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DETERMENING THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS INDENTITY^a

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SUMMARY

Today, there are two main perspectives from which deafness and deaf people are perceived. First, physiological (medical) view is predominant and deafness is perceived as disability, so the child with hearing impairment who steps out of ordinary, has to learn how to speak, how to hear as better as it can (with some types of hearing aid) and has to accomplish interaction and communication with the hearing population. Second, socio-cultural view sees deaf people as part of cultural, lingual and ethnic minority. In this context identity development of deaf people is very complex and longterm process which is studied by many scientists around the world. Reviewing the research it was determined that there are lots of factors which affect the identity development of deaf and hard of hearing people, such as the hearing status (when was the hearing impairment, the degree of hearing impairment and early intervention), family environment, educational experience, the mode of communication etc. The hearing screening is the first step of diagnosis of hearing impairment which positively contributes parents adjustments to newly created situation. Scientists have determined that alongside compulsory implementation of newborn hearing screening, 50% of children doesn't get the timely diagnosis and early intervention. Deaf children are 90-92% born in hearing families. Deaf children with hearing parents that communicate verbally or orally with each other, are likely to experience deafness as a disability and will develop cultural identity of the hearing population and vice versa. Deaf children born in deaf family will use sign language and will develop cultural identity of ethnic minority and deaf people. However, between this two angles there can develop many different models and ways of identity development of deaf persons which will be considered in details. Next major factor in identity development of deaf persons is educational experience. Most of the researchers point that the type of the school which deaf person attends (regular or special) dominant way of communication (verbal language, sign language, total communication) teacher attitudes to deafness and the acceptance of hearing peers, significantly affect identity development of deaf people.

Key words: factors, identity development, deaf and hard of hearing

INTRODUCTION

Identification is a psychological process from which the person relates to other person or group it admires.

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That is the basic condition for successful socialisation of the child. Role models for identification can exist at any age. According to Ericsson there are three main meanings of identification: 1. As imitation 2. As a feeling of continuity in space and time and 3. As ego-identity which in itself gathers two first meanings, but it also exceeds them (according to Brinthpaut, 2008). Identity represents connection between psychological and behavioral answer of the individual in context of society. McIlroy and Storbeck (2010, p. 494) consider that identity "is based on that how the children internalize experiences within family and school".

Yinger (1976) stresses that ethnical identity of member of ethnical manority group is being determined on the basis of identification with "segments of the majority group, with itself or others, to have common origin and that they share segments of common culture and are involved in common activities which are important component of that culture" (as cited in Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 41).

Because the ethnical identity is very subjective feeling, even inside one ethnical group there can be many variations. As a result of that, common history, cultural customs, skin colour or language, secluded ethnical identity doesn't always have to define ethnical identity (Leigh, 2012; Rodriguez & Santiviago, 1991; Bennett, 1988). As ethnical identity, the identity of deaf people is subjective and can give the feeling of affiliation to members of the group. Lane, Pillard and Hedberg (2011) have noticed that the feeling of affiliation in Deaf culture can be strong as family bonds and can offer the sense of solidarity inside the Deaf community. What more, even as the hearing culture, the culture of the Deaf has important variations between its members (Fischer & McWhirter, 2001). The development of the identity of the Deaf national manority can depend on the feeling that the individual has inside that manority (culture).

Two main perspectives of deaf people

There are two main perspectives from which deaf person is being watched on. First, physiological or medical perspective is predominant and it experience deafness as disorder, by that means the hearing impaired child departs from normal, has to learn how to speak, how to hear better with the help of hearing aids and how to accomplish interaction and communication with the hearing population. Second, socio-cultural perspective sees deaf people as a part of cultural, lingual and ethnical manority (van Cleve & Crouch, 1989; Parasnis, 1997; Parks, 2009).

Within the dominant culture of the hearing, deafness is through history being determined on medical/pathological model. The identity of the deaf is often defined as a disability and something atypical (Bauman, 2005). As a result of that, the sense of marginalization and inferiority is implemented within the manority culture of the Deaf. McIlroy and Storneck (2010) consider that the individual that was cultured as a deaf person automatically had "the identity of the second class" (p.495).

Through the eighties, cultural movement of the Deaf was starting to get more zest, basically it chested through for the rights and dignity of deaf and hard of hearing people, within the hearing population. There has been the shift in the education of the deaf and development in socio-cultural models of deaf people who were being identified as a manority group that has its own language, values, historical framework of development,

art and culture (Parasnis, 1997; Radić-Šestić, Ostojić, Đoković, 2015). In that context, notion of the Deaf culture is being experienced as cultural community which influenced scientists view and interest in the Deaf culture, the development of the identity of deaf, as well as the theories which are related to identity development and similar concepts in relation to cultural identity of the deaf. The advocates of deafness as a culture besides the term culture, always use capital letter D-Deaf, while the small letter “d” indicates deafness as a pathology (Dolnick, 1993).

Acculturation and paradigms of identity

Notion acculturation was evolved from prefix *ad*, which should mark that the occurring changes in process of acculturation are such character that they are not being accomplished sudden and instant as other current laws, but, on the contrary they are being accomplished in a relative long period of time. The second part of the notion is derived from latin word *cultus* which in serbian language has more than one meaning: cultivation, care, growing, education and upbringing. These processes are not the thing of the moment, they are not acts, they are duration.

Acculturation and identity are two very similar notions, but they are not synonyms for aspect of human development. On the one side, acculturation can represent behavioral answer of the individual to exposure of some new culture or cultures (Leigh, 2010). For deaf person, acculturation in new culture of the Deaf usually begins in school age (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011). Acculturation – entrance to the culture of the Deaf, can allow deaf individual “to acquire and maintain aspects of the culture of the Deaf, while in the same time acquires and maintains aspects of the predominant hearing culture” (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2010, p. 338).

On the other side, identity can be defined as a psychological process in which individual identifies itself (Brinthaup, 2008) and has a feeling of affiliation to one social group (Leigh, 2012; Triandis, 1989; Teylor, 1999). Identity is interaction between the individual and other people during life (McCaw, Leigh & Marcus, 2011). As a result of that, some researchers claim that the identity is not the static internal aspect of human development – as a chronological age – but it is how it is seen or representing itself (Leigh, Marcus, Dobosh & Allen, 1998; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003), but it develops under the influence of the environment and in relation to other people (Hintermair, 2007; Taylor 1999).

Because of that acculturation and identity represent the connection between psychological and behavioral answer of the individual in the context of society. Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987) have given four proposals to category of acculturation:

Integration – when the individual respects its culture, but in the same time they include the aspects of the dominant culture. This is often called biculturalism;

Assimilation – when the individual waives off its original/authentic culture and accepts dominant culture as its own;

Separation – when the individual accepts its own culture and are withdrawing themselves from dominant culture;

Marginalisation – when the individual doesn't identify nor with its own or the dominant culture.

Diversity of deaf identity

The first researcher who was interested in identity development of the deaf is Glickman (1993). Firstly, he formulised the identity problem and developed the Scale for identity assessment of the deaf. On the basis of first research he identified four development phases of the identity of the deaf: 1. "Culturally hearing" are the deaf people who have the attitudes of the dominant hearing culture and see themselves as a persons that have hearing impairment; 2. "Culturally marginal" are not sure to which group they belong and have a confusion in relation to the world of the deaf and the hearing; 3. "Imersion identity" are relating ro "radical or militant" attitudes of the deaf; 4. "Bicultural identity" is related to the individual who are proud deaf persons integrated in a balanced way and in the hearing society.

On the foundations of Glickmans theory of identity development of the deaf, Holcomb (1997) have created seven categories of identity of the deaf persons who are based on the level of exposure of the individual to the deaf community:

Balanced bicultural identity refers to a deaf person who is feeling pleasant in both cultures, cultures of the deaf and the hearing;

Dominantly deaf bicultural identity relates to the people who are mainly involved in the deaf community, but they are also in good relations to the hearing persons;

Dominant-hearing bicultural identity refers to the people who have restricted involvness in the deaf community, but are feeling good in the company of the deaff persons;

Culturally isolated identity refers to the people who reject all connections with the deaf people;

Culturally individual identity refers to the people who prefer to communicate with deaf people as long as possible but maintain contacts with the hearing population on minimum;

Culturally marginal identity refers to the people who are not feeling well in any community, nor the deaf nor the hearing;

Culturally closed identity refers to deaf persons who didnt have a chance to meet other deaf persons and culture of the Deaf.

Bat-Chava (2000) is on the basis of the cluster analysis defined tree identities on the sample of 267 adult deaf persons. He called them cultural identity of the hearing, cultural identity of the deaf and the bicultural identity.

Although the Glickman, Holcomb and Bat-Hava have developed different callisifications of the identity of the deaf, they have similar idea about their phases of development (Maxwell-McCaw, Leigh & Marcus, 2000). Most of the deaf people (90-92%) are born in hearing families in whome they communicate and educate by verbal and oral language. There si a presense of deniel of deafness, sign language and the style of deaf people living. Then the deaf person in relation to surroundings in which it coexists identifies with the culture of the hearing. With the development of self-consciousness, especially after meeting and socializing with other deaf persons, the individual by time starts to understand that it cant communicate the same with the hearing people as it can with the deaf and then its identity becomes dissonant. With more frequent contact with the Deaf community, it experiances affirmation; changes identity introspectively

and becomes aware of the difference between the hearing culture and the Deaf culture. That would mean that the deaf persons who are born in hearing families go through four phases of identity development: 1. Identification with the hearing culture 2. Due to the problems in identification of the individual, the identity is negative 3. Because of the easier communication with the community of the Deaf, identity of the deaf develops. 4 Bicultural identity (Chen, 2014).

Factors of deaf identity development

The identity development of the deaf persons is very complex and long term process which is being researched by many scientists around the world. Reviewing the research it was determined that there are lots of factors which affect the identity development of deaf and hard of hearing people, such as the hearing status (when was the hearing impairment, the degree of hearing impairment and early intervention), family environment, educational experience and academic achievement, the mode of communication etc.

The status of hearing loss

It is considered that the status of hearing loss, apropos the time hearing impairment (prelingual or lingual period) degree of hearing impairment and early intervention affect the identity development of the deaf and hard of hearing persons (Fischer & McWhirter, 2001; Hu, 2005).

Per 1000 newborns 3 babies have hearing damage (Kurtzer-White and Lutterman, 2003). Over 90 percent of deaf children are born in hearing families who have little or no knowledge about their disability. Screening of the hearing is the first step to diagnose hearing impairment and it positively contributes the adjustment of the parents to the newly created situation. In addition to screening implementation of the hearing, it estimates that 50% of newborns doesn't get the timely diagnosis and intervention (Houston, Bradham & Guigard, 2011). Different factors can delay timely diagnosis as an absence of the testing of the newborn before it leaves the hospital, when tests give fake positive result or the testing is not been monitored by qualified personnel. Marschark (2007) highlights that the hearing impairment of children is not diagnosed by their second or third year because of the shortcomings of the hearing screening.

Possible significant delay with the start of early intervention and experts support, thus entailing the delay in determining the hearing aid and the development of language for a child after being diagnosed (Proctor, Neimeyer & Compton, 2005). Programs of early intervention educate the family, provide adequate material resources and support that helps them make a decision based on the best interests for their child (Marschark, 2007).

Table 1 *The three major types of Early Intervention programs**

Auditory-verbal / Oral-aural	Total Communication	Bilingual / Bicultural
Focuses on the use of even minimal amounts of amplified hearing to develop spontaneous speech and to process language in a natural way through auditory pathways. These programs aim to enable children with hearing impairment to learn to listen, understand spoken language and communicate through speech using their residual hearing, and in the oral-aural approach, using lip-reading as well. These programs usually place the parent in the role of primary educator.	Focuses on the use of a wide range of methods of communication including speech, lip-reading, listening, signing and finger spelling. These various methods of communication may be used alone or in combination with each other. When speech and signing are used together this is known as simultaneous communication.	Focuses on education through two languages "Signing and spoken language. Spoken language is taught as a second language via reading and writing or through sign systems representing, and speech. In many educational programs and school settings, children who are deaf or hearing-impaired may learn about the deaf community and its history, language and culture, as well as learning about the hearing community.

*Australian Government (2005)

Fischer and McWhirter (2001) have researched the connection between degree of hearing impairment and cultural identity and have found out that prelingual deaf persons are more identified with the culture of the deaf, while hard of hearing persons, especially if the hearing damage happened in prelingual period, more often accept culture of the hearing than persons who have become deaf in prelingual period. Authors have concluded that the time of occurrence and degree of hearing loss affect the identity development with these group of people. Parks (2009) highlights that the degree of hearing loss and hearing status of the parents are the factors that affect the choice of communication. On the basis of the results of research Thumann-Prezioso (2005), the degree of hearing loss can indirectly affect the identity development of deaf and hard of hearing persons. Respectively, time when the hearing loss begun and the degree of hearing loss indicate more on physical status, but very important role have social and cultural environment of the individual (Thumann-Prezioso, 2005).

The environment of family

Bronfenbrenner and Ericsson (1980) have noted that there is strong connection between identity development and social expectations of the individual. This expectations dictate how the individual behaves and on what way he/she will be integrated in broader social environment. Family is the first institution that sets social expectations towards the individual, so that the identity is developed on the basis of connecting the experiences, future expectations and social interactions with broader social environments. Researchers (Leigh et al., 1998; Eckert, 2010) have supported the argument that the family and the education system have strong influence on identity development, additionally highlighting that the identity of the individual is "dependent on the context of environments" (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 225).

Leigh et al. (1998) have researched how hearing adults and deaf persons identify themselves and have found out that the experience of being deaf/hard of hearing

with hearing adults affects identity development in a way that is different to identity development of hearing or deaf/hard of hearing person that has deaf parents. Hadjikakou (2011) sets an example of the individual by the name *John* who developed an identity of a deaf person. As a child, he first had an identity of a hearing person, after that cultural marginal identity because he has deaf but speaking father and hearing mother who didn't know sign communication. They have enrolled John in regular primary school in which he didn't have any contacts with deaf persons and he only communicated orally (by speaking) with his environment. Back then he didn't feel good being deaf.

Other research states that some parents think that a deaf child shouldn't go to school because of its disability, so it doesn't need an education (Chen, 2011). Behavior of this type of parents affects negatively on development of deaf children. Generally, deaf children are on the strong influence from the members of the family with whom they identify. Many hearing, even deaf, parents can build family atmosphere in which deafness is perceived as a disability and in which use of sign language is forbidden. This type of view parents transfer to their deaf children. In contrast of that, deaf children whose parents/or brothers or sisters are members of the Deaf community will most probably be exposed to cultural model of deafness through interaction with the family and the Deaf community.

Educational experience

Next vital factor in identity development of deaf persons is educational experience. Most researchers who have been interested in this area point out that the type of the school deaf person attends (regular or special) dominant way of communication (verbal language, sign language, total communication), attitudes of the teacher towards deafness and acceptance from hearing peers significantly affects identity development of deaf person (Bat-Chava, 2000; Rose, 2001; Zhang & Wang, 2009; Hu, 2005; 2005; Nikolarazi & Hadjikakou, 2006, 2007). Today, there are 4 different schooling options which are available to deaf and hard of hearing children: 1. Special departments of the regular schools 2. Mainstream or inclusive regular schools 3. Residential or boarding schools 4. Daily special schools for deaf children inside the school system. Mainstream (inclusive) option allows deaf children to attend school with the hearing peers, with or without the support of the special educator-rehabilitator. Special departments are special sections in school for typical children in which they attend teaching and the children with development disabilities. In contrary to mainstream schools, hard of hearing pupils in residential schools attend classes in school in which there are only hard of hearing pupils, and they live in boarding school because the family home is far away from the school. And in the end, daily schools for deaf pupils are similar to residential schools because it is attended only by hard of hearing pupils, but on the contrary to residential school they don't live in boarding school but with their families.

Many researches prove that the school experience affects identity development of the deaf children, Nikolarazi and Hadjikakou (2006) have found out that the teachers in mainstream schools often consider that the hard of hearing children have difficulties learning. It is noted that deaf pupils in their surroundings have the feeling of isolation and loneliness. This finding is supported from other researchers who estimated

that the deaf children feel alienated in mainstream schools (Leigh, Maxwell-McCaw, Bat-Chava & Christiansen, 2008). On the contrary, Leigh et al. (2008) have concluded that the pupils who are educated in boarding schools have more confidence and more positive identity development than pupils who are being educated in mainstream environments.

The research from Cole and Edelman (1991) points that the teachers in mainstream schools promote mostly hearing identity (they encourage verbal/oral communication instead of using sign language) which can negatively affect identity development of the deaf pupils. Hearing teachers describe deaf pupils as individuals who have psychological problems and behaviour problems in greater extent than the pupils alone. Factors that affect the way deaf individual identifies himself (as a hearing or deaf person) depends on the parents, teachers and peers views towards deafness which by nature are very complex.

Bat-Chava (2000) have on the sample of 267 deaf adults confirmed that the respondents have attended special or residential schools have developed cultural identity of the deaf and that after finishing school have easily been integrated in Deaf community. In contrast, the ones wholly included in hearing environments didn't meet other deaf pupils and adults, so they didn't become the part of the Deaf community even in adulthood.

Chinese scientists Zhang and Wang (2009) think that deaf children who have accepted verbal/oral education easily develop cultural identity of the hearing or marginal identity, in contrast to that, deaf children who have accepted sign language more often identify themselves with the culture of the Deaf or have bicultural identity.

Factors influencing academic achievement

The results of the research which have been conducted in the seventies and eighties point that children with deaf parents achieve better academic success than children with the hearing parents. This result suggests that deaf children with hearing parents too can have benefits from using sign language. However, this explanation has been disputed because not every deaf parent uses sign language in communication with their children (Jensema & Trybus, 1978). Big number of other factors can influence academic achievement of deaf children. First factor is the reason for hearing loss: deafness in kids with deaf parents is often inherited, while deafness on kids with hearing parents can be effect of many factors, some of which affect strongly development in many areas of child development (Jensema & Mullins, 1974). Second factor is that deaf parents easier accept hearing damage of their children and that do it better than the hearing parents (Corson, 1973, as cited in Quigley & Paul, 1986). Third factor is that better paralinguistical skills which are needed later in life for language development can provide deaf than hearing parents more.

Shortly, although research point out on better academic achievements of deaf pupils of deaf parents relative to deaf pupils with hearing parents, samples are not clear. It is determined that deaf children of deaf parents have bigger self-esteem and show better developed lingual capabilities than deaf children with hearing parents, which is often attributed to better understanding of deafness by deaf parents than the hearing parents (Koelle & Convey, 1982).

Ritter-Brinton (1993) have found out that two most frequently cited factors which are connected to academic achievement of deaf pupils are *parents expectations* and *communication fluency at home*. Hearing status of the parents was not the main factor in academic achievement of deaf children. In studies from year 1986, on the basis of interview of parents with deaf children which had a goal to identify families psychosocial factors which are related to high academic achievements of deaf children, Bodner-Johnson has determined two factors. First is called *adapation to deafness*, which implies acceptance of the deaf child and positive orientation towards the Deaf community. Second factor is called *imposing achievements*, and it is related to high education and professional expectation of the deaf child (as cited in Powers, 2003).

Reed et al. (2008) alleges that succesfull deaf and hard of hearing pupils have support of the family, peers and school, the unseccesfull pupils have couple of reliefs and lack of support (as cited in Radić-Šestić, 2013).

The mode of communication

Although about the way of communication of deaf persons was within the curriculum in studies about family environments and educational experience, many scientists (Sutton-Spence, 2010; Nikolaraze & Hadjidakou, 2006; Kossewska, 2008; Sheridan, 2010) still research how the way of communication as a independent factor affects identity development of the deaf. Deaf persons usually use one or ways of commucating or both, sign language and/or verbal/oral language. The use of specific way of communication and attitude of deaf person towards another language affects identity development of that person.

In his doctoral thesis Hole (2004) has followed the experience influence of individual from childhood in gaining linguistic skills (verbal/oral or sign language) on identity development. She found out that participants who are experiencing themshelves the oral type, more frequently have feeling of shame, isolation, alienation, constriction and depression then participants who have been brought up using sign language.

Sutton-Spens (2010) have analyzed interviews with british teachers who are deaf and other adult deaf persons who have talked with children using sign language. He has concluded that the participants are proud of their deafness, and point out the value of sign language and importance of Deaf community.

Meanwhile, Nikolaraze and Hadjidakou (2006) have followed the influence of educational experiences on identity development of the deaf and have found out that participants with deaf person identity consider that the sign language allows them more efficient communication.

Kossevka (2008) states that dominant way of communication is related to lingual competence. Lingual competence of deaf pupils should be understood as a part of socialization process for them and formating self-concept which is also relevant predictor of self-identity.

Potmesil and Valenta (2006) mention concept of total *communication* which can be defined as very liberal, eclectic and combined technique which consists of larger number of different methods of communication. Authors consider that in teaching it can be used as a combination of sign, whrite, mimic, talk, pictures or any other way

of communication that eases mutual communication and understanding interviewee. Total communication could be easier and favorable than using just one type of communication (sign or oral) for development of deaf children, so they consider that in it there is big potential for identity development of deaf persons. First, most of deaf children are born in hearing families whose members don't have a chance to get to know sign language and Deaf culture, except if the child is attending school for the deaf or it becomes the part of the Deaf community. Second, many deaf people point out that they experience the world visually and through sign language. In that context, deafness is not a loss, but social, cultural and lingual identity. In both cases total communication is adequate for identity development of the deaf and hard of hearing child.

CONCLUSION

Factors that affect identity development of deaf and hard of hearing persons are being researched from decades ago. Identity development is very complex and dynamic process which develops during the life of the individual. The influence of the environments and relations with other people in process of identity development reflects differently on deaf and hard of hearing person and it can go through many development phases of identity (exmp. Hearing cultural identity, deaf cultural identity, bicultural identity). Through which phases will it go by and on what phase of identity development will deaf and hard of hearing person stop, depends on number of factors.

Many years of research point out that there are lots of factors which affect the identity development of deaf and hard of hearing people, such as hearing status (when was the hearing impairment, the degree of hearing impairment and early intervention), family environment, educational experience and academic achievement, the mode of communication etc.

Although it is proven that listed factors in smaller or bigger way affect identity development of deaf and hard of hearing persons, there by the discussion on this subject is not finished. First, it is noticed that the affect of certain factors are in mutually interwoven and it is not clear which and to what extent affects identity development of deaf and hard of hearing persons. Second, perspective from which deafness is being perceived is changing constantly with the society development, so thus the approach to deafness changes also. If we observe identity as psychosocial dimension, it is certain that it follows the society changes which should be permanently researched. New research can crystallize new factors that affect identity development of deaf and hard of hearing subpopulation.

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