

Abstract

Background: There has been a surge in the number of deaf advocacy works led by Deaf leaders/advocates in Hong Kong. Their identification with the Deaf community was hypothesized to be a motivating factor for these works. However, less is known about the empirical relationship between the two.

Method: The present study examined the effects of dual sense of community (Deaf sense of community and Hong Konger sense of community) on two domains of critical consciousness (audism and general social issues) and mental health of the Hong Kong deaf population through a cross-sectional self-report questionnaire presented in written Chinese and Hong Kong Sign Language (HKSL) in a sample of 63 local deaf individuals.

Results: A dual sense of community and the differential effects of its constituent factors were identified. The Deaf sense of community is associated with critical motivations towards both audism and general social issues, and Hong Konger sense of community is associated with mental well-being. No mediating effect of critical reflection on the relationship between sense of community and critical motivation was found.

Conclusion: The Deaf sense of community, also a politicized collective identity, appears to push forward civil engagement in a wide range of issues. The Hong Konger sense of community, on the other hand, helps a deaf individual feel less isolated and alienated in the hearing-dominant society, and in turn supports better well-being. These results suggest the benefits of fostering the development of a dual sense of community in deaf individuals at both personal and societal levels.