

資料

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STATUS OF
DEAF STUDENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

This article aims to report on the postsecondary education status of selected deaf students in the Philippines. An author-made questionnaire was administered to a total of 65 students (34 male and 31 female) who came from a college for the deaf and regular schools with special programs for the hearing impaired. Results revealed that pursuit for postsecondary education has been the concern of single students who most of the cases were born in Metro Manila and belong to low income group. They showed average achievement in English and Mathematics while low performance in Science was noted. As a result of inclination for a more "hands on learning," vocational/technical related programs summarizes the courses of the students. Lecture was the most preferred learning strategies and the importance of teacher-interpreter and sign language interpreter was strongly recognized. Findings indicate the need for strengthening the vocational curriculum in the secondary level to prepare the students for their postsecondary options in this area. Teaching strategies should also be enriched to increase the students' level of motivation.

Key Words : postsecondary education, preferred learning strategies, communication aids

INTRODUCTION

Deaf graduates face a crucial decision of what option to take after finishing secondary education. The individual's choice which is largely influenced by his socio-economic status and some personal attributes would determine the kind of life he will have in the future.

Due to financial difficulties, one option that

a large number of deaf graduates take into consideration is looking for employment (Sanchez and Kusanagi, 1997). Postsecondary education however, is the other preference made by some of them who wish to acquire further education.

Acknowledging education as effective means of preparing deaf individuals assume important roles and become productive citizens of the country, programs of such kind in the United States of America and Japan have been increasing in number (Smith and Luckasson, 1995 ; Kusanagi, 1994) and have gained

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legal and popular support from the government. In the Philippines the programs of this type are few and normally hosted by private institutions. Offerings of such kind are usually limited in Metro Manila.

Although the enactment of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons in 1992 provides the deaf and other disadvantaged with adequate access and assistance to postsecondary education, very few are still enjoying such right.

While limited research has been conducted on this area since the enactment of the aforementioned bill, the present study thus attempts to describe the present status of deaf students as well as the significant factors influencing their academic life in the postsecondary level studying the researches in the U.S.A. and Japan. The authors particularly focused on the deaf students' perception on communication aids used at school, facilities and services offered by the school and frequency of consultations with key persons. It is hoped that the results of this study will aid government officials, school administrators serving the hearing impaired, special educators and rehabilitation workers in taking appropriate steps for improving the status of these individuals.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to determine the postsecondary education status of deaf students in the Philippines. Specifically, this aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1 . What is the profile of the deaf students in terms of:
 - a . demographic factors
 - b . educational background
 - c . deafness-related factors
- 2 . 2. What is the perception of the deaf

students in the following areas:

- a . preferred learning strategies
 - b . frequency of consultations with key persons
 - c . communication aids used at school
 - d . school facilities, services and methods of instruction
- 3 . What are the usual problems encountered by the deaf and what recommendations can be made to improve their academic life?

METHODOLOGY

1 . Subjects of the Study

The respondents consisted of 65 deaf students: 34 males and 31 females who are taking postsecondary courses at the time of study. They were selected from the following postsecondary education institutions with the following distribution of subjects: College of Saint Benilde-De La Salle University (CSB-DLSU), 15.4%; CAP College for the Deaf (CAP-CD), 55.4% and the Manila Christian Computer Institute (MCCI), 23.1%. It is important to note here that a total of 100% was not attained since there was one student each from CSB-DLSU and CAP-CD who, for unknown reason was not able to return the questionnaire. One of the first postsecondary institution for the hearing impaired, CAP-CD basically employs sign language as a medium of instruction. CSB-DLSU and MCCI on the other hand, are regular schools with special educational programs for the deaf. These schools likewise use sign language in the instruction of deaf learners.

2 . Procedures

Coordination with the aforementioned institutions was initially made to facilitate the gathering of important data. From the total population of the surveyed schools, 50%

were randomly selected to respond to the questionnaire so that a more representative description can be derived. The breakdown of the subjects is as follows :

CSB-DLSU 25-11 respondents

CAP-CD 80-39 respondents

MCCID 30-15 respondents

An author-made questionnaire was administered in group with the assistance of a sign language interpreter who explained the instructions and contents of the questionnaire. The questionnaire sought to elicit demographic and other related information about the subjects and their perception towards different areas influencing academic life.

3 . Methods of Analysis

This research is a descriptive type of study which employed simple statistics in the analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1 . Profile of the Deaf Students

A . Demographic Factors

The respondents of the study were composed of 34 male and 31 female deaf students whose ages ranged from 16 to 36 years old with a mean age of 22 years old. A large distribution of 95.4% belong to the single status (95.4%) while 4.6% are married. These figures show that pursuit for postsecondary education has been the concern of many deaf individuals who do not have marital commitment yet.

Taking a closer look at the respondents' age, it could be noticed that further education has also been the priority of many deaf adults as 64.6% belong to this group. Similar situation is noted in the United States where in 1985 to 1986, an estimated 35,000 deaf adults took continuing education courses, many of

them offered through Gallaudet University (Commission on the Education of the Deaf, 1988 as documented by Smith and Luckasson, 1995).

Regarding place of birth, 61.5% were born in Metro Manila ; 36.9%, provincial areas and there is a case of a student who was born outside the Philippines. Family income-wise, 55.4% of the respondents came from a low-income group (P7,000 below) while 44.6% belong to a high income group (P7,000 above). Since the surveyed institutions were all private schools, a relatively high amount is required of students for their fees. It is worthy to mention however, that those who belong to the majority-income group are receiving scholarship which makes educational accommodation easier for them. Such assistance is in consonance with the provision of Chapter 2, Section 15 of the Magna Carta for the Disabled Persons (1992).

B . Educational Background

Basically the subjects were secondary graduates from 1982 to 1996 and coming from the different institutions catering to the needs of deaf learners. Of these cases, 76.9% finished secondary education from various schools for the deaf ; 12.3% from special education centers and 7.7% were from mainstreamed program. The remaining 3.1% failed to respond to the this part of the questionnaire.

Since high school academic achievement is a good predictor of later success, the researcher took note of the subjects' performance in English, Mathematics and Science which are considered basic learning areas. This was also gathered since there were no achievement data available in the postsecondary level at the time of study. Utilizing the grade point average (GPA) in the aforementioned learning areas, it was found out

Table 1 Academic Achievement in High School

Learning Areas \ Rating	High (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
English	23.1	56.9	20.0
Mathematics	29.2	46.2	24.6
Science	30.8	33.8	35.4

that the subjects have average achievement in English and Mathematics with 56.9% and 46.2% distribution respectively. Science, however, received low performance as 35.4% of the cases fall within this level. Please refer to Table 1 for this.

Admission of students in the postsecondary level despite low achievement could be due to the absence of entrance examination that would screen deaf applicants in this level. Exemption of deaf students from the National College Entrance Examination is also contributing factor for this situation. Education is also made possible since majority of the respondents reside in Metro Manila where all the surveyed schools are located.

As regards the institutions hosting programs for the deaf, it was noted that 55.4% are accommodated at a college for the deaf while 44.6% are from regular schools offering special programs for the hearing impaired. In this study, two institutions belong to the latter group. Enhanced socialization skills with fellow deaf as noted by Brown and Foster (1991) could be the reason why a large number of respondents chose to enroll in a school for the deaf.

Courseswise, 44.6% are presently taking associate courses in information technology ; 23.2%, computer software technology, 13.8%, accounting and 7.7%, business management. There are 10.8% of the cases who are

enrolled in a degree course in business administration. These findings relate to that of Kasen et. al. (1990) when they studied the status of 46 rubella deaf young adults. Drawn from four types of school settings : special day school for the deaf, regular school with the half the day mainstreamed, regular school with the half the day or more mainstreamed and completely mainstreamed, they found out that 62.5% of the subjects' major areas of study were heavily concentrated in computer science, business and other technical, job-focused subjects as compared to a more liberal arts orientation.

Summarizing this part, vocational-related courses could be the result of the deaf's preference for a more "hands on learning" than the usual academic-related courses where theoretical discussions are done in the classroom most of the time. Please refer to Figure 1 fo this. Another factor affecting their choice on "hands on learning" might be the possibility for immediate employment.

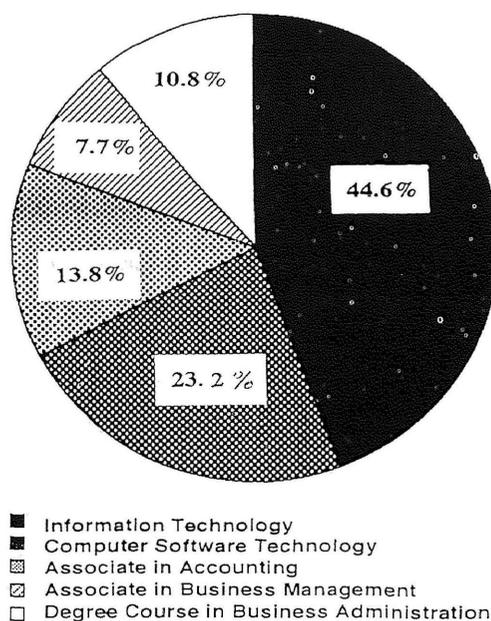


Fig. 1 Courses Being Taken

Since there are only few postsecondary institutions/programs for the deaf in the Philippines, limited opportunities are then made available for them. On the contrary, a considerable improvement in the number of postsecondary programs for the deaf in other countries have been noticed. Smith and Luckasson (1995) noted that there are 150 postsecondary accredited programs in the United States specifically designed for deaf students. These programs serve 7,664 students with hearing impairments, and all have support services including a coordinator. Worthy to mention are the programs being offered at the Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York. At NTID, deaf students have the option of enrolling within the college that are designed specifically to address the special needs of deaf learners, or of "cross-registering" into academic programs by one of the colleges of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). If they choose the latter option, they are provided extensive support services including interpreters, note-takers and tutors. Thus, deaf students have the academic advantage of receiving a degree from a well regarded institution and the social advantage of having a significant number of deaf peers (Brown and Foster, 1991).

Residence in post secondary institution for the deaf requires 70.8% of the respondents to finish their course in 2 years; 18.5% in 3 years while 10.8% would be able to finish the degree in 4 years. Short term program has become the choice of many students as this offer immediate opportunity for employment. In addition, this could also be due to the fact that taking short term courses only require

minimal fees than enrolling in college or bachelor's degree programs.

C. Deafness-Related Factors

This study revealed that 58.5% of the respondents are congenitally deaf while 41.5%, adventitious. Of the latter group, 59.3% became deaf during early childhood (3-7 years); 29.6%, during babyhood (1-2 years); 7.4% during puberty (8-12 years) while the remaining 3.7% became deaf late in life. In terms of degree of hearing loss, 46.2% have profound impairment; 24.6%, severe; 15.4%, moderate and 12.3% of the respondents have mild hearing loss. Again, there are 1.5% cases whose degree of hearing impairment is undetermined. Aware of education's rich contribution in man's life, the respondents, regardless of onset and degree of impairment, have sought for further education as an effective means in preparing them as productive individuals in the future.

2. Perception of the Deaf Students

A. Preferred Learning Strategies

Learning is defined by Lawton and Gordon (1993) as a permanent or lasting change in knowledge, skills or attitudes brought about by experience rather than maturation is the ultimate goal of educative process. Achieving this goal in an educational setting necessitates effective teaching which facilitate

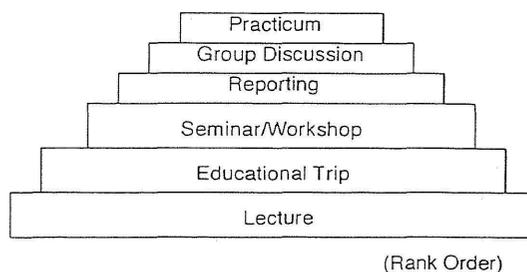


Fig. 2 Hierarchy of Preferred Learning Strategies

the process. Lang et. al (1994) describe the characteristics of effective teaching as they interviewed 56 deaf college students regarding the latter's view on some critical teaching incidents. They noted that 30.9% of the incidents were associated with aspects of teacher affect and the category with the next-highest frequency of occurrence was teaching strategies (24.4%), followed by quality of lectures and explanations (17.4%) and communication (17%). The researchers stressed that effective teaching is one which provides reinforcement and feedback, uses visual aids and involves the students in learning activities. With these as considerations, teaching-learning materials are truly useful as they facilitate and stimulate learning process in order that the learner is able to fully realize his potentials (MECS, 1986).

The present study relates with the aforementioned since the respondents' preferred learning strategies are those that satisfy the conditions for effective teaching. In this case, lecture was the method most liked by the deaf students in classroom as this provides opportunities for them to acquire new concepts from the teachers who utilize novelty and creativity in the presentation of the topics. This was followed by educational trips and the conduct of seminar-workshop. Equally interesting, educational trips allow the students to experience the concreteness of the material to be learned by visiting some places and laboratories. Seminar-workshop on the other hand gives time for shared discussion which at the end of the session will require an output from the learners. A hierarchy of learning strategies on Figure 2 is derived showing the respondents' degree of preference for different learning strategies.

B. Consultations with Key Persons

This part presents how frequent the subjects consult with the key persons regarding their academic undertakings. It was revealed in this study that 56.9% of the deaf confer with their parents, sometimes; 24.6%, never and 18.4%, often. In the case of the academic adviser, 70.8% of the students consult with them sometimes; 15.4%, never and 13.9%, often. The same pattern holds true in relation with the subject teacher as 75.4% seek their help, sometimes; 20%, often and 4.6%, never. Guidance counselors whose task is basically ensuring the adjustment of students in their academic life are also sometimes sought for advise by 52.3% of the deaf; 36.9%, never and 9.2%, often. Deaf classmates and friends are sometimes requested for assistance by 64.6% of the cases; 29.2%, often and 4.6%, never. However, other school staff are never consulted by 53.9% of the deaf while 33.9% and 10.8% seek for their opinions sometimes and oftentimes respectively. As in other items, a 100% response was not gathered because about 1.5% of the subjects did not have answer on areas for guidance counselors, deaf classmates and friends, and other school staff. As such, deaf students tend to discern things from their own point of view without so much consideration of their parents, teachers and friends' perception. Social support and encouragement should therefore be enhanced by parents and significant others so that the students may be more open with their feelings and problems. These would likewise block their egocentric behavior and enable them to develop a more adjusted personality. Please see Figure 3 for this.

C. Communication Aids

Aids to communication play a significant role in the learning process of deaf learners

as these help make the learning stimuli available for them. In this study, teacher-interpreter and sign language interpreter are revealed to be very helpful communication aids as 56.9% and 53.9% of the respondents respectively perceived its importance.

While De Caro et al. (1987) noted interpreting as the most often provided special support services, it is just necessary to enhance the interpreting and sign language skills of teachers and other individuals involved in the education of the deaf. In the Philippines, the Philippine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, a non-government organization which was established in 1979, provides sign language training at various levels to individuals (mostly teachers and rehabilitation workers) who want to acquire/upgrade sign language skills. Training its teachers on this area is likewise conducted by the Philippine School for the Deaf, the pioneer institution for the handicapped and the only national school for the hearing impaired in the country.

Tutors, captioned films and note-taker with 58.5%, 49.2% and 47.7% distribution respectively are just regarded as helpful communication tools. Skillful in dealing with the

deaf, tutors are perceived to facilitate learning as special sessions are conducted to clarify some unclear topics. As subtitles print the words spoken in films and video, captioning allows the deaf to have equal access to information and entertainment (Smith and Luckasson, 1995). Note-takers on the other hand lend its usefulness in documenting the lectures delivered necessary for the deaf's conduct of self-study or review. However, teletypewriter (TTY) formerly known as the telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) along with hearing aid are perceived to be not helpful communication tools as 58.5% and 47.7% of the deaf supported this view. Since TTY is not yet available in the surveyed schools and even students do not own one, its importance is then not acknowledged. In the case of hearing aid, this device was not identified useful since the students could benefit from sign language communication despite its absence. Details are shown on Figure 4.

D. School Facilities, Services and Methods of Instruction

Utilizing a 3-point scale, subjects were asked whether these aspects are "very good," "good" and "not good" depending on their

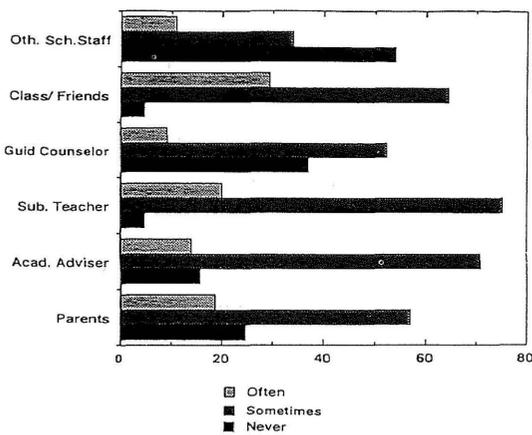


Fig. 3 Frequency of Consultations with Key Persons

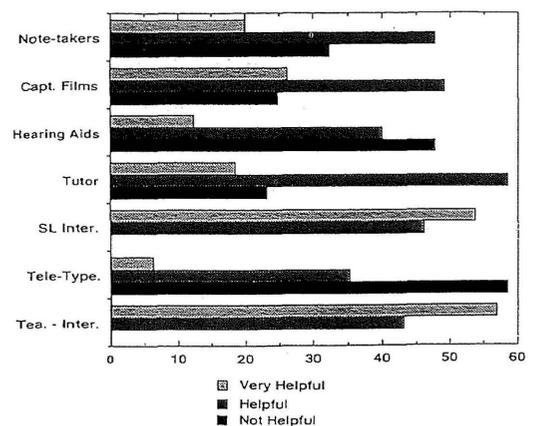


Fig. 4 Usefulness of Communication Aids

Table 2 Perception of Some Aspects of Academic Life

Aspects	Perception	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Not Good (%)
Facilities and Equipment		32.3	55.4	12.3
Programs and Services		18.5	78.5	3.1
Methods of Instruction		27.7	66.2	6.2

experiences. Academic programs and services (78.5%), methods of instruction (66.2) and facilities and equipment (55.4%) received "good" rating from the respondents.

This indicated that on the average the subjects viewed the aforementioned aspects as functional and relevant to their needs. A closer look at the program offerings of the surveyed schools showed a curriculum adapted for the deaf in order to meet their unique instructional needs. The teaching force is composed of special educators who have training in the use of sign language as a communication mode. Academic advising and interpreting are also extended to help the students in school-related problems. Most importantly, practicum is offered to graduating students and a job placement is provided after graduation.

On the other hand, it is important to underscore the percentage of respondents (44.6%) who perceived facilities and equipment the negative way. Discontentment was attributed to insufficient buildings/classroom where classes for the students could be held. This part needs considerable attention for environment has significant influence on learning. Please refer to Table 2.

3. Usual Problems and Recommendations

This part describes the usual problems being encountered by the respondents as they become part of educational institutions. Along these problems are opinions which

were freely expressed by the subjects. Results revealed that communication topped the list as 36.9% of the cases complain in this area.

Although teachers receive sign language training prior to teaching, communication problems still arise between them and the students who act as communication partners in the teaching-learning process. Perhaps teachers' proficiency in the language of signs is still not enough to impart the intended ideas. Supporting this claim, Arevalo and Kusanagi (1996) found out that the message level correspondence of teachers in the use of simultaneous communication is from 60-80% only which means that the conveyed message is not fully understood. In an earlier study, such deficiency was attributed to teachers' insufficient sign language background as most of the respondents are still in the basic level. (Arevalo and Kusanagi, 1995). It is thus encouraged that teachers for the deaf should upgrade their sign language skills and update themselves with the current trends on communication modes and other deaf-related issues. For effective communication works on a two-way basis, teachers should also try to develop a more personal contact with the deaf for them to be able to assist their students well.

Difficulty in one's subjects like sentence construction is also a problem raised by 23.1% of the respondents. A common occurrence

among deaf individuals, such problem illustrates Myklebust's (1964) "deafism" which focuses on the English problems of hearing-impaired children. These weaknesses include omission of necessary words or incorrect use of words, simple and rigid sentence structures and inability to deduce meaning of words from context.

While majority of the deaf use American Sign Language (ASL) rather than Signing Exact English (SEE), the tendency for uttering sentences in distorted word order is found greater (Flores, 1989 ; Parian, 1996).

Unfavorable relations on the other hand is aired as bothering some 4.6% of the respondents. The deaf's restricted personality development which was discussed earlier could pave the way for exhibiting such behavior. Problems concerning deaf's association with the hearing counterpart could again be traced back to communication barrier. Knowledge of sign language is again acknowledged as necessary for hearing people in order for them to understand and relate well with the deaf.

The construction of more classrooms/buildings is one of the major suggestions raised by the students as it was observed that some classrooms of the surveyed schools are too small and not conducive for learning. The proposal is likewise necessary as there are two cases of surveyed schools wherein the rooms are constructed side by side with the personnel's office. Another area which caught the attention of the students is the need to improve the sign language skills of the teachers for better communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the study are as follows :

1 . This study revealed that pursuit for higher education has been the concern of single students who most of the cases were born in Metro Manila and belong to low income group. Most of them have profound impairment who acquired deafness prior to the development of language. Educational backgroundwise, the students were basically secondary graduates with average achievement in English and Mathematics and low performance in Science. Accommodated at a college for the deaf and regular schools with special programs for the hearing impaired, vocational/technical training summarizes the deaf's postsecondary course as a result of preference for a more "hands on learning."

2 . Lecture, seminar-workshop and educational trips were the most preferred learning strategies of deaf students. Consultations with the key persons at school was not oftentimes done by the students although they recognize the great importance of teacher-interpreter and sign language interpreter in the classroom. As regards perception towards the school's programs, services and methods of instruction, the respondents generally rated these areas positively.

3 . Communication problems topped the list of the students' complaint at school despite teachers' knowledge of sign language. This was followed by difficulty in one's subject particularly poor sentence construction. Unfavorable relations were also raised as bothering the students. In order to improve their academic life, the students suggested for a construction of more buildings/classrooms as conducive venues for learning. They likewise sought for the upgrading of teachers' sign language skills for better understanding.

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