

Perceptions of Saudi Parents of Children with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Searching for Information and Support through Social Media Applications

Dr. Bader Alkahtani

Department of Special Education, School of Education, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This research paper concerning the perceptions of Saudi Parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing seeking information and support through social media is based on data obtained from interviewing of forty parents. The paper examines the available literature materials concerning children with deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia and health information on social media. The paper also analyzes the research materials such as books and journals and online materials concerning social media and parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing. The collection of the data for this research is conducted through questionnaires that are randomly distributed to teachers for distribution to Parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing in Riyadh Saudi Arabia. Random sampling was used in the study where 80 parents were selected on the reliance of probability sampling method. Descriptive analysis was applied in the analysis of the data obtained from the survey. Descriptive analysis is used in analysing and explaining the general attribute of data collected. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) is also used in processing the data. The results are analysed, and it reveals that parents are actively using social media to search for information about deafness and hard of hearing. The literature reviewed is collaborated by the information obtained by this research. It is concluded that social media application plays a role in shaping the way parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing behave. Finally, the paper offers recommendations to the parents, guardians and the society as a whole.

Keywords: Parents, children with deaf and hard of hearing, information and social media.

1. Introduction

Deafness refers to the partial or complete loss of hearing also identified as hearing impairment. The hearing loss, which has different grades, is measured in decibels hearing loss abbreviated as dB HL. The hearing loss is classified into four including mild hearing loss which is characterized with a situation where a person cannot hear whispers. A moderate hearing loss is manifested by hearing impairment of conversational speech. Severe hearing loss is characterized by an inability to hear a shout. The worst condition is manifested by the inability of the hearing a sound. A child might experience any of the two hearing loss, that is, conductive hearing loss which is said to affect 4% of all school children or Sensorineural hearing loss which is responsible for affecting 0.3 % of all children ("Deafness in Children. Free Medical Information. Patient", 2017)

The perception of the parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing seeking information and support through social media in Saudi is varying; some of these parents are teachers who are also tasked with the duty of imparting knowledge to these children. The research papers seek to gather information about the reaction of parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing and analysis the data for an effective recommendation. The researcher employs the usage of a questionnaire in obtaining data which are obtained through sampling and later on an efficient analysis is conducted. The results obtained are discussed to give an overview of the situation on the ground. The reaction of the parent to the diagnosis of deafness includes emotion shift where the parent the parent expresses the feeling of intense emotion to the child. The focuses of the family shifts to the affected child with the aim of getting the child get the maximum support and information it requires. The family also changes its ways of communication to adopt and accommodate the needs of children with deaf and hard of hearing.

1.1 The Aim of the Research

This research aims to understand the views of parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing on use of Social Media related information for their children , the information search for it through social media, and what parents would like to find on social media applications.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this investigation:

- 1) What are parents' perceptions of using of Social Media related information for their children with deaf and hard of hearing ?
- 2) What information do parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing Search for on Social Media Applications?
- 3) What Would Parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing like to find on Social Media Applications?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Children with Deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia

Zakzouk et al., (1995) says that the sensorineural hearing has a severe impact on the child. The authors also say that hearing loss can occur early to the children due to distal renal tubular acidosis. Saudi Arabia introduced special education in the 1950s. In the 1990s, the Ministry of Education initiated integration of students with disabilities into regular school. The government recognized the need for educating the children with special needs, and it designated some schools for this purpose. Althabet (2002) says that the first institute for the student with intellectual disabilities opened its doors in the early 1970s. According to a research initiated by Alyami et al., (2016) found out that there are limited services of uncovering and intervention for children with deaf and hard of hearing and that there is a likelihood of the participants to access intervention services. The intention of the study was aimed at determining the status of early intervention services provided to kids who are deaf and hard of hearing (Alyami H, 2017).

Roetto & Muñoz (2011) says that hearing screening has turned out to be a routine procedure for a newborn. The authors also point out that the caring doctor is the initial professional who is mandated to see the family and offer guidance concerning hearing loss. A study conducted by Barakat & Lynn (2014) indicated that there were no changes in the education of children with deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia during the years under study. Children with deafness are seen or said to be under harsh hearing loss that confines the capability of the minor to process linguistic information through hearing. According to Alsulaiman et al., (2014) there exists a negative attitude of Saudi parents with child with deaf and hard of hearing towards the prenatal diagnosis. The researchers found out that the severity influenced the attitude towards prenatal analysis among men. In their conclusion, the researchers say that culture plays a role in determining whether to terminate the pregnancy rather than severity of the condition.

Children with deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia face challenges in their studies because their educators have an attitude towards them. The system classifies the students as deaf or hard of hearing (Alshahrani, 2014). The study about deaf is scanty in Saudi Arabia as is pointed out by Alqurani (2011) the government has put in place policy measures to ensure that children with deaf and hard of hearing get the education. However, there is a unique cultural border such as gender segregations of unrelated boys and girls which shapes the general school system and how the students with deaf and hard of hearing relate. The hearing loss of a child needs to be intervened early enough to avoid total hearing loss. Lai et al., (2014) says that the objective of early intervention for kids with hearing loss will involve support in oral speech maturity and optimum utilization of hearing devices to foster the holistic affiliation between family members. All the children in Saudi Arabia are entitled to education including those suffering hearing loss. The special education needs are administered to ensure that this right is not violated.

2.2 Health Information on Social Media

The social media provides accessible as well as credible fitness information to the parents, children and health professionals. The information available is useful for the improvement of the public health outcome. The Internet and mobile communication with proper use of social media may bring health information to many people directly and quickly. The information and technology have experienced a massive growth, and this has enhanced access to information. There are countless blogs on health topics including deafness which can be accessed and read by any person. The posts are written in clear terms which can be read by both specialists and non-specialists (Moorhead et al., 2013). Courtney (2013) says that media has a role to play in the dissemination of information about the health of men, women, and children. The author says that social media is a great information equalizer which is radically transforming the manner in which people are communicating in the world. The social network such as Facebook is used as inviting platform for advertising or informing people about health links which exist on the internet. A lot of people communicate and discuss a broad range of topics including health online. The sentiment about the importance of media in the dissemination of health information in Saudi Arabia is supported by the arguments of Almainan et al., (2015).

Twitter and other social media apparatus aid in providing accurate health information to a lot of people. When there is the outbreak of a disease, social media can be relied on to convey the message very fast and covering a wide area. Advertisers of health services find social media as an ideal place where to post their advertisements. Some of the adverts go ahead to explain the diseases and symptoms which might be the indicator of the disease. Precautionary and preventative measures are posted online to warn people of the possible cause of illness and conditions which the diseases can develop (Househ, 2014). Information about any condition can be obtained online without a fee, but there is a catch on the authenticity and accuracy of the information provided. The problem of relying on social media information about health is its lack of credibility and a person to hold liable just in case the procedure or diagnosis fails and Bader & Schuster (2015) warns against sharing medical history and conditions online.

Although the social media will provide a lot of information about health, there are different ways to which it

affects our mental health. The social media is addictive when a person say intends to browse for few minutes about some health conditions, and he might find himself glued to the computer for hours. The post made about the health status might depict a healthy person or have an image of a healthy person when one compares himself with such a person he will feel restless. A person might end up abusing the drugs, and this will make them unhappy. The person may become moody when they miss the information which they have been searching for social media.

2.3 Social Media and Parents of Children with deaf and hard of hearing

The social media provides information about the deaf and hard of hearing to the parents and other stakeholders in the growth and development of the Children with deaf and hard of hearing. The information available to the parent will be used to give the child care and protection necessary for their well-being in the society. The report also provides the ground upon which the parents can do advocacy for needs of child deaf and hard of hearing . In a research survey conducted by Dr. Paul Jacobs is claimed to be the first study of the kind which focused and designed to examine how parent advocates for the educational accommodation and related services for their children with deaf and hard of hearing. Although the findings of the research are yet to be made public, the study acknowledges that parents have a role to play in advocating for the well-being of the children with deaf and hard of hearing. The study was conducted to obtain information to be published on Odyssey Magazine and online distribution. The study provides proof that social media has a role to play in disseminating information about child with deaf and hard of hearing. Parent advocacy survey was conducted online and by e-distribution list and was aimed at understanding what challenges do parents experience when advocating for the needs of their children with deaf and hard of hearing (Center, 2017).

The receipt of information that a child is deaf and hard of hearing is a shock to a parent. The parents get confused and wonder who will be there to comfort them or provide the necessary support and materials about the deafness and hard of hearing. They also wonder how they will relate to the child and start anticipating the challenges they will face while raising the minor. The news usually leaves the parent dump struck where there is no family history of deafness and hard of hearing, a state of confusion arises as they wonder what hearing loss is and how it will impact on the lives of their child. The parents become concerned about the future of the child including social life, and they wonder whether the child will have friends to live with and how special schools which shape their lives. Due to confusion and availability of internet for browsing, the parents will start searching for information about deafness and hard of hearing so as to be prepared in advance. The social media provides the support and encouragement much needed by the parent. The explaining about the disease, its effect, and possible causes are essential in making the parent understand that the illness is not a punishment to the child. The parents also get inspiration from other parents or children who have the same problem or more. The sharing of the story relieves the parent and acts as a guide on what is expected of them and what to expect from the child. Social media provides the materials in ranging content and context; it is therefore up to the parent to decide what materials to pick and what materials to abandon. Proper sieving and utilisation of online and social media information will boost the courage of the parent. The parents are in a position to set their goals and determine what to expect from other siblings and relatives as well as neighbors. The setting of boundaries and standards ensures that the child is not demoralized or abused by the peers.

The social media provides the platform for meeting and interacting. Parents and caregivers of children with deaf and hard of hearing meet online and they can discuss the issue of common interest concerning challenges and prospects of the child suffering from the disease. Whenever a parent realizes that other people are experiencing the same problem, they will feel encouraged. Social media is also an ideal site where the parents can get first-hand information, in particular through chats, about the condition, how to cope with t and how to address the issue of trauma. The interaction does not need to be face to face since people from diverse cultural background and regions can meet online, say through Twitter or Facebook and discuss the illness. Sharing of material and links on how to handle the situation of hearing loss can be conducted on social media. The parents and children can get video clips, reading materials and other relevant materials for their growth and welfare.

However, the social media may encompass a profound negative consequence and impact on the parent of kids have hearing loss. The parent may meet different parents on the social media who have differences of opinion about treatment and accommodation of children with deaf and hard of hearing. Some people advocates hiding the children to avoid them from being seen by other people because they are considered a curse or disgrace to the society. It demands a lot of courage and willingness for parents to admit that their child is suffering from hearing problems. Shouting and sign language is threatening conversation a person can get from uncaring people on the social media. Poor articulation and understanding of the issue by the members of the social media make it difficult for parents to share their predicaments, challenges, and triumphs with other people.

The social media may also post information intended to discourage and annoy the people who have children with deaf and hard of hearing. The post may take the form of images or a detailed explanation of the disease but put in a derogatory way. The parents are responsible of treading carefully on social media because it provides

both useful and harmful information which have a direct and indirect impact on the life and welfare of the child with deaf and hard of hearing. There exist social media pedophiles, the parents should warn their children with deaf and hard of hearing against. The online tutorials on sign language are useful as it provides the basics learning and communicating techniques necessary for maintaining a conversation with a child with deaf and hard of hearing. But the sign language and teaching from the social media might be wrong and misleading, the authenticity and accuracy of the tutorials and other learning materials should be checked. Therefore, it is for the parent to consider the available information on social media and evaluate which one to rely on.

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire drafted is intended to provide right questions which will attract reliable and valid information which is necessary for informed decision making. The questionnaire is formulated to give the researcher the required pace for obtaining pertinent information from the teachers regarding their personal perception. The questionnaire had consisted of three forms of questions single answer questions, multiple choice, and open-ended text question. Babbie (1990) in acknowledging the importance of good skills and theory testing, said that methodology survey is the best means of obtaining information when conducting a study centered on people and their views, beliefs, motivations and behaviors. The study under consideration was undertaken in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia and it involved a sample of 40 parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing. The drafted questionnaire contained various sections which sought to obtain demographic, social media experience as well as information needs of parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia. The survey was crafted based on the objective of the study and scope of the study.

To ensure the validity of instruments used four experts were involved in accessing and making sure that instrument is relevant and addresses the aims of the study. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the internal reliability of the device, and this was conducted through test-retest, the result obtained had a coefficient of 0.87. The coefficient served as an indicator that the instrument was reliable and therefore useful for the study. In an endeavor to get the best and maximum response from the respondents, the researcher has enlisted four research assistants to help administer the questionnaire.

3.2 Sampling

Neuman (2006) pointed out that sampling is imperative in a study as it gives the researcher a chance to review the general attributes of the population. He further says that there are two methods of sampling namely probability and non-probability. This research work utilizes probability methods in which case random selection of 80 parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing is conducted. The collection is carried out in different schools, but only 40 of the parents managed to return the questionnaires for a sample of 80 parents initially selected.

3.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis is applied in analyzing the survey data obtained from the parents who returned the forms. The researcher relied on descriptive statistical analysis to explain the general attribute of the data collected. Results obtained were summarized and a simple graphics used to describe the study. Briggs and Coleman (2012) hailed SPSS as an efficient tool for analyzing data and therefore in an attempt to effectively process the statistical data, the researcher relied on statistical Package for Social Science to analyze the data.

4. Result

4.1 Demographic Details of Parents and Their Children with Deaf and hard of hearing

The researcher obtained feedback from 40 parents who had a varying age, ranging from 25 years to 64 years. Out of the 40 respondents, 25 were women (Mothers), and the rest 15 were men. The percentage of the women interviewed through questionnaires was 62.5% as compared to only 37.5 % of men. The researcher found out those parents within the 25-34 age brackets had the highest level of children with deaf and hard of hearing; they had 28 cases which represent a 70 %. Out of the 40 parents, only 17 possess university degrees while the rest 57.5 % have High school as the highest verifiable education. The number of children with deaf and hard of hearing in a family was observed to decline steadily. Out of the 40 families interviewed for this study, 30 parents had a single child suffering from the illness, and this represented a 75%. Only 8 families were reported to have two children in the same family who were affected by deafness and hard of hearing. The number declined to 2 families when three children were considered. It represented a 5 % of the total population. The researcher found out that minors below the age of ten formed the largest group of children of the deaf and hard of hearing. 21 parents indicated their children were below ten years but older than four years, and this represented a 52.5 % of the total population of the study. The researcher employed oral, manual and a blend of the oral and manual method of communication. Oral communication and manual communication were equal, and they shared the

50 %. The other 50 % went to a breed of oral and manual communication. See table 1.
 Table 1: Demographic details of parents and their children children with deaf and hard of hearing

Item	%	N
Relationship to child		
Father	37.5	15
Mother	62.5	25
Age (years)		
25–34	70	28
35–49	25	10
50–64	5	2
Highest level of education		
High school	57.5	23
University degree	42.5	17
Number of children with deaf and hard of hearing in family		
One	75	30
Two	20	8
Three	5	2
Age of child of deaf and hard of hearing		
5–10 years	52.5	21
10–15 years	37.5	15
15–18 years	10	4
Method of communication		
Oral	25	10
Manual	25	10
Both	50	20

4.2 Social Media Use by Parents

The researcher sought to understand how comfortable the respondents felt when used social media application. It was discovered that 67.5% of the interviewees felt very comfortable while 32.5% felt somewhat comfortable. The researcher also found out that home is the place where most parents access social media applications, and it formed a 75 % against 25% in preference for work. 32.5% of the parents were reported to use social media every day to find information about deafness and hard of hearing and related topics. 50% of the respondents take weeks while the rest takes months to use social media to find information about deaf and hard of hearing . The majority of the parents (82.5%) visits 2-3social media application when searching for deafness and hard of hearing information. Those visiting a single application occupy 10% and that using 4-5 application account for the remaining7.5 %

Six parents claimed always to find the information they are searching for on social media, 75% of the respondents said they find the information most of the time while 10% claimed they locate the information only sometimes. Websites specializing with information concerning deaf and hard of hearing is the most frequently visited sites in search of deafness and hard of hearing information. It recorded 47.5% followed by search engines at 25%. 17.5% of the population said that they visit websites recommended by other parents to find or search for deaf and hard of hearing -related information. Recommendations of the social media application by experts accounted for 7.5 % while the remaining 2.5 % accounts for referral and recommendations by friends and family members. The information derived have a minor influence (75%), on decision making. 70% of the respondents have spoken with a doctor about information obtained on social media, and they seemed somehow interested (67.5%). The majority, at 82.5 % have participated in an online support group for people interested in the deaf and hard of hearing. See table 2.

Table 2: Social media use of respondents

	%	N
How comfortable are you using social media applications?		
Very comfortable	67.5	27
Somewhat comfortable	32.5	13
From where do you most often access social media applications?		
Home	75	30
Work	25	10
How often do you use social media applications to find information about deafness and hard of hearing and related topics?		
Every day	32.5	13
Several times a week	50	20
Several times a month	17.5	7
About how many different social media applications types do you usually visit when looking for information about deaf and hard of hearing?		
1	10	4
2-3	82.5	33
4-5	7.5	3
How often are you able to find the information you are looking for?		
Always	15	6
Most of the time	75	30
Only sometimes	10	4
How do you find or search for deaf and hard of hearing -related social media applications?		
Search engine	25	10
Web sites specializing in deaf and hard of hearing	47.5	19
Web sites recommended by doctor or deaf and hard of hearing professional	7.5	3
Web sites recommended by a friend or family member	2.5	1
Web sites recommended by other parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing	17.5	7
In general, does the information you find on social media applications influence the decisions you make about your child with deaf and hard of hearing?		
Major influence	45	18
Minor influence	75	30
Other	5	2
Have you talked to a doctor or other hearing professional about information you have found on social media applications?		
Yes	70	28
No	30	12
If you talked to the doctor or other deaf and hard of hearing professional, how interested were they in deaf about the information you found on social media applications?		
Very interested	27.5	11
Somewhat interested	67.5	27
Not too interested	5	2
Have you ever participated in an online support group in social media applications for people interested in deaf and hard of hearing?		
Yes	82.5	33
No	17.5	7

4.3 Information Parents Search for on Social Media Applications

The parent search different information concerning deafness and hard of hearing on social media. The researcher found out that 80% of the respondents search for parent support groups. It was also observed that 38 out of the 40 respondents find educational options on social media applications. The data indicates that only 5% of the respondents who do not search for educational information on social media. 20 parents frequent the social media in search of hearing loss information while the other 50% does not comb for this kind of information. 70% of the respondents were to report to search the social media in an attempt to get information about organizations and society dealing with deafness and hard of hearing.

The search of hearing aids hit 92.5 % which represents 37 parents of the total population. This means that

parents are in needs of hearing aids. Social media as a communication option accounts for 82.5% of the searches conducted by the parents. The parents seeking to get information about cochlear implant is 77.5% while parents seeking information about early interventions are reported to be 99.5%. Almost all parents visit the social media to search for early intervention with only 30% visiting the application to search for alternative treatment or management of deafness and hard of hearing affecting the child. See table 3.

Table 3: Information parents search for on social media applications

	%	N
Parent support groups	80	32
Educational options	95	38
Hearing loss	50	20
Organizations and societies	70	28
Hearing aids	92.5	37
Communication options	82.5	33
Cochlear implants	77.5	31
Early intervention	97.5	39
Alternative treatment/management	30	12

4.4 What Would Parents Like to Find on Social Media Applications?

The researcher sought to understand what parents would like to find on social media application in as far as deafness and hard of hearing is concerned. The researcher figured out that out of the 40 respondents, 38 or 95% would like to get information about early intervention, that is, evidence-based outcomes with comprehensive information regarding different methodologies of early intervention. 90% of the respondents would like to find information about speech or language. The application should provide tips and techniques. Educational materials are among the information that parents would like to find on social media. 70% of the respondents said that they would like to find educational materials with evidence-based options, guidelines for parents and teachers. The parents pointed out that they would like educational materials supplied online to be evidence based and should provide further educational options.

The respondents, 92.5%, would like to have technology information featured on social media applications. The technology should capture new updates and future trends. The parents would like to have stories about successful deaf and hard of hearing and adult deaf and hard of hearing featured on social media application. The researcher found out that 87.5% of the respondents supported this idea. They sought the media to provide more information about successful children who are doing well in be availed online. Unbiased information backed with research is another set of information the parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing would like availed on social media. 33 respondents out of the total populations supported the idea of the social media application to provide unbiased information which is reliable. See table 4.

Table 4: What Would Parents like to find on social media applications?

	%	N
Early intervention (Evidence-based outcomes Comprehensive information regarding different methodologies).	95	38
Speech/language (Outcomes and expectations, Tips and techniques).	90	36
Education (Evidence-based options, Guidelines for parents, teachers and classmates, Further education options	70	28
Technology (Updates on new developments, Future trends)	92.5	37
Stories (Stories about children Successful Deaf and hard of hearing /deaf adults)	87.5	35
Communication (Unbiased information, backed by research findings)	82.5	33

5. Discussion

There are some children with the deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia, from the result obtained, it has been seen that there are children with deaf and hard of hearing. The presence of their school serves as an indicator that these kids are part of the society and that the government is taking care of them. For a discussion of this paper, the researcher recommends that we stick to the number of the respondents who decided to return the questionnaires. The results have not tabulated nor informed us what type of deafness and hard of hearing affects the children under review. Nevertheless, the parents have given their responses. As noted by Aplyami et al. (2016) there are inadequate services of uncovering and intervention for children with deaf and hard of hearing. The researcher found out that as the number of years goes by the number of those affected by deafness and hard of hearing tends to grow. The demographic information indicates that children between the age of 5-10 years form 52.5% of the population. There is a significant decrease when children between the age of 10-15 years are concerned. The number further decreases to 10%. In principle, what this means is that the children below ten years old are at a higher risk of contracting the disease.

The research also indicates that there is a likelihood of young parents getting a child or having a child with the deaf and hard of hearing. The researcher found out that among those interviewed, young family accounted for 70%. The parents within the age brackets of 25-34 years are reported to be the highest respondent while those above 50 years only represent 5%. This means that there is less likelihood of a parent getting a child with deaf and hard of hearing when they are over 50 years as compared with parents below 34 years of age. The researcher found out that there is a need for early intervention for children with hearing loss. According to the findings presented by the researcher, after considering the response obtained from forty responses it found out that 39 respondents were for early intervention. The information which parents search from social media concerning early intervention was 97.5%. This is the highest percentage recorded under any subheading in this discussion. It shows that parents are desperate for information which will help their children, as well as help themselves, counter the problem of deaf and hard of hearing before it is too late. It can be deduced that young parents are in search of the information that will assist in preventing the disease. There is an indication that parents are seriously into the habit of seeking help from the social media, the author reported an 82.5% positive response on the question of whether the parent has participated in an online support group in social media. 17.5 % of the population answered in the negative.

It is the argument of Courtney (2013) that social media has a role to play in the dissemination of information about health. From the result obtained by the researcher, it is indicated that parents are frequenting the social media applications to find health information. It is reported that 20 out of 40 parents interviewed for this research project indicated that they visit social media application to search for information about hearing loss. The sought information is to help them understand the cause and possible mitigations available to the parents and the children who are suffering from hearing impairment. The organizations and societies are claimed to provide reliable information and guidance about deafness and hard of hearing. Their posts, advertisements, and education clips serve to educate both the parents and children. The report indicates that there was a 70% search about the societies and organizations by the parents. Social media applications are also seen to provide information about cochlear implants, which why 77.5% of parents search the Internet to find information about it. 30% of the population believe that the social media contains information about alternative treatment or management of deafness and hard of hearing. Almainan et al. (2015) articulate the importance of social media applications in the dissemination of information about health conditions of children with deaf and hard of hearing. The data obtained by the researcher agrees with the sentiments of Almainan et al. When the researcher sought to understand the information that the parents would like to get from social media application the response was fascinating. Over 70% of all the respondents had a request for the information concerning the health and well-being of the child. 38 parents said that they would like to get information about the early intervention of the disease. 82.5% said that they would like to get unbiased information supported by research findings. This indicates that parents believe that a social media application provides necessary information but their authenticity and accuracy needs to be probed.

The caution put across by Bader & Schuster (2015) seems to have triggered the precautionary approach of the parents. Parents, teachers, and classmates of the affected child will benefit from the social media application information if there are guidelines on how to deal with it and educate others about the disease. The parents of children deaf and hard of hearing rely on social media for education purpose and extraction of materials relevant to understanding the disease. Dr. Paul Jacobs claimed that parents have a role to play in advocating for the children with deaf and hard of hearing. He says that the parents should actively advocate for the educational, academic and related services for their children. The other related services referred to but Jacobs include health and well-being of the child. In an attempt to get an insight of how the parents advocate for children with deaf and hard of hearing, the researcher sought their opinion on a range of issues in connection with social media usage. The researcher attempted to get an insight of how comfortable the parents feel when using social media application to find information about deafness and hard of hearing.

The response was that most of the parents are very comfortable. Only 32.5% of the parents feel somewhat comfortable when using social media application to search for information about deafness and hard of hearing. Stigmatization, fear or lack of interest can be attributed to the feeling of being uncomfortable when searching information experienced by some parents. Home is the ideal place for seeking information as compared to the location of work. It is reported that 75% of the respondents preferred searching for the information at their homes as compared to 25% of the respondents who preferred workplace. The preference for home is associated with the need for privacy while those preferring place of work might be said to do so due to convenience. 32.5% of the respondents search for deafness and hard of hearing every day, either at their workplace or their homes. It is disappointing to note that 50% of the parents are not keen to search information about deafness and hard of hearing and related topics on social media every day. They might be justified not to check the media because the information is not updated daily and that some providers of the information are not verified.

The parents are visiting 1-5 social media applications in their endeavor to search for information necessary for maintaining their children with deaf and hard of hearing. It is an indication that social media has a place in

the heart and mind of Saudi Arabia parents who have children with deaf and hard of hearing. The parents using a single application were reported to be just 10% while those using 2-3 application are reported to be 82.5%. This is a clear indication that parents are interacting with various applications on their quest to find information about deaf and hard of hearing. Other parents have decided to explore more applications, and they search for the information from more than three requests, these parents account for 7.5 percent. Referrals by parents and friends as indicated in the research paper is an important interaction mechanism, the user of the media will be referred to other materials within the same site or other sites. Cross-referencing and extensive reading provides the reader with a comprehensive knowledge of the deaf and hard of hearing subject.

The researcher sought to get the feedback of respondents concerning their method of finding social media applications relevant for providing deaf and hard of hearing information and found the following. That referral by friends and family members as well as by doctors and deaf and hard of hearing professionals is 10%. But the recommendation to the other parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing forms 17.5%. Essentially, this means that parents of children with deaf and hard of hearing are caring and they interact with each other to share information about the disease. Some of the meetings are held face to face while others are held online through chat rooms or face booking. Other parents are reported to rely on the search engine to find or search for deaf and hard of hearing -related social media applications. The information found online by the parents is useful in making the decision concerning the welfare of the child with deaf and hard of hearing. But the level and type of decision are dependent on the kind of information obtained and their authenticity. It is reported that the information only has a minor influence in the decision-making process. 75% of the parents interviewed said that they rely on the information to make minor decisions while 25% of the parents use the information in making major decisions due to its major influence.

6. Conclusion

The parents of Children with deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi are seeking information and support through social media. The information available in the social includes health information and children with the deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia. The research paper has tackled the issue of how parents perceive the social media in their endeavor to obtain information about deaf and hard of hearing as it affects children. The researcher conducted a literature review to access the input of other scholars about the perception of the parents of children with the deaf and hard of hearing in their reliance on social media. The researcher developed the questionnaire to assist in collecting information from the respondents. Random sampling was used in supplying and distribution of the survey. The data gathered through surveys is subjected to data analysis by use of Statistical Package for Social Science. The result obtained indicates demographic details of parents and their children with deaf and hard of hearing, how the respondents use social media as well as the kind of information sought by the parents on the social media applications. The researcher found out there is a clear link between the literature reviewed and data obtained through questionnaires and analyzed. The research paper identifies that early intervention for children hearing loss is a desire for almost all parents.

7. Recommendations

The researcher recommends that authentic and reliable social media should be used when searching for any information concerning deaf and hard of hearing. Sieving and seeking the verifiability and accuracy of the information obtained online. Collaboration and interaction with the parents through social media platforms and face to face is recommended because the parents will share the challenges and problems they face. They can find the solution for the problem they are encountering as well as offering moral support to each other. The people posting deaf and hard of hearing materials online, whether video clips, images or studies should do it ethically bearing in mind that the information will be relied upon by another person for decision making. The authors also recommend that the parents should consult and share online materials with deaf and hard of hearing professionals and doctors for a guidance and direction. The parents should not follow the information they obtain from the internet blindly, but they should discuss the content with friends and relatives to analyze its effectiveness if put into practice.

Advises given by the doctors and deaf and hard of hearing professionals should not be substituted with social media posting. Wherever there is contradicting information on media concerning the same subject matter, and the parent should seek the opinion and advice of qualified personnel. The parents should not feel discouraged or burdened by having a child with hearing challenges. They should not blame their creator for the health condition of the child, but they should embrace the child and show them, parental love. Involving other family members and encouraging interaction of children in a modest manner serves as a uniting tool and the child with deaf and hard of hearing will experience a sense of belonging. The parent should always take charge of the child and guide them in their daily activities regardless of their hearing inabilities.

Acknowledgements

*The researcher thanks the educational researches centre at college of education, King Saud University, Deanship of Scientific Research, for supporting this research.

References

- Almaiman, S., Bahkali, S., Al, F. A., Bamuhair, S., Househ, M., & Alsurimi, K. (2015). The Prevalence of Using Social Media among Healthcare Professionals in Saudi Arabia: A Pilot Study. *Stud Health Technol Inform*, 213, 263-266.
- Alshahrani, M. M. (2014). Saudi educators' attitudes towards deaf and hard of hearing inclusive education in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Alsulaiman, A., Mousa, A., Kondkar, A. A., & Abu - Amero, K. K. (2014). Attitudes of Saudi parents with a deaf child towards prenatal diagnosis and termination of pregnancy. *Prenatal diagnosis*, 34(2), 153-158.
- Althabet, I. N. (2002). *Perceptions of teachers of mental retardation regarding their preparation program at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia* (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Florida, Tampa.
- Alyami H, e. (2017). *Deaf or hard of hearing children in Saudi Arabia: Status of early intervention services*. - PubMed - NCBI. *Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov*. Retrieved 14 February 2017, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27260597>
- Alyami, H., Soer, M., Swanepoel, A., & Pottas, L. (2016). Deaf or hard of hearing children in Saudi Arabia: Status of early intervention services. *International journal of pediatric otorhinolaryngology*, 86, 142-149.
- Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bader, B., & Schuster, T. (2015). Expatriate social networks in terrorism-endangered countries: An empirical analysis in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. *Journal of International Management*, 21(1), 63-77.
- Barakat, S. M. R., & Lynn, R. (2014). A Flynn effect among deaf boys in Saudi Arabia. *Intelligence*, 44, 75-77.
- Bosteels, S., & Blume, S. (2014). The making and unmaking of deaf children. In *The Human Enhancement Debate and Disability* (pp. 81-100). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Briggs, A.J., Coleman, M. & Morrison, M. (eds.) (3rd ed.) (2012) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London, Sage.
- Center, G. (2017). *Parent Advocacy Survey*. *Gallaudet.edu*. Retrieved 14 February 2017, from <https://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/research/projects/parent-advocacy-survey.html>
- Courtney, K. L. (2013). The use of social media in healthcare: organizational, clinical, and patient perspectives. *Enabling health and healthcare through ICT: available, tailored and closer*, 183, 244.
- Deafness in Children. *Free Medical Information. Patient*. (2017). *Patient.info*. Retrieved 14 February 2017, from <http://patient.info/doctor/deafness-in-children>
- Househ, M., Borycki, E., & Kushniruk, A. (2014). Empowering patients through social media: the benefits and challenges. *Health informatics journal*, 20(1), 50-58.
- Lai, F. Y., Serraglio, C., & Martin, J. A. (2014). Examining potential barriers to early intervention access in Australian hearing impaired children. *International journal of pediatric otorhinolaryngology*, 78(3), 507-512.
- Moorhead, S. A., Hazlett, D. E., Harrison, L., Carroll, J. K., Irwin, A., & Hoving, C. (2013). A new dimension of health care: a systematic review of the uses, benefits, and limitations of social media for health communication. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 15(4), e85.
- Neuman, W. L., & Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*.
- Roetto, M., & Muñoz, K. (2011). What Parents Want From Physicians Audiologists Bridge the Information Gap for Families of Infants With Hearing Loss. *The ASHA Leader*, 16(11), 5-6.
- Zakzouk, S. M., Sobki, S. H., Mansour, F., & Al Anazy, F. H. (1995). Hearing impairment in association with distal renal tubular acidosis among Saudi children. *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology*, 109(10), 930-934.