

Modeling the Role of Autonomy in Achieving Sustainable Employment for Deaf Young Adults



Summary of Garberoglio et al., "The Antecedents and Outcomes of Autonomous Behaviors: Modeling the Role of Autonomy in Achieving Sustainable Employment for Deaf Young Adults"¹

Why was this work done?

Despite advances in accessibility legislation and academic attainment, deaf young adults in the United States continue to experience underemployment and underpayment.

In general, autonomous beliefs, capacities, and behaviors are strongly related to improved academic and employment outcomes for students with disabilities. However, the role of autonomy in the developmental process for deaf youths is less understood.

The purpose of this study is to explore how parental expectations may affect autonomy development for deaf adolescents and to assess the role of autonomy for deaf adolescents as they navigate the transition from adolescence to early adulthood and enter the workforce.

How was this work done?

Researchers conducted a secondary analysis of a large-scale dataset, the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2). The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs created this survey to help researchers understand the experiences and achievements of students with disabilities during their transition from high school to adult life.

Statistical analyses were used to model the interrelationships between parent expectations, deaf youths' degree of autonomy, and the following:

- Autonomous actions, as defined by the youths' (a) IEP leadership, (b) number of jobs held since leaving high school, and (c) independent job seeking
- Employment outcomes, as defined by the youths' (a) hourly wages and (b) opportunities for advancement through promotion or wage increase

What do the results mean?

Parental expectations play a significant role in facilitating deaf adolescents' development of autonomy, which has an indirect and positive effect on employment outcomes in early adulthood.

"For many deaf youths, the earliest opportunity to develop self-determination takes place in the home."

Deaf adolescents, whose parents or guardians had more optimistic expectations about their future potential, had higher levels of autonomy, were more likely to find jobs independently, and had more job experience.

Deaf young adults who found their jobs independently reported higher wages on the job.

¹Garberoglio, C. L., Schoffstall, S., Cawthon, S., Bond, M., & Caemmerer, J. M. (2016). The antecedents and outcomes of autonomous behaviors: Modeling the role of autonomy in achieving sustainable employment for deaf young adults. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*. doi: 10.1007/s10882-016-9492-2



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Deaf adolescents with higher levels of autonomy were more likely to have employment with opportunities for advancement and a higher pay scale.



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