

DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYABILITY OF PERSONS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN SELECTED ORGANISATIONS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA**Oyewumi A.M.***Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan***Ogunwale O.R.***Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo***Abstract**

This study investigated the determinants of employability of persons with hearing impairment, in some selected organizations in Oyo State. Questionnaires were administered to 100 employers of labour in order to determine the employability of person with hearing impairment. The study used a descriptive survey research design. Multiple regressions was used to analyse the research questions and t-test statistics was used for the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The findings revealed that age, severity of hearing impairment, sex and psychological adjustment were the major determinants of employability of person with hearing impairment. It was also discovered that there was no significance difference in the attitude of public and private organization to employability of persons with hearing impairment. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the curriculum for students with hearing impairment should included career awareness training and social interpersonal communication activities.

Introduction

Employment is a major element in the lifestyle of all people with or without special needs. Meaningful employment has both social, as well as economic implications and benefits. These are aspects of life in most societies which are very important to an individual. In addition, employment offers ever person financial rewards, independence, family and community acceptance (Okeke, 2006). The social and economic status of people is largely determined by access to the labour market and/or marginalizations within it are apparent mechanisms by which certain groups of people are excluded from prosperity and influence (Kitchen, Shirlow and Shuttleworth, 1998).

Employment largely determines one's social status, gives satisfaction and influences one's lifestyle. It is essentially engaging somebody in a useful work after training and this is central to a man's life. Notably, the issue of employment of persons with special needs has not been given the attention it deserves. This viewpoint is supported by a document in the Western world on the employment issue of persons with special need. The document in question is the British Disabled Persons Employment act of 1944, the only legal framework to protect the employment rights of the disabled workers in Britain, (Obani, 2003). Focusing on the subject matter, Shakespeare (1992) states that implicit action to address meaningfully the employment problems of persons with disability via a policy position is rare and where it exists it has tended to be descriptive rather than being analytical.

The lack of meaningful and appropriate laws on the employment issue of person with special needs may be associated with the way people perceived them. The apparently flawed perception is also carried unto their assessment or rating which often showcase them as people with inadequate skills and ability required in different employment settings. Thus Kitchen, Shirlow and Shuttleworth (1998) state that disabled people are one group that is disadvantaged through limited access to the labour market. Martins, White and Melzer (1989) also contend that majority of special need persons are in low paid and low skilled manual work. Similarly, Oliver (1991) expresses the notion that people with special needs are often trapped in a situation of unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Doyle (1994) adds that special need persons are three times more likely to be out of work and when employed, they tend to be under represented in manual unskilled and semiskilled cadres. Kitchen, Shirlow and Shuttleworth (1998) affirm that unemployment and low earnings are leading to widespread poverty among the people with special needs. Equally, the growing crisis of employment which has been attributed mainly to astronomical rates at which educated by manpower are being produced without due consideration to placement is affecting the special need population.

Many special needs have access to education and training without corresponding increase in the capacity of the economy to absorb them. In addition, the absence of concrete, concerted and sustained programme to absorb the increasingly high turnover of

graduates from tertiary institutions, tend to make the labour market becomes saturated with too many people chasing few available jobs which makes it extra difficult for the special needs population to be employed regardless of their educational qualification.

Communication of persons with hearing impairment remains the greatest barrier. When persons that are hard of hearing and deafness apply for job placements or employment in a particular company, a pertinent problem is the inability to communicate and be communicated to effectively. The import of this communication problem is rarely duly appreciated by prospective employer or interviewer. This invariably jeopardize the likelihood or the chances of those that are hard of hearing or deaf to secure a job placement.

Anecdotal accounts and many studies indicate that hearing loss even a moderate loss can often does have a major impact on the individual employment status. It is a common place observation that persons with hearing impairment are frequently unemployed and underemployed or when employed experience much stress and social isolation form co-worker. Onwuchekwa (1998) observes that workers with hearing impairment in our society often develop a feeling of inferiority because of their psychosocial problems such as, isolation, depression, loss of self-esteem, anger and anxiety which they generally find hard to overcome. As a result, it may be extremely difficult for people with hearing loss to get a job. Also because of ignorance, uncertainty, fear or malice the employers are often unwilling to employ them. Many persons that with hearing impairment don't have jobs, many are stuck in jobs that are unfulfilling and do not offer advancement possibilities or lacked challenges and interest. They are stucked because they think it is extremely unlikely that they will get hired for another job, regardless of their qualification and experience. Those that are employed need communication accommodation to function most effectively. It is against this background that this study intends to investigate the likely variables that are needed to make persons with hearing impairment employable.

Statement of Problem

The number of individuals with hearing impairment acquiring pertinent skills and education are rising, but there are no corresponding employment opportunities. Thus, their being fully integrated to the society is becoming worrisome. Indeed, the question could be asked that what is the essence of taking the pains and committing enormous resources to training and educating this group of special need individuals.

Potential employers/entrepreneurs are ill-disposed to employing persons that are hard of hearing or deaf irrespective of their skills and level of education. A problem that is not unconnected with their inability to readily communicate with this group of special need individuals. Largely, difficult (problem) of communication underscores the negative disposition of employers/entrepreneurs to the hard of hearing or deaf persons. This problem should be examined with underlying objective of highlighting modalities of finding appropriate solutions. This is a central reason for this study.

Research Questions

1. What are the relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variables?
2. to what extent can the eleven independent variables predict the employability (dependent variable) of persons with hearing impairment.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the disposition of male and female employers towards the employment of persons with hearing impairment.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of public and private organizations towards the employment of persons with hearing impairment

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design to investigate the determinant of employability of persons with hearing impairment in some selected organization in Oyo State, the participants are the employers of labour in Oyo State. The sample is made up of employers from some selected organizations in Oyo State. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the organizations used for the study. They were both private and public organizations.

A determinant of employment questionnaire (DEQ) was used to gather the data for this study. It consists of a set of questionnaires, made up of part "A" and "B". Section A contains demographic data on department, sex, age, designation and education qualification of employees. the section also consist of eleven factors that can be considered in employing persons with hearing impairment and Section B consists of 12 question items with a likert scale specifically designed to allow participants to respond accordingly to the question items.

They include:

SA	-	Strongly agree
A	-	Agree
SD	-	Strongly disagree
D	-	Disagree

Descriptive statistics of multiple regressions was used to answer the research question and t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section is discussed under the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables?

	β	Se(b)	Beta	T-value	P	Remarks
Age	2.504	1.088	0.302	2.301	0.024	Sig
Severity of hearing loss	2.194	0.890	0.261	2.467	0.015	Sig
Sex	- 2.657	1.374	- 0.246	1.934	0.050	Sig
Social/psychological adjustment	- 2.044	0.887	- 0.255	2.303	0.023	Sig
Communication	- 1.263	0.882	- 0.157	1.432	0.155	NS
Absence of other disability	- 1.044	0.996	- 0.111	1.648	0.297	NS
Work experience	- 0.664	0.900	- 0.080	0.738	0.462	NS
Self-esteem	- 3.326	1.032	- 0.038	0.316	0.753	NS
Technical skills	- 0.180	0.931	- 0.023	0.194	0.847	NS
Marital status	- 0.051	1.058	- 0.005	0.049	0.961	NS
Qualification	- 0.023	- 0.970	- 0.003	0.024	0.981	NS

Table 1 reveals the relative contributions of the eleven independent variables to the dependent variables, expressed as beta weights. The partial correlation coefficient of sex, social and psychological adjustment, communication and absence of others forms of disability, work experience, self esteem, technical skills, marital status and qualification impacted negatively on the employability of the bearing impaired.

The most important determinant of employability, skills for persons with hearing impairment, are age, sex, severity of hearing

impairment social and psychological adjustment. Using the standardized regression coefficients to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables as explanation of the dependent variable, age ($\beta=2.504$, $t=2.301$, $P=0.024$) is the most impotent contributor to the prediction followed by severity of hearing impairment condition ($\beta=2.194$, $t=1.432$, $P=0.155$). Sex ($\beta=2.657$, $t=1.936$, $P=0.050$), social and psychological adjustment ($\beta=2.044$, $t=1.432$, $P=0.023$), communication ($\beta=1.263$, $t=1.432$, $P=0.155$), absence of other forms of disability ($\beta=1.044$, $t=0.048$, $P=0.297$) work experience ($\beta=-0.664$, $t=0.738$, $P=0.462$), self esteem ($\beta=0.326$, $t=0.316$, $P=0.753$), technical skills ($\beta=0.180$, $t=0.194$, $P=0.847$), marital status ($\beta=-0.051$, $t=0.049$, $P=0.761$), and qualification ($\beta=-0.023$, $t=0.024$, $P=0.981$) in that order.

Research Question Two: To what extent can the eleven independent variables predict the (dependent variable) employability of persons with hearing impairment?

Table 2 composite contribution of the independent variable (X_1-X_{11}) to the dependent variable (X_{12})

MULTIPLE R	R ₂	ADJUSTED r ₂	STD EMR OF ESTIMATE
0.44	0.198	0.107	3.7896

Source of Variation	OF	SS	MS	RATIO	P	Remarks
Regression	11	346.44	31.49	2.193	0.021	Sig
Residual	98	1407.38	14.36			
Total	109	1753.82				

Table 2 shows that the prediction of all the eleven independent variables to the dependent variable. It will be observed that the employability of persons with hearing impairment correlated positively with the two predictor variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation[®] of 0.444, though weak a multiple R₂ of 0.198. This means that 19.8% of the variance in the employability of persons with hearing impairment is accounted for by all the eleven predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution or the prediction is tested at $P<0.05$ using the F-ratio at the degree of freedom (df 11, 98). The table also shows that the

analysis of variance for the regression yielded on f-ratio of 2.193 (significant at 0.05 level) $F^{11/98} = 2.193$, $P < 0.05$. This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant. In other words, all the variables will predict the employability of persons with hearing impairment when taken together.

Table 3: T- test showing the difference in the attitude of public and private organizations towards the employment of persons with hearing impairment

Status	N	df	X	T	P	Remarks
Public Org	92	108	31.80	0.454	0.651	NS
Private Org	18		31.33			

The result from table 3 show that $t=0.97$, $df = 108$, and $P=0.651$. Since $(P)=0.651 > 0.05$ it implies that there is no significant difference in the attitude public and private organization towards the employment of persons with hearing impairment.

Table 4 = T-test showing the difference in ht disposition of male and female employers towards the employment of person with hearing impairment.

Sex	N	df	X	S	T	P	Remarks
Male	74	108	31.59	3.74	0.496	0.621	NS
Female	36		32.00				

The result from table 4 shows that $t=0.496$, $df=108$ and $P=0.621$, $1 > 0.05$. This implies that there is no significant difference in the disposition of male and female employers towards the employment.

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that the major determinants of employability of persons with hearing impairment are sex, severity of hearing impairment, social and psychological adjustment.

Though, through the finding all other variables identified will predict the employability when taken together. This is supported by the studies of Ramsell 1978, Johnson 2001-2002, Smith 2007, Obani 2003.

Also the findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the attitude of public and private organizations towards employment of persons with hearing impairment.

Further it was also discovered that there was no significant difference in the disposition of female and male employers toward employment of persons with hearing impairment. These findings could be attributed to societal belief towards persons with disabilities. Society creates additional handicap for persons with disabilities through their belief, stereotypes and prejudice. The employers of labour both private and public organization, female or male are within the society. The finding is supported by Quigley and Paul, 1990. Moores 2001, Adediran 2006, Hasse 2010.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The curricula for students with hearing impairment should include basic skills of employability to make them marketable and competitive. It is recommended that basic skills such as those listed below should be learnt. These are:
 - (a) career awareness;
 - (b) job seeking and application;
 - (c) basic literacy skills;
 - (d) social interpersonal communication;
 - (e) job survival and advancement skills; and
 - (f) decision making skills
2. There should be a well planned awareness and career education programmes as an integral part of education of persons with hearing disabilities so as to allow them acquire basic skill for employability.
3. Special needs employment scheme should be designed by Federal, State and Local Governments to encourage

persons with special needs to be gainfully employed rather than becoming dependant.

4. There should be adequate public awareness about hearing disabilities and the needs of persons with hearing impairment in a work place.
5. The existing laws backing the employment of persons with disabilities must be enforced and adequate accommodation should be provided in the working place.
6. Persons with hearing impairment should not be restricted to any particular employment; instead they should be encouraged to take up professions that they are interested in.
7. There should be provision of rehabilitation and counseling services for persons with hearing impairment to address the psychological and adjustment issues involved in hearing loss.

Finally, Federal Government should promulgate a law mandating all employers of labour to give a certain percentage of employment to qualified persons with hearing impairment applicant.

Conclusion

The study examined the determinant of employability of persons with hearing impairment. The study discovered that the age, severity of hearing impairment, sex and psychological adjustment are the major determinants of employability of person with hearing impairment. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the curricular for students with hearing impairment should include basic skills of employability to make them more marketable and competitive. Moreover, there should be provision of rehabilitation and counseling services for persons with hearing impairment in schools and rehabilitation centres to address the psychological and adjustment issues involved in hearing loss.

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