

p-ISSN : 2708-2105 | e-ISSN : 2709-9458

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gmcr

DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gmcr/.2024(IX)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX.I)



VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)

GMCR

GLOBAL MASS COMMUNICATION REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y



Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal

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Article Title

Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level

Global Mass Communication Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2015 e-ISSN: 2709-9458

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gmcr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX)

Issue: I (Winter-March 2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I)

Home Page

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Volume: IX (2024)

<https://www.gmcrjournal.com/Current-issues>

Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)

<https://www.gmcrjournal.com/Current-issues/9/1/2024>

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Abstract

This study addresses the academic barriers of students with hearing impairment at a private institution. A competent generation depends on education; however, SWHI has particular hurdles in getting higher education. Communication, socialization, curriculum, instructions, learning, and support services are examined as significant factors in academic performance. The census-sampled research examines demographics including age, gender, and disability level in 41 SWHI. The researcher uses sign language interpreters to collect data. Quantitative investigations refine SWHI views on academic impediments. Detail frequency distributions and statistical tests like t-tests reveal demographic trends and variances. Communication, socialization, curriculum adaptability, and educational structural impediments were found. Library, internet, and assistive technology reduce academic challenges, according to the study. The research intends to influence policy-making to make SWHI higher education more accessible by illuminating these complexities.

Keywords: Academic Barriers, Communication, Social Education, Sign Language Interpreters, Socialization, Support Services, Students with Hearing Impairment (SWHI), Higher Education Curriculum Adaptation.

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Pages: 92-103

DOI: 10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).07

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024\(IX-I\).08](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08)

Article link: <http://www.gmcrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gmcrjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gmcrjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rv1oIA2.pdf>

Citing Article

08	Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level						
	Author	Faisal Amjad Almas Shoaib Abdul Qudoos		DOI	10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08		
Pages	92-103	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	I
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Amjad, F., Shoaib, A., & Qudoos, A. (2024). Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level. <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> , IX(I), 92103. https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08					
	CHICAGO	Amjad, Faisal, Almas Shoaib, and Abdul Qudoos. 2024. "Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level." <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> IX (I):92103. doi: 10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08.					
	HARVARD	AMJAD, F., SHOAIB, A. & QUDOOS, A. 2024. Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level. <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> , IX, 92103.					
	MHRA	Amjad, Faisal, Almas Shoaib, and Abdul Qudoos. 2024. 'Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level', <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> , IX: 92103.					
	MLA	Amjad, Faisal, Almas Shoaib, and Abdul Qudoos. "Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level." <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> IX.I (2024): 92103. Print.					
	OXFORD	Amjad, Faisal, Shoaib, Almas, and Qudoos, Abdul (2024), 'Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level', <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> , IX (I), 92103.					
TURABIAN	Amjad, Faisal, Almas Shoaib, and Abdul Qudoos. "Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level." <i>Global Mass Communication Review</i> IX, no. I (2024): 92103. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08 .						



Global Mass Communication Review

www.gmcjournal.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmcr>



Pages: 92-103

URL: [https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024\(IX-I\).08](https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024(IX-I).08)

Doi: 10.31703/gpessr.2024(IX-I).08



Title

Academic Barriers of Students with Hearing Impairment at the Undergraduate Level

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Abstract

This study addresses the academic barriers of students with hearing impairment at a private institution. A competent generation depends on education; however, SWHI has particular hurdles in getting higher education. Communication, socialization, curriculum, instructions, learning, and support services are examined as significant factors in academic performance. The census-sampled research examines demographics including age, gender, and disability level in 41 SWHI. The researcher uses sign language interpreters to collect data. Quantitative investigations refine SWHI views on academic impediments. Detail frequency distributions and statistical tests like t-tests reveal demographic trends and variances. Communication, socialization, curriculum adaptability, and educational structural impediments were found. Library, internet, and assistive technology reduce academic challenges, according to the study. The research intends to influence policy-making to make SWHI higher education more accessible by illuminating these complexities.

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Keywords:

[Academic Barriers, Communication, Social Education, Sign Language Interpreters, Socialization, Support Services, Students with Hearing Impairment \(SWHI\), Higher Education Curriculum Adaptation](#)

Introduction

Education is the basic right of every human being living in this world, the deaf community is also a big part of our society, and education is the basic

right of this community (Afzaal et al., 2023a). Hassanzadeh and Nikkhoo (2019) reported that education is one of the basic human rights. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) leads to compulsory education for all children and is signed into law to



improve the academic achievement of all students. It is a fact that some institutions, departments, and people are trying to make the education of hearing-impaired students more social, modern, and accessible, but at the same time, these students still face many obstacles to getting higher education (Burke, 2021)

In the 21st century, the internationalization of higher education is nothing new. UNESCO (2020) reported that over the past twenty years, the overall Higher Education (HE) registration rate has almost doubled worldwide, from 19% to 38% between 2000 and 2018. Currently, the number of registered students in tertiary education is 38%. However, it should also be noted that Differences in higher education enrollment and graduation rates have also been observed (Burke & University, 2019). It is also important that countries pay attention to dropout rates and growth rates, not only high graduation rates that measure this process, but also high graduation rates that reflect these are the results of their efforts (UNESCO, 2020).

Some types of academic barriers are faced by disabled students especially hearing-impaired to get higher education at the undergraduate level in the universities. They feel reluctant to interact with other students during their studies and lack social interaction. Curriculum is one of the major obstacles in facilitating the development of a more social system in any educational setup (Juvonen, Lessard, Rastogi, Schacter, & Smith, 2019). Curriculum is a major constraint in any educational setup, where facilities are being provided for holistic system development (Dua and Dua, 2017). The curriculum is also a hurdle for students coming to this level as they cannot cover the entire syllabus like the public. Social education works to identify and remove all barriers to learning and covers everything from curriculum to teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2022).

Socioeconomic status is also a factor in academic achievements for Students with Hearing Impairment (SWHI). Sometimes they don't understand teaching instructions or strategies which are used by the teachers because these instructions are based on general students not fit for them. Sometimes these are not learning like normal people; however, they have to face many difficulties while learning. Due to a lack of

knowledge, these people are not even able to get support services any kind of financial support, or any other help (Giebel et al., 2021). Physical, mental, cultural, emotional, or social factors can create barriers to learning that prevent knowledge from achieving its learning goals. When it comes to learning, our physical location plays an important role in reducing or promoting common learning barriers. While barriers to learning are not localized to specific locations, they can pop up almost anywhere a student is trying to learn or do something new (Rice, 2021).

The overall expansion of HEIs and departments in the period of the last two decades is also evident in Pakistan. However, the penetration rate of Pakistan is less than ideal compared to the penetration rate of developed countries (TARIQ, KHAN, RAHMAN, & Business, 2020). In 2002, the level of access to higher education for 18-23-year-olds in Pakistan was just 2.2 percent. Substantial efforts have been made to increase the penetration rate. The HEC opened numerous new universities and the access level was raised to 4.7%. In 2009, the government introduced a new countrywide schooling coverage and set a target of 10 percent admission to using 2015 (Ministry of Professional and Technical Training, 2011). Pakistan is very near to achieving this aim as its tertiary education rate reached 9.5% in 2014 (Schwab & Sala-i-Martin, 2015).

The rationale of the study was to find out the academic barriers, which are faced by students with hearing impairment (SWHI) and the other purpose of this study was to investigate the academic enablers for the successful education of SWHI at the undergraduate level. This study was conducted to highlight the academic barriers or hurdles faced by students who have hearing deficiency while they are studying at the undergraduate at university levels (Kisanga & Development, 2020). Various kinds of research highlighted the connection between the barriers and enablers of deaf students at higher education levels.

Considering the above debate, it can be said that students with hearing impairment (SWHI) face many types of academic barriers and enablers to succeed in their advanced education at the undergraduate level in the universities. The

objective of this study is to investigate the academic barriers faced by students with hearing impairment at the undergraduate level. And to explore the difference among the responses of students with hearing impairment based on gender regarding academic barriers

Literature Review

The power of education can be gauged from the fact that it is preparing a generation of a nation to attain a nation of broad competence and character (Anisah, 2019). Education is a tool that provides humans with new information, talents, strategies, and records, enabling them to recognize their rights and responsibilities closer to their circle of relatives, society, and kingdoms (Afzaal et al., 2023). Hassanzadeh and Nikkhoo (2019) reported that literateness is the right of each human to live in this world. No Child Left Behind Act (2001) emphasizes the compulsion of education for all children and is signed to improve the academic achievement of all students. The delivery of education as a social welfare service serves as an attempt to make sure that the listening impaired are constrained in terms of privileges and possibilities to emerge as efficient, employable, and obtain a successful and impartial upcoming (Mantey, Cobbina and Hamenoo, 2017). According to Awab-us-Sibtain et al. (2019), that study mentions that participation in higher education is considered an important debate in sociology, as the growth of higher education is directly associated with the financial wealth of a nation (Douglass, 2015). The role of education in unbreakable development is to inspire learning for long-term survival through good education (Fazil et al, 2019).

Delivering education to disabled persons does not mean insertion them in an educational institute, it is necessary to guarantee that steps are taken to support their learning, particularly if an institute practices social education. Therefore, SWHI is extraordinary and their education can only be enabled if fences to education are addressed by the adoption of enablers that improve their education (Kumatongo and Muzata, 2021). Education in higher education at the undergraduate level is a recent invention by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan(Hoodbhoy, 2021). Hearing Impaired Students, Physically Handicapped

Students, and Visually Impaired Students are welcomed in many higher educational institutions in Punjab. According to Hameed and Quratul-Ain (2020), as various studies have indicated, SWHI faces several problems such as obtaining support for enrollment, diverse education, public adjustment, and modification of evaluation processes. Likewise, there are very few higher education chances obtainable to SWHI at a limited number of institutions. Many studies show, there are many hurdles to SWHI (Muzata, 2017; Muzata& Mahlo, 2019; Simalalo, 2017).

It is also important to enable students with hearing impairment (SWHI) to engage in effective communication and social interaction with fellow students as well as their teachers (Albash, 2023). Because of hearing loss, deaf persons use other different means of communication to talk to other personnel the most animated 19 and unconstrained of which is debatably sign language. It is a system of visual signs that consists of a specific sequence, location, path, and hand movements as well as fingers, and facial expressions(Oudah, Al-Naji, & Chahl, 2020). Countrywide sign languages have set up learning techniques and some corporations support, broaden, and teach them. Maximum deaf human beings discover sign language as a relaxed and dependable way of verbal exchange, which leads to identification with the language and the humans of the language (Kompara, Hölbl&Welzer, 2021).

Sign language is formed in a 3- dimensional space that includes many structures and contributions, including hand movements, hand placement, orientation and orientation, and facial and body expressions. (Escudeiro et al., 2013). Prejudice is a major barrier to hearing-impaired students' communication, so educating these students and teaching them about Deaf culture can prove very beneficial to an asocial environment (Frumos and Rosu, 2019). Independently developing these skills and therefore literacy delay is a significant factor in the experience of these students (Barnes, 2019). Alterations in educational policies as well as in educational practices lead to the increasing enrollment of SWHI in higher education 20 (HESA, 2016). Students who self-identify as "deaf" can speak via ASL and/or lip and voice examination for themselves(Jun 2022).

When students go to class, these students should be expected to listen carefully to the teacher during the lecture and be asked to cooperate, including discussion, when they sit in small groups. Those contexts are challenging for the deaf pupil, as they require information on instructional content material, communication, and social interaction. Even though interpretation seems to be the maximum commonly used resource to assist D/HH students, it has a few boundaries, each cognitive and social. Comparable results have been originated in other studies. Better training packages do now not always offer deaf college students all opportunities and aid services for academic inclusion (Vincent & Chiwandire, 2019). Further, deaf students additionally feel a want for social inclusion (Frumos and Rosu, 2019). Powell et al. (2014) reported, that SWHI have trouble in educational as well as in social interfaces, and they have an assured degree of categorization in the zone of social interface with hearing nobles. Institutes of HE in Pakistan have taken steps to offer admissions to SWHI in different programs but unfortunately not ready to meet the academic and social needs of these students (Hameed and Quratul-Ain, 2020).

The quality of higher education is an additional significant feature to consider when debating the issue of students with hearing impairment (SWHI). Quality issues include physical facilities as well as flexible curriculum and teaching procedures. In the education system, students occurring in the educational procedure (Kelly, 2009) generally define curriculum as the entirety of experiences. Teachers need to deliver information about SWHI and sign language within the curriculum, in social classrooms (Hameed and Quratul-Ain, 2020). Safder et al. (2012) conducted a research study in which they discovered that there are so many curricular issues related to curriculum adaptation as well as modification to meet the unique needs of SWHI. The issue about quality contains facilities for physical and curriculum with flexibility as well as instruction (Hamid & Quratul Ain, 2020). The major historical, political, and philosophical tendencies of society have always been reflected in the curriculum development in education (Abidin, Murtadlo, & Multiculturalism, 2020).

Hearing-impaired students face many difficulties regarding the teaching methods used by educators in the classroom. There are many barriers to social education, such as teachers' speed of talking throughout lectures, trouble in contributing to deliberations, and questions answering. Teachers and their communication are the finest when interpreters are present to assist them (Safder, Akhtar, Fatima, and Malik, 2012). A mixture of conventional communication, sign language, lip reading, and assistive technologies can catch up on challenges, allowing the children to participate in classroom discussions and immerse themselves in learning. Most hearing-impaired students read the speech to approximately an extent. Therefore, educators should see to the students when they talk. You should speak slowly, clearly, and loudly to help them.

A learner may face one or more barriers during his education while systemic barriers to learning are barriers created by the educational system itself (Lavrijsen & Nicaise, 2019). When a child with a disability experiences his or her disability primarily during the learning process, he or she will need to adjust to his or her disability at many levels to reach his or her full potential. Hearing-impaired students sometimes face many barriers to education at the college or university level, and the barriers to learning are not only internal, but the learning skills of these students are very important. Deaf learners have a very limited vocabulary, which makes them unable to easily engage in incidental learning (Barcroft et al., 2021). Inadequate learning spaces can make implementation of IEPs difficult (Mapepa and Magano, 2018).

Supportive services are wanted to address learning barriers for learners who are D/HH. These include the provision of appropriate teaching materials such as visual materials for deaf learners including pictures, diagrams, and artworks to improve their comprehension. Differentiation helps create Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with learning disabilities. Additionally, evaluations should be tailored to each student's challenges (Mapepa and Magano, 2018).

Table 1*Comparing Past and Current Research: SWHI Academic Barriers in Higher Education*

Aspect of Comparison	Past Research Works	Current Study
Focus of Study	Previous study emphasizes the necessity for education for everyone, including the disabled. Education and reading are universal rights. (Anisah, 2019; Hassanzadeh&Nikkhoo, 2019; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).	This study addresses academic challenges for private university undergraduate SWHI students. It investigates higher education SWHI issues in communication, socialization, curriculum, teaching, learning, and support services.
Enrollment Challenges	and SWHI confronts enrollment, diversified education, public adjustment, and assessment process changes in higher education (Hameed &Quratul-Ain, 2020; Muzata, 2017; Simalalo, 2017).	This study analyses higher education SWHI issues such as communication, socialization, curriculum, teaching, learning, and support services. It identifies domain-specific SWHI response frequency distribution issues.
Communication Methods	Research shows that sign language is essential for hearing-impaired people (Kompara, Hölbl&Welzer, 2021). Education systems should promote sign language acquisition and usage (Escudeiro et al., 2013; Frumos and Rosu, 2019).	SWHI communication is crucial, hence this research uses sign language interpreters to gather data. Sign language is essential for SWHI communication, and it seeks to identify communication hurdles and views.
Quality of Higher Education	Prior studies on SWHI higher education quality include physical facilities, flexible curriculum, and teaching methods (Kelly, 2009; Safder et al., 2012).	This research investigates SWHI higher education quality by examining curriculum, teaching, and support service obstacles. It examines students' views on curricular accessibility, contentment, and support services.
Barriers to Learning	Hearing-impaired pupils have obstacles in instructional approaches, classroom discussions, and question responses (Safder, Akhtar, Fatima, and Malik, 2012).	This research examines SWHI higher education challenges in communication, social interaction, curriculum adaptability, and educational systemic barriers
Supportive Services	Prior research has shown that deaf learners require supported services such as instructional materials, differentiation, and tailored evaluations (Mapepa and Magano, 2018).	This research recognizes the usefulness of SWHI support services in overcoming academic difficulties. It evaluates library, internet, assistive technology, and teacher support services.

Methodology

Research design is not associated with any precise approach of records series or any precise sort of statistics. While designing studies it's miles critical to identify the form of evidence used to fairly solve the study query (Akhtar, 2016). Quantitative studies have been adapted from descriptive study settings to the researcher's approach to teaching students with hearing impairment (SWHI) at the undergraduate level to meet their academic barriers. Broadening the study design approach to make choices about overall aspirations and perspectives, the type of research setting that will be used, the method of data collection, sampling strategy or criteria for selecting topics, information gathering methods, and fact-checking techniques. Research design is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted.

The sample size of this research was comprised of 41 SWHI who were enrolled in a private university and getting an education at the undergraduate level and a census sampling technique was used to conduct this study (ul Ain, 2021). A census sampling technique was used to conduct this study. According to BYJU (2023), the census method is a system of statistical counting in which all the individuals of the populace are analyzed. Population refers to the gathering of all observations underneath the situation. For example, if you need to research to discover students' opinions about your school's facilities, all the students in the institute will form the 'population' component for research. Researchers can obtain high-quality data 56 that can be used to develop and test hypotheses in a specific field by selecting and designing a relevant instrument. Additionally, the use of reliable and valid quantitative research instruments can increase the credibility of research findings and help develop new research questions and hypotheses (Pentang, 2023). The instrument was comprised of six academic barriers i.e. communication, socialization, curriculum, instructions, learning, and support services (Tuiloma, Graham, Arias, & Caicedo, 2022).

The data was collected through instruments,

which were developed by the researcher under the guidelines of the supervisor. The researcher hired a sign language interpreter who interpreted questionnaires in sign language for the SWHI to get valuable answers about their academic barriers and enablers at the undergraduate level. The instruments contain two parts; the first part consists of demographic information about SWHI such as age, gender, semester, and impairment level and the other part of the instruments consists of statements regarding academic barriers. After the collection of the distributed questionnaires, the data was entered into SPSS and coded. Numerical coding was assigned to each variable for the easy analysis of data. Collected data was analyzed through SPSS and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and find out the results about academic barriers, which are faced by the SWHI at the undergraduate level. All measurements or results were shown in tabular forms and reported accordingly. Descriptive statistics were applied to find out the frequencies of the responses given by SWHI regarding academic barriers.

Results and Discussion

This study uses descriptive and inferential statistics to examine records. While descriptive records summarise statistics, inferential facts derive inferences and anticipate population behaviour from sample data. This study analyses academic hurdles to undergraduate performance for students with hearing impairment (SWHI) using frequency, mean, and standard deviation. Mean and standard deviation show the data's central tendency and variability, whereas frequencies show how frequently specific behaviours or traits occur. To compare the difference between the results of male and female respondents and other demographic, a t-test was applied by the researcher which is a type of inferential statistics to compare the means of two groups.

The gender-based SWHI frequency distribution shows 18 girls (43.9%) and 23 men (56.1%). Percentages represent gender distribution in the 41-person sample. SWHI distribution by gender is summarized in this presentation.

Table 2

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	18	43.9
Male	23	56.1
Total	41	100.0

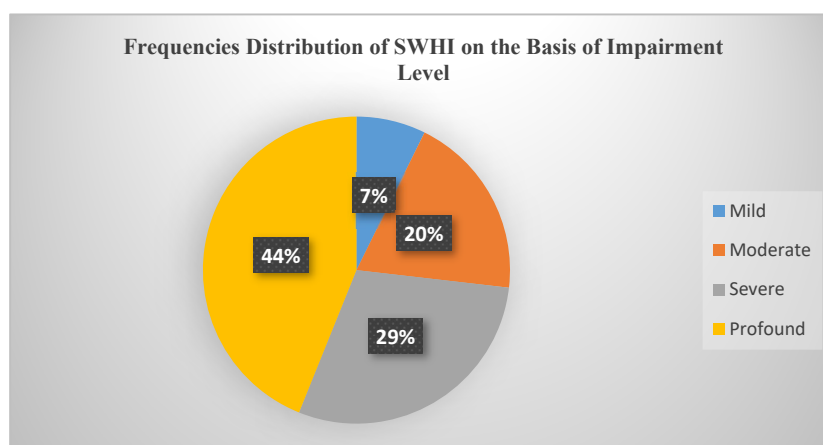
SWHI frequency distribution by age group is shown in the table. The 18-20 group has 10 (24.4%), the 21-23 group 15 (36.6%), and the 24-26 group 16 (39.0%). The 41-person sample provides a complete SWHI distribution by age.

Table 3

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	10	24.4
21-23	15	36.6
24-26	16	39.0
Total	21	100.0

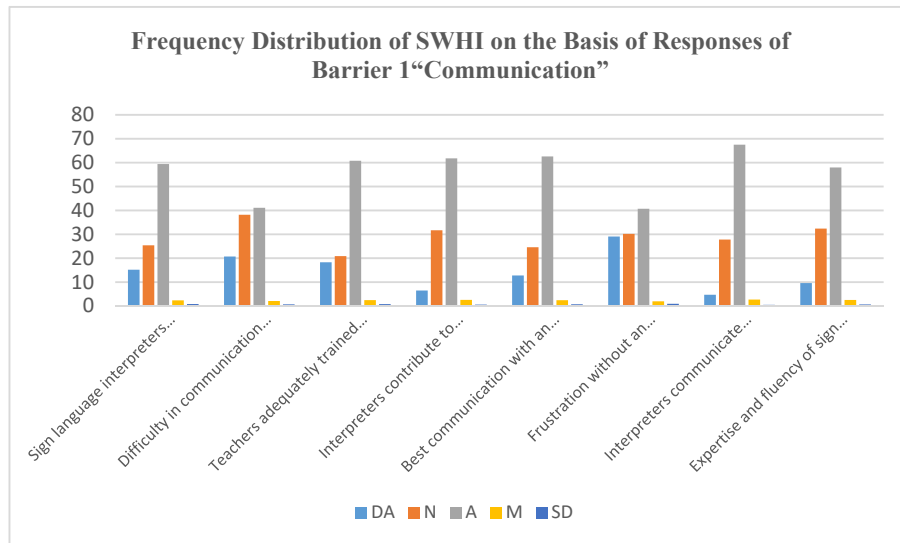
This chart shows SWHI frequency distribution by impairment level. In the 41-person sample, 3 (7.3%) had light impairment, 8 (19.5%) moderate impairment, 12 (29.3%) severe impairment, and 18 (43.9%) profound disability. This breakdown shows SWHI prevalence across impairment levels.

Figure 1



The chart shows SWHI frequency distribution by impairment level. It shows that 3 (7.3%) of 41 respondents had a light impairment, 8 (19.5%) moderate impairment, 12 (29.3%) severe impairment, and 18 (43.9%) profound disability.

Figure 2



Student Academic Barriers: Frequency Distribution of SWHI for "Communication" is shown in Table 4.5. The table evaluates sign language interpreters, teacher training, and communication efficacy using

eight assertions. Disagree (DA), Neither (N), Agree (A), Moderately Agree (M), and Strongly Disagree (SD) responses reveal students' perspectives of academic communication obstacles.

Table 4

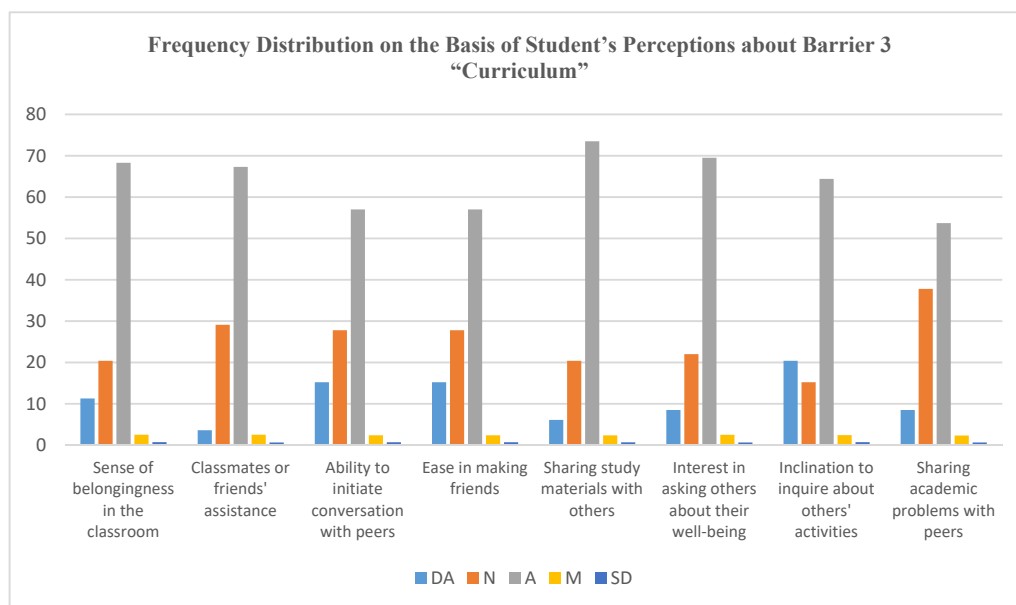
Frequency Distribution Based on Student's Perceptions of Barrier 2 "Socialization"

S. No	Statement	DA	N	A	M	SD
1	Sign language interpreters are actively involved	15.2	25.4	59.4	2.35	0.832
2	Difficulty without an interpreter in communication	20.7	38.2	41.1	2.10	0.701
3	Teachers adequately trained for sign language	18.3	20.9	60.8	2.45	0.778
4	Interpreters contribute to easing communication	6.5	31.7	61.8	2.57	0.612
5	Best communication with an interpreter	12.8	24.6	62.6	2.42	0.715
6	Frustration without an interpreter in activities	29.1	30.2	40.7	1.95	0.904
7	Interpreters communicate questions to teachers	4.7	27.8	67.5	2.70	0.511
8	Expertise and fluency of sign language interpreters	9.6	32.4	58.0	2.51	0.665

The table shows a Frequency Distribution of student views of "Socialization" obstacles, notably Barrier 2. Statements (1-8) show the proportion of replies to belongingness, class help, starting talks,

creating friends, sharing study materials, showing care, and addressing academic challenges with peers. This data shows how students see academic socialization obstacles.

Figure 3



The chart shows a Frequency Distribution of student views of "Curriculum" obstacles, especially Barrier 3. Statements 1-10 show the percentage distribution of answers on topics such as specifically tailored curriculum, content satisfaction, ease of understanding, social

education needs, accessibility, and teacher training. Statement 4 shows that 7.3% disagree, 9.8% neither agree nor disagree, and 82.9% think the curriculum meets social education goals. Student opinions on curricular issues are shown by this data.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution Based on Student's Perceptions of Barrier 4 "Instructions"

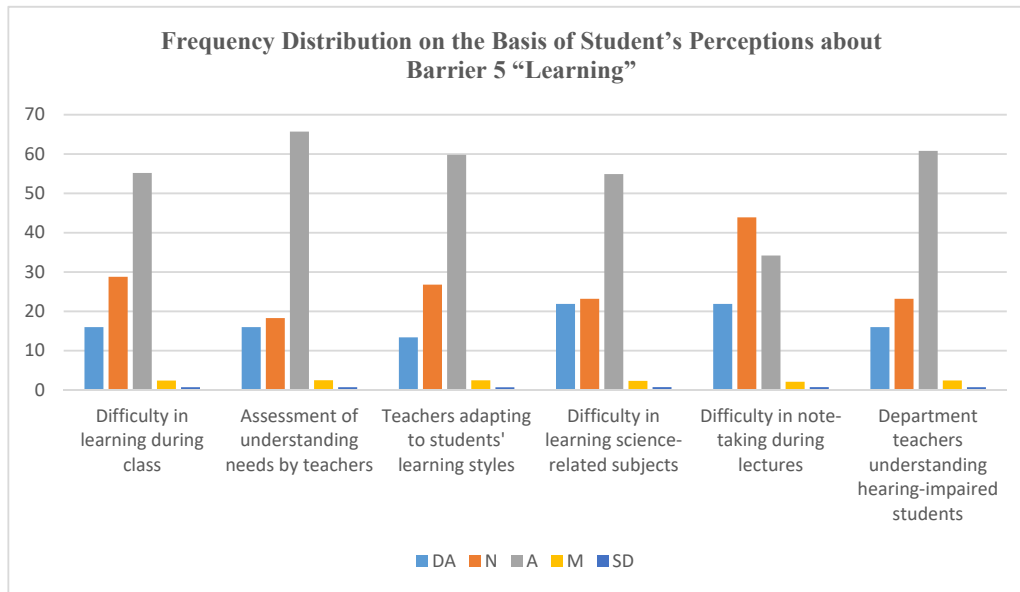
S. No	Statement	DA	N	A	M	SD
1	Availability of specially designed curriculum	6.1	24.4	69.5	2.72	0.611
2	Satisfaction with the content of the curriculum	10.2	30.2	59.6	2.59	0.624
3	Ease of understanding the curriculum	8.5	22.0	69.5	2.72	0.611
4	Fulfillment of needs for social education	8.5	13.4	78.1	2.82	0.553
5	Availability of sufficient teaching materials	6.1	26.8	67.1	2.72	0.554
6	Satisfaction with teachers trained for social curriculum	10.2	23.2	66.6	2.65	0.619
7	Accessibility of the curriculum for students	10.2	18.3	71.5	2.69	0.611
8	Delight with the content of the curriculum	8.5	22.0	69.5	2.72	0.611
9	Modification of curriculum according to needs	6.1	26.8	67.1	2.68	0.619
10	Clarity of learning goals in courses	0.0	24.4	75.6	2.87	0.395

The table shows a Frequency Distribution of student views of "Instructions," concentrating on Barrier 4. Statements (1-8) show the proportion of replies as Disagree (DA), Neither (N), Agree (A),

Moderately Agree (M), and Strongly Disagree. Statement 3 shows that 5.7% disagree, 53.5% neither agree nor disagree, and 40.8% believe that instructors teach quicker than pupils can learn. This

data shows student satisfaction and preferred help-seeking techniques for educational issues.

Figure 4



A Frequency Distribution of student views of "Learning," emphasizing Barrier 5, is shown. Statements (1-6) show the proportion of replies as Disagree (DA), Neither (N), Agree (A), Moderately Agree (M), and Strongly Disagree. Statement 4

demonstrates that 21.9% disagree, 23.2% neither agree nor disagree, and 54.9% agree that scientific courses are challenging. This data shows students' views on learning problems, including difficulty and instructor comprehension.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution Based on Student's Perceptions of Barrier 6 "Support Services"

S. No	Statement	DA	N	A	M	SD
1	Access to library	6.1	42.9	51.0	2.49	0.570
2	Access to the internet in the computer lab	15.2	11.3	73.5	2.63	0.741
3	Access to assistive technology like hearing aids	8.5	18.3	73.2	2.71	0.617
4	Ease of interaction with the sports instructor	15.2	12.2	72.6	2.59	0.744
5	Availability of support staff for hearing-impaired students	15.2	23.2	61.6	2.49	0.736

The table shows a Frequency Distribution of student views of "Support Services," at Barrier 6. Statements (1-5) indicate the proportion of replies as Disagree (DA), Neither (N), Agree (A), Moderately Agree (M), and Strongly Disagree. Statement 3 shows that 8.5% disagree, 18.3% neither agree nor disagree, and 73.2% agree they wear hearing aids. This data shows students' views on hearing-impaired student assistance programs.

Conclusion

This study examined academic barriers for undergraduate students with hearing impairment (SWHI) at a private institution. To investigate SWHI educational issues, the study used a mixed-methods methodology with quantitative and qualitative features. The results illuminated academic hurdles in several ways. Various genders, ages, and disability degrees provided a varied view of SWHI experiences. Most individuals had considerable hearing impairment, highlighting

the specific problems of severe hearing loss. SWHI faced distinct challenges in communication, socialization, curriculum, instructions, learning, and support services, as shown by frequency distribution tables. The research revealed issues with sign language interpreters, teacher training, and communication effectiveness. Without interpreters, social activities were difficult, frustration levels were high, and successful communication required interpreters. Curriculum issues highlighted the necessity for SWHI-specific curricula, content satisfaction, accessibility, and customization. Instruction covers topics including instructional tempo, social education, and teaching materials. Students identified scientific difficulties and instructor understanding as learning impediments. SWHI had trouble with the library,

internet, assistive technology, sports instructors, and hearing-impaired student support personnel. Combining quantitative and qualitative data from sign language interpreters allowed the study to examine these scholastic hurdles. To improve undergraduate SWHI inclusion and success, the research highlighted impediments and stressed the significance of resolving them. Finally, our study may guide educational policies, interventions, and support services to make SWHI more social. Understanding these limitations is essential to building a higher education system that meets the requirements of all students, regardless of hearing ability. These observations should inform future research and interventions to improve SWHI academic achievement and well-being in higher education.

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