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# **Influence of Classroom Climate on Socio-Emotional Well-Being of Students with Hearing Impairment in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined the influence of classroom climate on socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo state in Nigeria, Descriptive survey research design of correlational type was used to carry out the study. Sample consisted of 231 students with hearing impairment using purposive sampling technique, from three schools in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Two standardized instruments were used to collect data - My Class Inventory(  $r=0.78$ ) and Students Socio-emotional well-being Scale ( $r=0.82$ ). Three research questions were answered and data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis. The results indicated that student-students interactions ( $r=0.62$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and communication ( $r=0.54$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) significantly correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. Student-teacher interactions and discipline in the classroom did not correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. However, students-teacher interactions, student-student, interaction communication and discipline in the classroom predicted socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment  $F(4, 208)= 1013.66$   $P< 0.05$ , while the relative contributions of independent variables to the dependent variable are as follows: students-students-*

*interaction ( $\beta = 0.357$ ), communication ( $\beta = 0.218$ ), discipline in the classroom ( $\beta = 0.357$ ) and student-teacher interaction ( $\beta = 0.031$ ) respectively. It is therefore recommended that teachers should ensure good classroom climate in order to boost the socio-emotional development of students with hearing impairment.*

**Key Words:** Students with hearing impairment, Socio-emotional well-being, Classroom climate, Interaction, Communication.

### **Introduction**

A large proportion of school days are spent within the classroom, where interactions, no doubt, take place among students and their teachers. Behaviours and feelings (such as feelings of happiness, safety, interest in the welfare of others, striving to do one's best and building positive relationships with others) that students display in school, at home and in the society are reflections of what they are exposed to and learnt within the classroom settings. Classroom climate involves different kinds of relationships that exist among students and their teachers. Positive classroom climate have been associated with positive students behaviour within the classroom, in the school, at home and the society at large. While negative classroom climate leads to antisocial behaviour, poor peer relations, poor academic focus and aggressive behaviour. The perceptions of the people (students and teachers) who are together in the classroom on a daily basis can provide a wealth of information and deeper insights about the type of climate inherent in their classrooms and how it affects or influences the students' behaviours and feelings. (Fraser, 2010)

Classroom climate refers to the social climate (relationship and interaction) and the emotional climate (feelings for each other) of the classroom Bierman, (2011). Classroom climate is determined by such factors as teacher-students interaction, student-students interaction, communication and discipline. Rogers, (2011), identified aspects of classroom climate to include communication, mutual respect and rapport among students and their teachers.

In most classrooms of students with hearing impairment, communication flow from teacher to students while less direction of communication is from one or two students to the teacher. However, a positive classroom climate should be opened and democratic, such that all the students are free to express their opinions during class discussion. This will create sense of belonging, make the students feel comfortable and stimulate creativity and innovation. The communication barrier between students with hearing impairment and members of their families makes them feel rejected and unwanted at home. Therefore, their classroom should be a welcoming place where they can express themselves, be understood, and receive the necessary feedback, corrections and assistance from the teachers who are conversant with their means of communication. Communication helps to foster good interpersonal relationship which build a positive classroom climate where they feel safe, respected, receive every necessary support, learn to cope with, and control their feelings and emotions, and in fact, learn to behave in acceptable manner at school, in the home, and in the society. Communication is therefore, an important aspect of classroom climate. Consequently, any communication gap in the classroom will create a negative classroom climate, which can affect the students' behaviours and feelings.

Effective communication between students with hearing impairment and their teachers serves as a connection between the two and the strength of this connection portrays the type of climate that exist in the classroom. Students need their teachers to understand and support them as they strive to get the most out of their daily interactions in the classroom (Hamre and Pianta, 2011). Therefore, one can rightly say that positive student-teacher relationship goes a long way in helping to reduce, if not totally, prevent the occurrence of drop-outs and truancy which are common vices among students with hearing impairment.

Furthermore, positive interaction between students and teacher motivates the students to recognize the classroom and entire school as a home away from home (Knoell, 2012). Such an interaction helps in creating a positive classroom climate

where the students always want to be. The type of interaction that exists within the classroom influences and reflects on the students' behaviour outside the classroom, beyond the school environment into the home and the society. In other words, the students manifest this resultant positive behaviour at home among their family members and among their friends and peers in the larger society. However, if the students' relationship with their teachers is not cordial, there is every possibility that the students may tend to isolate themselves, become depressed and develop a low opinion of themselves as they tend to feel rejected and unwanted in school as well. These negative feelings can also influence negative behaviours such as bullying, truancy, dropping out of school and so on. Moreover, parents, guidance, teachers, school administrators and policy makers hardly consider the importance of classroom climate in relation to the inculcation of positive attitudes and behaviours in students with hearing impairment.

Good student-student interaction is a vital part of any positive classroom climate. Student-student interaction helps students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Kolloff, 2011). In a classroom setting, interaction happens naturally among hearing students as they listen to each other's comments, ask each other questions, and build rapport through frequent contact. The same thing occurs among students with hearing impairment. However, there is a communication barrier between student with hearing impairment and their hearing counterpart in an inclusive classroom. One major factor that has been identified as a cause of the low levels of interaction between students with hearing impairment and their hearing peers is a repeated misunderstanding of each other. Hearing students usually misunderstand a request for information to be repeated as a sign of lack of interest in what they were saying. Also, the frequent need for physical contact or going to stand in front of their hearing peers as a mean of attracting attention when speaking may be against the social boundaries that some hearing students have been taught, which may increase the possibility of the student with hearing impairment being dismissed by such peers (Martin and Bat-Chava, 2003).



Nevertheless, interaction among students with hearing impairment is mutual since they use sign language to communicate and interact with each other.

The behaviours and actions of students in the classroom are guided by the classroom and school rules and regulations. When students with hearing impairment in a general education classroom do not properly understand these rules and regulations, they tend to break the rules. In such a situation, punishment by the teacher becomes unfair, and such unfair punishment or favouritism of their hearing peers by the teacher will cultivate distrust in such students. Research indicates that teacher tends to shows care, love and shower praises on hearing students in an inclusive setting as compare to those with hearing impairment whose performance is below average. This action of favouritism put students with hearing impairment in such classroom in a state of depression and prevents them from interacting freely with the hearing students. This attitude negates the objectives of inclusion as a mean with which to foster social integration.

A classroom where students with hearing impairment are constantly punished will negatively affect the feelings and behaviour of such students. Due to the fact that their condition predisposes them to some unacceptable behaviour, teachers of students with hearing impairment employ punishment as a means of correction without considering the classroom climate that contributed to their behaviour. Leone (2009), observed that exclusionary disciplinary practices within the classroom perpetuate a cycle of academic failure which often leads to school dropout, removing the student from an academic setting. Students cannot be motivated to think productively or do their best in a harsh, threatening classroom. As socialization agents, teachers have to teach their students which behaviors are expected in which situations.

A positive classroom climate, with good student-teacher and student-student relationships, helps to enhance the socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. Socio-emotional well-being is a combination of social well-being and emotional well-being. Social well-being involves a

person's relationships with others and how that person communicates, interacts and socializes with other people. It can also relate to how people make friends and whether they have a sense of belonging. Positive social well-being manifest in good relationships with others and the absence of behavioural problems, that is, not having disruptive, isolation, violent or bullying behaviour.

Emotional Well-being refers to how we think, feel and relate to ourselves and others and how we interpret the world around us. Having good emotional well-being affects the capacity to manage, communicate, form and sustain relationships. It also affects the ability to adapt to changes and major life event. Emotional well-being has to do with the ability to relate to each other and the social environment, adapt to change and cope with adversity. The implications of decreased emotional well-being are related to stress, depression, and anxiety. On the positive side, enhanced emotional well-being is seen to contribute to upward spirals in increasing coping ability, self-esteem, performance and productivity at school and in all ramifications in life.

The social and emotional well-being of young people consist of the range of positive and negative emotions and behaviours that they experience on a regular basis in different areas of their lives (schoolwork, peer relationships, family, extra-curricular activities, involvement in community) such as achieving one's potential (academic, social, personal), engagement, happiness, helping others as well as relative absence of anger, depression, loneliness, bullying, isolation, under-achievement, and substance abuse (Bernard, 2002)

Good socio-emotional well-being therefore, creates a foundation for healthy behaviours and educational attainment; helps prevent emotional and behavioural problems, violence and crime, teenage pregnancy and the misuse of drugs and alcohol (Adi, 2007). Students with high levels of social and emotional well-being are more likely to successfully cope with physical, intellectual and social challenges in the classroom and at home.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are general concerns about the numbers of students with hearing impairment who manifest extraordinarily low levels of social-emotional well-being to the extent of exhibiting negative feelings and behaviours such as bullying, isolation, anger, anxiety, depression, poor motivation, underachievement and substance abuse (alcohol, drugs). It has been reported that there is a high incidence of socio-emotional and problems among students with hearing impairment of all ages (Marschark, 1993). These problems are caused by the inability of the students with hearing impairment to acquire the necessary language and communication skills with which to interact with others, learn the proper behavioural patterns in their schools and societies as a whole and poor classroom climate. This study examined the influence of classroom climate on socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, oyo state, Nigeria..

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the relationship between classroom climate and socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?
2. What is the composite contribution of the independent variables classroom climate (students-teacher interaction, student-students interaction, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables classroom climate (students-teacher interaction, student-students, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?

### **Method**

The researchers adopted a descriptive research design of correlational type. This enabled the researchers to examine

the relationship among the variables of interest in the study as well as the composite and relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable. There was no manipulation of the variables of interest in the study. The population of the study comprised all students with hearing impairment in Ibadan. The sample comprised 213 students with hearing impairment selected from three schools in Ibadan. The purposive sampling technique was used to select both the schools and participants for the study. Two standardized instruments were used for data collection namely: - My classroom inventory and Students' socio-emotional well-being scale. My classroom inventory has twenty five items. It was developed by Fraser and Frisher (1983) and adapted by the researchers. It has four Likert scale. The instrument is reliable with coefficient of 0.78 and students socio-emotional well-being scale has thirty items. It was developed by Bernard, Stephanou and Urbach (2009). The instrument was adopted by the researchers. It has internal consistency of 0.82. The two instruments were administered on the participants through the help of research assistants. The data collected in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis.

## Results

### Research Question One

Research question one stated that what is the relationship among classroom climate (student-teacher interactions, student-students interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom), and socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?

**Table 1: Correlation matrix of relationships among independent variables and the dependent variable (Socio-emotional Well-being)**

	Student-teacher Interaction	Student-Students Interaction	Communication	Discipline in the classroom	Socio-emotional Well-being
Students-	1.000				

teacher interactions					
Student-students interactions	0.235**	1.000			
Communication	0.319	0.254	1.000		
Discipline in classroom	-0.037	-0.041*	-0.013	1.000	
Socio-emotional Well-being	-0.0024	0.623**	0.541	0.013	1.000

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result from table one revealed the relationship among the independent variables (student-teacher interactions, student-student interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) and dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment) The result shows that student-students interactions ( $r=0.623$ ,  $<0.05$ ) and communication, ( $r=0.54$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) are significantly correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. While, student-teacher interactions ( $r= - 0.024$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) and discipline in the classroom ( $r=- 0.013$ ) are not correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment.

### Research Question Two

Research question two stated that what is the composite contribution of the independence variables (students-teacher interactions, student-student interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?

**Table 2: Composite contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable**

R	R-Square	Adjust R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
0.865	0.839	0.837	4.92351		
<b>Analysis of Variance</b>					
Source of variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	128305.534	4	32076.38	1013.66	0.00
Residual	6582.047	208	31.644		
Total					

Significant at  $P < 0.05$

Table 2 shows that the multiple correlation coefficient (R) indicating composite contribution between the predictor variables (students-teacher interactions, student-students interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) and the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) is 0.865 while the adjusted R square is 0.839. This implies that the predictor variables accounted for 83.9 per cent variance of socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 1013.66 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the predictor variables predicted the socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing significantly and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

### Research Question Three

Research question three stated that what is the relative contribution of the independent variables (students-teacher interactions, student-students interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment) in Ibadan?

**Table 3: Relative Contributions of the independent variables on the dependent variable**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.876	1.126		3.443	0.001
Student-teacher interactions	0.302	0.213	0.031	1.409	0.159
Student-students interactions	0.086	0.009	0.357	9.143	0.000
Communication	0.059	0.009	0.218	6.906	0.000
Discipline in classroom	0.036	0.025	0.035	1.454	0.146

Table 3: reveals the relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weight. The entire independent variables are found to contribute differently to socio-emotional well-being. Specifically, students-students interaction contributed the most to socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment ( $\beta=0.357$ ,  $t=9.143$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). This is followed in the order of magnitude by communication ( $\beta=0.218$ ,  $t=6.906$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), discipline in the classroom ( $\beta=0.035$ ,  $t=1.454$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and student-teacher interaction ( $\beta=0.031$ ,  $t=1.409<0.05$ ).

### Discussion

The first research question stated that what is the relationship among classroom climate (student-teacher interactions, student-students interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom), and socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan? The result from table one shows that student-students interactions and communication are significantly correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment, while student-teacher interactions and discipline in the classroom did not correlate with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. The result of this study corroborated that of Stinson, Whitmire and kluwin

(1996) who found that students with hearing impairment from mainstreaming programs for the deaf and hard-of-hearing reported feeling most emotionally secure with other students who had a hearing loss. Moreover, Bat-Chava, Martin, Kosciw (2005); Whitmire (1992), study showed that positive relationships of deaf students with their hearing classmates were related to higher levels of well-being. In contrast to the finding of this study, Antia & Dittillo, 1998; Antia, Kreimeyer, Metz, & Spolsky, 2011; Keating & Mirus, 2003) found that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students interact less frequently and are less successful at maintaining peer interactions over time.

Furthermore, the result showed that communication significantly correlated to socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. The result corroborated that of Onwuchekwa (1992) who reported that the underlying causes of such socio-emotional development may be linked to communication challenges and potential language delays which often occur in children with hearing loss. Moreover, the result of this study showed that student-teacher interactions was not correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. This result is in consonant with Centre for advanced study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) (2002), that students in middle school and high school characterise their interactions with teachers as frequently unsatisfying and unmotivating. However, the finding is in contrast with Lansford et al. (2005) who reported that the lack of high quality relationships between students and their teacher resulted in negative effects including depression, anxiety, and poor health in general. Moreover, the result shows that discipline in the classroom was not correlated with socio-emotional well-being of student with hearing impairment. This finding agree with Kapp (1991) who contended that students with hearing impairment faces problems acquiring and understanding moral behaviour codes because it is mainly through language that they are transferred from one member of society to another. However, Ovell and Suaning (2001), noted that discipline in schools and within the classroom is essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment and relationships.



The second research question stated that what is the composite contribution of the independence variables (students-teacher interactions, student-student interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan?

The findings of the study showed that the independent variables correlated with the dependent variable. That is, students-teacher interactions, student-student interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. This implies that the selected predictor variables predicted the socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment significantly.

The results confirmed those of other researchers like Daniels & Shumow, (2003); Jia et al (2009), Ryan and Patrick (2001) who reported in their studies that the quality of interactions in the classroom among students and teachers create the classroom climate. The result confirms that of Sheridan (2001) in a study of seven deaf children from diverse family backgrounds and school settings reported that deaf children had many positive experiences, relationships with others, self-perceptions and expectations for themselves. This implies that the ability of students with hearing impairment to interact with, make friends with, and be accepted by peers is clearly portrayal of socio-emotional well-being. The result was also in consonant with Griggs, Gagnon, Huelsman, Kidder-Ashley, and Ballard (2009) who maintained that, student-teacher relationships may reduce the risk of negative behavioral outcomes. This implies that a positive students-teacher interaction help prevent emotional and behavioural problems for students with hearing impairment. Furthermore, the result is in line with Marschark and Hauser (2008) who noted that classroom participation for Students with Deafness and Hard of Hearing requires the ability of them to communicate with their teachers and other. Hindley, (2000), who reported that lack of opportunity to participate in social life resulting from barriers within the environment (e.g. language/communication, and social attitudes towards

deafness) is regarded as a major determinant of deaf children's social and emotional deficit. Also Glickman (2013), asserts that for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children growing up in environments without early or consistent access to a communication modality that suits their needs, there is a greater likelihood for the "development of behavioral, social, and emotional disturbances including aggression.

The result also agreed with Wayson and Pinnell (1994) who stated that good discipline in the classroom helps to develop desirable students' behaviour. This means that good classroom discipline and adherent to the rules and regulations in the school influenced the socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment.

The third research question stated that what is the relative contribution of the independent variables (students-teacher interactions, student-students interactions, communication and discipline in the classroom) to the dependent variable (socio-emotional well-being) of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan? The relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable are as follows: students-students interaction ( $\beta=0.357$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), communication ( $\beta=0.218$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), discipline in the classroom ( $\beta=0.035$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and student-teacher interaction ( $\beta=0.031$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). All the independent variables had relative contributions to the dependent variable, with student-student interactions having the highest. This result is in line with Batten, Oakes and Alexandra (2014), who stated that peer interaction or friendships could provide deaf children with opportunities to develop specific social, emotional, and cognitive skills, alongside increasing their overall well-being and self-confidence. In contrary to the findings of this study, studies by Dammeyer, (2010); Fellingner, Holzinger, & Pollard, (2012); Hintermair, (2007) reported that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students experienced socio-emotional problems when compared to their hearing peers with rates as high as two to three times. This implies that student-student interaction is essential for socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. Moreover, this result confirmed the position of Scheetz, (2004) who argued that students with

hearing loss who have acquired sophisticated use of language have an increased opportunity of being accepted by their hearing peers. Conversely, Onwuchekwa (1992), stated that the breakdown of communication affects the attitudes, feelings and thinking of the deaf as well as those of the hearing who seek to establish personal relationship with them and that the persons exhibit greater tendency to anxiety and dependency.

Furthermore, the result is in line with (Dika & Singh, 2002; Wentzel, 2003), who averred that for high school students, positive teacher-student relationships can reduce rates of dropping out by nearly half, help explore options for college, and impact student's social and emotional well-being. Roy, (2009), stated that when the teacher is awkward and hesitant with the student (and/or the interpreter), the whole class is as well. This implies that the way teacher approaches the student with hearing impairment affects how other students, teachers, and administrators perceive them. Therefore, positive students-teachers can set a good example and encourage the socio-well-being of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The result of the study is also in line with Marschark and Hauser (2008), who reported that due to communication difficulties, some deaf students may not be aware of the social rules or communication skills used in social interactions and this may impact on their ability to behave appropriately. This means that their condition may make them vulnerable to violates classroom rules and regulation, especially in an inclusive or integrated setting.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the influence of classroom climate on socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan Oyo state. It was found that two out of the four independent variables - student-students interactions and communication significantly correlated with socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment while the discipline in the classroom and student-teacher interactions are not correlated to socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. Again, all the independent variables compositely contributed to the socio-

emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment. Only student-student interaction and communication have relative contributions to dependent variable.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the discussion of results and general experience in the course of the study, the following recommendations are considered necessary.

Stakeholders involved in the education of students with hearing impairment should consider classroom climate when considering the issue of poor socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment.

Owners of private schools for students with hearing impairment and government should organize seminars and symposium for teachers of students with hearing impairment on the effect of classroom climate on socio-emotional well-being of their students.

Teachers of students with hearing impairment should be well educated on the importance of developing positive interaction with their students for the enhancement of good socio-emotional well-being among them (the students)

Parents of students with hearing impairment need to acquire the basic communication methods of persons with hearing impairment to enhance better social interaction within the family.

School counsellors should also help teachers of students with hearing impairment understand their roles in the development of positive interaction to enhance the socio-emotional well-being of their students.

Curriculum planners should structure the learning activities in such a way that student-student interaction, teacher-students interaction, communication and discipline in the classroom will be enhanced.

Educational psychologists and school counsellors should orientate policy makers about the influence of classroom climate on the socio-emotional well-being of students with hearing impairment.

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