

A Study on Emotional Competence Development Through Targeted Interventions Among Hearing and Speech Impaired Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the development of emotional competence through targeted interventions among hearing and speech impaired adolescents. Emotional competence including self-awareness, empathy, adaptability, motivation, and social skills is a vital component of psychological growth, especially for adolescents with communication disabilities who often face emotional and social challenges. This quasi-experimental research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a specially designed intervention package developed to enhance emotional intelligence among hearing and speech impaired students enrolled in a special school in Himachal Pradesh. The intervention incorporated activities such as reflective exercises, stress management techniques, and structured peer interactions, all adapted to meet the unique needs of the participants. A sample of 30 adolescents was selected for the study, employing a pre-test and post-test control group design. Findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in the emotional competence of students who received the intervention compared to those in the control group. The results highlight the effectiveness of targeted strategies in fostering emotional well-being and social adaptability among hearing and speech impaired adolescents. The study provides valuable implications for educators, special educators, and policymakers committed to advancing inclusive and emotionally supportive learning environments.

Keywords: Emotional Competence, Hearing and Speech Impaired Adolescents, Targeted Interventions, Inclusive Education, Quasi-Experimental Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional competence is a multidimensional construct that encompasses an individual's ability to recognize, understand, express, and regulate emotions effectively in both personal and social contexts (Saarni, 1999). It is increasingly acknowledged as a critical determinant of psychological well-being, adaptive behaviour, and academic success among school-aged children and adolescents (Denham et al., 2003). For differently abled secondary school students particularly those with sensory impairments emotional competence assumes even greater significance, as these learners often encounter heightened challenges in emotional expression, peer interaction, and social adjustment (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Students with disabilities frequently experience emotional distress, social exclusion, and low self-worth due to systemic barriers and societal attitudes (UNESCO, 2020). These emotional vulnerabilities can lead to academic underachievement, behavioural issues, and limited social engagement. Therefore,

cultivating emotional competence among this population is essential for promoting inclusion, resilience, and holistic development. Despite the growing emphasis on inclusive education, many existing school programs continue to prioritize cognitive development, often overlooking the socio-emotional needs of differently abled students (Singal, 2016).

In light of these concerns, structured interventions aimed at enhancing emotional competence have gained scholarly attention. The present study examines the effectiveness of a self-fortifying intervention package, designed specifically to foster emotional growth among differently abled secondary school students. This quasi-experimental research incorporates pre- and post-test assessments to evaluate emotional development across five key domains: self-awareness, adaptability, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Coleman, 1970). The intervention consists of reflective activities, emotional regulation exercises, peer support sessions, and stress management techniques, all tailored to the developmental and contextual needs of learners with disabilities.

By addressing emotional competence as a core component of inclusive education, this study aims to contribute empirical evidence on how targeted interventions can promote psychological empowerment, social inclusion, and improved educational experiences for differently abled learners. The findings of this research are expected to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders about the significance of integrating emotional learning frameworks within mainstream schooling systems to support equitable and holistic development for all students.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Research studies on emotional competence among school students, particularly those with disabilities, has gained momentum in recent years. Wei and Lee (2016) developed the Emotional Competency Rating Scale for young children in Taiwan using a cross-sectional design and found that emotional competence improved with age, and that girls consistently outperformed boys in several emotional domains. Dahiya and Kanta (2017) examined the correlation between academic achievement and emotional competence, learning style, and academic anxiety among 9th-grade students. Their descriptive survey revealed a positive relationship between emotional competence and academic success. Sonia (2020) conducted an experimental study to assess the effect of cooperative learning on emotional competence, scholastic achievement, and academic stress. While the study found no significant difference in emotional competence between the control and experimental groups prior to intervention, it emphasized the need for further research in diverse educational settings. Kumari (2021) explored scholastic achievement and self-efficacy among secondary school students in relation to emotional competence, finding that students with higher emotional competence performed better academically, though no significant interaction was found between emotional competence, gender, and location. Upadhyay (2021) carried out a comparative study of emotional competence and adjustment between differently abled and normal students. Using two-way ANOVA, the study reported average emotional competence levels across groups, with no significant gender differences among differently abled students. Upadhyay also suggested that future research should employ experimental designs to assess the impact of interventions like yoga, meditation, and counselling on emotional maturity and adaptability. Collectively, these studies underscore the critical role of emotional competence in students' academic and social development, while highlighting the scope for further experimental investigations across varied educational contexts.

3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Emotional competence plays a vital role in the academic success, social integration, and psychological well-being of differently abled secondary school students. Despite growing emphasis on inclusive education, the emotional needs of these students often remain overlooked in both special and mainstream schools. Barriers such as social stigma, peer exclusion, and limited emotional support hinder their ability to manage emotions effectively. Studies have shown that students with disabilities generally possess average or below-average emotional competence and are at risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties if unaddressed (Upadhyay, 2021; Sonia, 2020). While earlier research has focused on descriptive or correlational analyses, there is limited experimental evidence on the effectiveness of structured emotional interventions, especially for hearing and speech-impaired learners (Kumari, 2021; Dahiya & Kanta, 2017).

This study addresses that gap by evaluating a self-fortifying intervention aimed at enhancing emotional skills and psychological resilience. Its findings are expected to support educators, counsellors, and policymakers in creating emotionally supportive learning environments. The study aligns with the inclusive vision of the NEP 2020 and the RPwD Act 2016, aiming to empower disabled students both academically and emotionally.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study the Significant difference in mean gain scores on the Emotional Competence of Disabled Secondary School Students between Control and Experimental Group.

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There will be Significant difference in mean gain scores on the Emotional Competence of Disabled Secondary School Students between Control and Experimental Group.

6. METHODOLOGY SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample for the present study comprised a total of 30 hearing and speech impaired students selected from a special school located in District Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. The sample was divided into two groups using a quasi-experimental design with a non-randomized pre-test and post-test control group format. The experimental group consisted of 14 students from Class 10th, who were administered the self-designed, targeted intervention program aimed at developing emotional competence. The control group comprised 16 students from Class 9th, who did not receive any intervention during the study period but continued with their regular academic routine. The intervention was implemented over a structured time frame, with both pre-test and post-test assessments conducted to measure changes in emotional competence.

7. PROCEDURE AND DATA COLLECTION TOOL USED

The study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test control group design. The Emotional Competence Scale by S. Dahiya and S. Gahlawat (2018) was used to measure emotional competence among hearing and speech impaired students. Pre-tests were administered to both groups before the intervention. The experimental group received a four-week targeted intervention comprising emotional awareness activities, empathy tasks, stress management, and peer interaction strategies. The control group continued with regular academic activities and did not receive any emotional competence training.

After four weeks, post-tests were administered to both groups using the same scale. The data were analysed using the t-test to determine the effectiveness of the intervention in improving emotional competence.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In order to study the effect of targeted interventions on emotional competence among hearing and speech impaired adolescents, Mean, S.D. and t-value were computed to test the significance of difference in mean gain scores between Control and Experimental Group. The summary of the results is given in table 1 and figure 1 as under:

Table 1

Comparison between the mean gain scores on the Emotional Competence among hearing and speech impaired adolescents between Control and Experimental Group.

Group	N	Mean Gain Score	SD (Gain)	SE _D	t-value
Experimental	14	22.50	17.65		
Control	16	4.56	18.83	6.66	2.69*

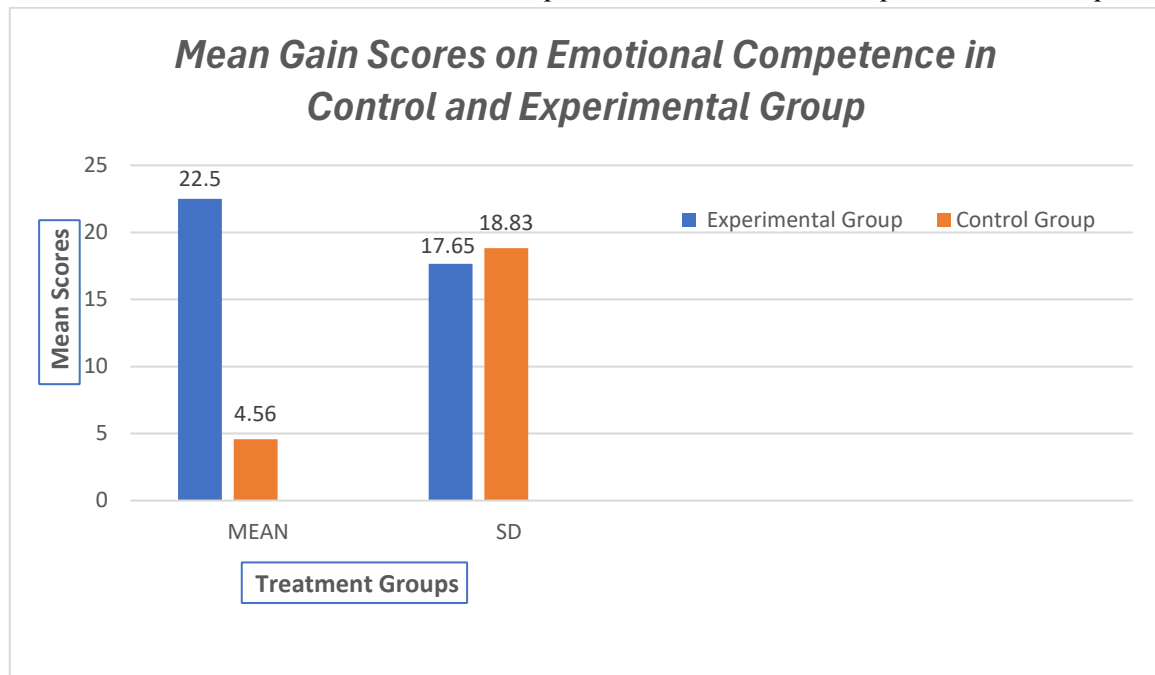
***Indicated the t-value, significant at level of significance 0.05**

The data presented in Table 1 clearly indicates a significant difference in the mean gain scores of emotional competences between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, which received the targeted interventions, showed a mean gain score of 22.50, while the control group showed a considerably lower mean gain of 4.56. The standard deviations of the gain scores were 17.65 for the experimental group and 18.83 for the control group. The calculated standard error of difference (SE_D) between the two means was 6.66, and the resulting t-value was 2.69. the calculated t-value at df 28 is 2.69 which is significant at the 0.05 level. Hence the hypothesis which states that “**There will be Significant difference in mean gain scores on the Emotional Competence of Disabled Secondary School Students between Control and Experimental Group**” stand accepted.

Further, on the basis of mean scores (Table 1), it is clear that class 10th i.e. experimental group gained more scores on Emotional Competence in Experimental Group than Control Group. (Figure 1)

Figure 1.

Mean Gain Scores on Emotional Competence in Control and Experimental Group



Hence, it can be concluded from table 1, that the 10th class students belonging to Experimental Group differ significantly on the mean gain scores of Emotional Competence.

Thus, the inference can be drawn that targeted interventions had a positive and meaningful impact on the emotional competence of hearing and speech impaired students. The greater improvement observed in the experimental group supports the effectiveness of the targeted intervention in enhancing emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and social-emotional functioning among differently abled learners. These findings align with the study's objectives and provide empirical support for incorporating structured emotional learning strategies within special education settings.

9. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that the targeted intervention significantly enhanced the emotional competence of hearing and speech impaired adolescents. Students in the experimental group exhibited greater improvement in emotional skills compared to those in the control group, highlighting the effectiveness of the self-fortifying program. These results affirm the value of incorporating structured emotional development interventions in special education settings to foster emotional growth, self-regulation, and better social adjustment among differently abled students.

10. FUTURE SCOPE

The present study opens avenues for further research by applying similar interventions across diverse disability groups and educational levels. Future studies may explore long-term effects of emotional competence training and its impact on academic performance, behavioural adjustment, and peer relationships. Expanding the sample size and including government and inclusive schools could enhance generalizability. Additionally, integrating technology-based emotional learning tools may provide innovative directions for future interventions.

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