



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Hearing the Unheard: Life Adaptation Struggles and Coping Mechanisms of the Deaf

Sheryll L. Torallo

Universidad de Sta. Isabel de Naga Inc., Naga City, Philippines

Corresponding Author e-mail: storallo@usi.edu.ph

Received: 25 February 2025

Revised: 27 March 2025

Accepted: 29 March 2025

Available Online: 31 March 2025

Volume IV (2025), Issue 1, P-ISSN – 2984-7567; E-ISSN - 2945-3577

<https://doi.org/10.63498/nx2st247>

Abstract

Aim: Deaf individuals are often misperceived as isolated or cognitively impaired, overlooking that deafness is an invisible sensory condition. Such misconceptions perpetuate stigma, misinformation, and barriers to inclusion. This study examined the lived experiences of Deaf individuals in the Bicol Region, highlighting their challenges and coping strategies in navigating a predominantly hearing society.

Methodology: This qualitative phenomenological study employed Colaizzi's Analysis Method, using in-depth interviews with 11 Deaf adults (aged 27–48) facilitated by Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs). The participants were selected through purposive sampling.

Results: Findings revealed that Deaf participants faced significant challenges due to communication barriers, affecting family relationships, education, employment, healthcare, and social interactions. They experienced isolation and exclusion due to limited family sign language proficiency, inaccessible education, workplace discrimination, and inadequate healthcare access. Despite these challenges, resilience emerged through self-advocacy, alternative communication strategies, community support, and technology, particularly messaging apps and video calls.

Conclusion: Communication barriers limit opportunities for Deaf individuals, resulting in exclusion and economic hardship. Achieving true inclusivity requires systemic reforms, such as accessible education, workplace accommodations, and improved healthcare services. Fostering awareness, implementing inclusive policies, and promoting accessible communication tools are essential to genuine empowerment, equality, and diversity across all sectors.

Keywords: Communication Barriers, Coping Mechanisms, Deaf, Inclusion, Life Struggles, Resilience, Systemic Reforms

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 466 million people worldwide, including 432 million adults and 34 million children, live with permanent hearing loss. This statistic is particularly relevant in the Philippines, where socioeconomic factors and middle ear problems contribute to a higher prevalence of hearing impairment (Newall et al., 2020). The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) estimates 1,784,690 individuals had hearing difficulties in 2020. These individuals come from diverse communities across the country, with most being born into hearing families where they initially communicate using home signs (Notarte-Balanquit, 2023). A significant proportion of Filipinos are estimated to experience moderate to severe hearing loss, with national trends indicating that a notable portion of this group resides in the Bicol Region.

Within this context, it is crucial to recognize that, despite the widespread nature of deafness, it is frequently misinterpreted in hearing-centric societies as a cognitive disability rather than a communication difference. Such misconceptions not only misrepresent the Deaf experience but also contribute to stigma and marginalization, compounding the daily challenges Deaf individuals face in their interactions and participation within society (DCW, 2019).



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Unlike cognitive impairments, which primarily impact intellectual functions, deafness predominantly affects linguistic processing through hearing, thereby disrupting communication, social connections, education, identity, and independence. The prevailing misperception of deafness as a cognitive issue severely restricts access to essential resources such as education, employment, and community participation, perpetuating cycles of poverty, abuse, and social exclusion (Syed et al., 2020).

Isolation emerges as a consistent theme in the lives of Deaf individuals, often beginning within their own families. Many Deaf individuals experience what has been described as the "dinner table syndrome," in which exclusion from everyday conversations leads to emotional isolation and a sense of disconnection (Hall et al., 2018). Furthermore, limited proficiency in sign language exacerbates their exclusion, both from hearing communities and from other Deaf individuals, further deepening their isolation.

For emerging Deaf adults, navigating a predominantly hearing world presents unique challenges. They must contend with communication barriers, cultural differences, and pervasive societal biases. The struggle for accommodations—often referred to as the "Deaf tax"—becomes a recurring issue, leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt (Leigh et al., 2022; Mousley & Chaudoir, 2018). As a result, many Deaf adults continue to experience isolation, loneliness, and stigma, which further entrenches their marginalization and restricts their ability to fully engage with society (Blancaflor, 2022).

The right to accessible communication is enshrined in both international and national frameworks. Article 21 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) affirms the right of persons with disabilities to express themselves through their preferred modes of communication. In the Philippines, RA No. 11106, known as the Filipino Sign Language Act, seeks to ensure dignity, independence, and equal access for Deaf individuals (ncda.gov.ph). However, achieving genuine progress requires more than legal recognition—it necessitates societal awareness, improved accessibility, and authentic representation of Deaf Filipinos.

Healthcare accessibility remains a critical issue. The UN Declaration of Human Rights underscores the right to non-discriminatory access to healthcare services (UNHRC, 2019), yet language barriers persist, resulting in inadequate health education, poor health outcomes, and heightened marginalization (Moreland et al., 2022). In the Philippines, the scarcity of interpreters and the absence of a comprehensive licensing system further limit access to necessary healthcare services (Shank & Foltz, 2019; Mendoza, 2018).

Despite these ongoing challenges, research on the Deaf community in the Philippines, especially in the Bicol Region, remains limited. Understanding the lived experiences of Deaf individuals and their coping strategies is essential for fostering greater inclusivity. This study aims to explore how Deaf individuals adapt to the communication barriers and societal biases they encounter, thereby informing policies and practices that can more effectively support their well-being.

This study integrates Heidegger's phenomenology with Werner's Theory of Resilience to examine the experiences of Deaf individuals. Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, or *Being-in-the-World*, provides a framework for understanding how individuals construct meaning and identity through their interactions with the world (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). For Deaf individuals, this process is shaped by their engagement with a predominantly hearing society, where communication barriers significantly influence self-perception and worldview. Werner's Theory of Resilience further enriches this understanding by exploring how Deaf individuals draw upon personal strengths, family support, and community resources to overcome adversity (Werner, 1995). In this context, resilience is viewed as a dynamic process where the ability to adapt, find meaning, and thrive emerges despite their challenges.

By merging Heidegger's focus on meaning-making with Werner's resilience framework, this study seeks to illuminate how Deaf individuals in the Bicol Region construct their reality, develop coping strategies, and foster resilience, identity formation, and overall well-being. The findings from this research aim to inform policy development, enhance healthcare access, improve educational practices, and influence societal attitudes towards the Deaf community. Ultimately, this research seeks to promote inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment, particularly within the Philippine context and more specifically in the Bicol Region.

Objectives

The study explored the life adaptation struggles, coping mechanisms, and resiliency among people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the Bicol Region. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How do communication barriers impact the daily lives and social interactions of deaf individuals across different settings? (family, education, and workplace)
2. What are the unique challenges deaf individuals face in developing their identity and sense of belonging in deaf and hearing communities?



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

- What coping strategies do deaf individuals employ to navigate communication challenges in a predominantly hearing environment?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and articulate the life struggles, coping mechanisms, and resilience of Deaf participants as they adapt to a predominantly hearing world. Phenomenological research is a qualitative approach that examines individuals' lived experiences while setting aside the researchers' preconceived notions about the phenomenon. This method seeks deeper insights into how individuals perceive and understand their experiences (Ho & Limpaecher, 2022). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), phenomenological research is particularly suitable for exploring complex, lived experiences, as it allows researchers to identify core themes and meanings that emerge from participants' narratives.

Martin Heidegger's phenomenology underpins this study, emphasizing the authentic exposition of the lived experiences of Deaf individuals as they navigate adaptation challenges in a hearing society. This framework facilitates the identification of fundamental themes essential for understanding the meaning and richness of their experiences. Furthermore, Colaizzi's method of data analysis was applied. This method is regarded as rigorous and robust in establishing the credibility and reliability of findings (Wirihana et al., 2018).

Population and Sampling

This study included 11 adult Deaf participants aged 27 to 48 from various provinces within the Bicol Region. Participants were either born Deaf or had profound hearing loss using Filipino Sign Language (FSL) or American Sign Language (ASL), regardless of their affiliations or roles within Deaf organizations. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, with data saturation determining the final number. Sign language proficiency was essential to ensure consistency in data collection. Certified sign language interpreters (SLIs), mainly teachers and religious sisters from an established school for the Deaf, facilitated communication throughout the study.

Instrument

This study employed an interview guide to gather in-depth data on the lived experiences and perspectives of Deaf participants, focusing on their adaptation challenges, coping mechanisms, and resilience within a predominantly hearing society. The guide outlined key questions and topics for qualitative research to facilitate effective inquiry, ensure high-quality data collection, and capture detailed participant insights.

The interview guide consisted of two sections: The first section gathered demographic information, while the second featured open-ended questions to explore participants' adaptation challenges and coping strategies. Probing questions were incorporated to encourage deeper reflection and provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. The questions were carefully translated and phrased in a "Deaf-friendly" manner, promoting accurate interpretation and comprehension. The interview guide underwent expert review and validation to enhance reliability and appropriateness. Certified Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) transcribed participants' responses verbatim onto the interview guide form during the interviews. The transcriptions were then coded for data analysis. This process ensured accuracy, facilitated verification, and supported thorough data analysis while upholding ethical standards.

Data Collection

Following approval from the panel members and the Dean of the Graduate School, the researcher coordinated with key individuals, beginning with a meeting with the local superior of SLMD to present the study and obtain permission. The initial participant meeting aimed to build rapport, provide orientation, explain ethical considerations, and outline participation details. Religious sisters from SLMD, serving as Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs), facilitated effective communication. A separate orientation was held for SLIs, including certified teachers and religious sisters proficient in ASL and FSL. They were briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, ethical guidelines, interview protocols, and scheduling. Feedback was encouraged to enhance data collection accuracy and uphold participant rights.

Eleven participants from various Bicol provinces attended pre-interview briefings covering study objectives, procedures, ethical considerations, and consent. SLIs transcribing responses verbatim conducted individual

691



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Google
Scholar

Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

interviews. Data was then systematically organized and analyzed using Colaizzi's method to ensure accuracy and depth of interpretation.

Data Analysis

In this phenomenological study, Colaizzi's data analysis method was utilized to explore and interpret the lived experiences of Deaf individuals from their perspectives. This systematic, seven-step approach is designed to extract essential meanings from participants' narratives. It comprehensively explains how communication barriers shape their daily lives, social interactions, and resilience across various settings, including family, education, and the workplace.

The analysis began with familiarization, where the researcher thoroughly read and reread transcripts to immerse themselves in participants' narratives. Significant statements related to communication barriers, challenges, coping mechanisms, and resilience were then identified, capturing key aspects of their experiences. Next, formulating meanings involved interpreting these statements to uncover underlying emotions, perceptions, and implicit meanings. As patterns emerged, related meanings were clustered into overarching themes, providing coherence and depth to the data. An exhaustive description was then developed, synthesizing themes into a detailed narrative representing the struggles, challenges, and adaptive strategies of Deaf individuals. This comprehensive account was refined by eliminating redundancies, ensuring clarity and precision in the final synthesis.

Member-checking was conducted by sharing findings with participants and experts to verify accuracy and authenticity. Feedback was incorporated to ensure alignment with participants' lived experiences. Colaizzi's method provided a nuanced exploration of Deaf individuals' experiences, revealing valuable insights into their challenges, coping strategies, and resilience within a predominantly hearing society. Supported by Maree (2019), this method proved effective for uncovering deep insights into the lived experiences of Deaf individuals, providing a reliable framework for understanding their challenges and resilience.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered strictly to ethical standards throughout the study. A comprehensive orientation was conducted for Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) to ensure they fully understand ethical guidelines, including informed consent, participant rights, and confidentiality. This training equipped SLIs to facilitate accurate and ethical communication between the researcher and participants. Before interviews commenced, the researcher thoroughly explained the informed consent process, which SLIs translated to ensure participants fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and rights. Participants were provided Ample time to ask questions or seek clarification before consenting. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any point or refuse to answer questions without explanation or negative consequences. Even after signing the consent form, participants could skip any questions they found sensitive or uncomfortable. Participants were assigned unique numerical codes to protect anonymity and confidentiality, and identifying details were excluded from all data presentations. These measures ensured participants' privacy, dignity, and autonomy were respected throughout the research process.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

From the responses of the participants, the formulated themes to describe the life adaptation struggles and coping mechanisms of the Deaf includes the following:

1. Impact of communication barriers in the daily lives and social interactions of the Deaf

THEMES

Isolating Family Dynamics
Challenging Educational Experiences
Limiting Workplace Opportunities
Compromised Healthcare Access
Restricted Community Engagement



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

1.1 Isolating Family Dynamics

The following are some of the insights provided by the participants during the interview:

"I felt alone, being the only deaf student." (R1)

"My family didn't understand me, I felt left out." (R7)

"I prefer to stay at home; I'm very shy to mingle with others." (R11)

"While my mother tried to learn basic SL, our interactions were still limited." (R4)

"I use all means to communicate, including writing notes, but I still feel distant." (R6)

For many Deaf individuals, the family—traditionally a primary support system—can be a source of isolation due to communication barriers. The lack of a shared language creates emotional distance, frustration, and strained relationships, leaving participants feeling misunderstood and excluded. Attempts by family members to learn basic sign language were often insufficient, resulting in weak emotional bonds and diminished self-esteem.

Although some family members attempted to learn basic sign language, these efforts were often limited, inconsistent, and insufficient. Participants acknowledged these attempts but noted that they rarely progressed beyond rudimentary gestures or fragmented expressions. This lack of sustained communication hindered the formation of genuine emotional bonds, contributing to feelings of neglect, frustration, and diminished self-esteem.

Participants' accounts revealed the inadequacy of available communication methods—such as gestures, writing, and mobile phones—for conveying basic information. While these methods were practical, they failed to capture emotional depth, leaving participants feeling emotionally distant from their families. One participant poignantly said, "They hear me but don't understand me."

The emotional disconnect experienced within the family often extended beyond the household. Participants described withdrawing from social situations, fearing misunderstanding or rejection. This reluctance to engage socially was frequently linked to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, contributing to heightened anxiety and, in some cases, depression. Such findings align with McLaughlin et al. (2018), who noted that Deaf individuals raised in non-signing households often experience greater rates of depression and social withdrawal. Santos (2021) further emphasized that family acceptance and active communication significantly enhance the sense of belonging among Deaf Filipinos.

The participants' experiences highlight an urgent need for family-centered interventions to bridge communication gaps. Programs that promote accessible sign language education for families could foster emotional connections and inclusivity, allowing Deaf individuals to feel genuinely understood and supported. Awareness campaigns encouraging families to learn and use sign language consistently may also strengthen familial relationships, promoting emotional well-being and resilience.

Ultimately, addressing these communication barriers within the family is essential for improving the emotional and social well-being of Deaf individuals. Creating supportive and inclusive home environments can empower Deaf individuals to engage more confidently with the broader community, enhancing their overall quality of life.

1.2 Challenging Educational Experiences

The following are some of the insights provided by the participants during the interview

"Some teachers did not know SL, making learning difficult." (R2)

"College was very difficult because the teachers and classmates did not know SL." (R3)

"Teachers did not use SL, so I struggled to understand lessons." (R7)

"High school was sad because classmates bullied me." (R2)

"I felt ignored when group activities were happening, and I wasn't included." (R8)

"I wanted to finish school, but my parents didn't have jobs, so I felt very sad." (R9)

"High school was sad because classmates bullied me." (R2)

Deaf students face substantial learning barriers, including the absence of sign language-proficient teachers, inadequate accommodations, and peer bullying. These obstacles hinder their academic engagement and participation, leading to frustration, exclusion, and limited growth. Consequently, their career opportunities are



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

restricted, and financial difficulties further exacerbate these challenges by limiting access to Deaf-friendly educational environments.

The study showed that while some Deaf students found support in schools with Deaf peers, transitioning to mainstream institutions often resulted in academic struggles and emotional distress. Many reported feeling isolated as the only Deaf student in their class, and without sign language-proficient teachers, they struggled to fully comprehend lessons, affecting their engagement and learning outcomes.

Despite attempts by families and schools to provide sign language instruction, these efforts were typically inconsistent and inadequate in bridging communication gaps. The absence of qualified teachers and insufficient accommodations prevented meaningful interaction with peers and instructors, leaving students disconnected from their educational experiences.

Participants reported frequent bullying and discrimination in mainstream settings, which significantly increased their emotional distress and reduced their motivation to remain engaged in their studies. Coupled with financial constraints, these factors contributed to a higher rate of educational discontinuation, despite participants' desire to continue their education. These findings are consistent with previous research, such as Garcia & Santos (2021), which identified the lack of accommodations in Philippine schools as a key factor leading to higher dropout rates. Similarly, Bauman et al. (2020) found that inclusive policies, including the employment of sign language-proficient teachers and the provision of interpreters, were positively associated with improved educational outcomes.

The implications are clear: without adequate support, Deaf students face barriers that hinder their academic growth and future opportunities, affecting their long-term career prospects and economic independence. To address these issues, structural reforms are essential, focusing on the hiring of qualified teachers, providing necessary accommodations, and enforcing anti-bullying measures. These actions can foster inclusive learning environments, ensuring Deaf students have equal access to academic opportunities, paving the way for their future success.

1.3 Limiting Workplace Opportunities

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"I feel less privileged in terms of education and employment." (R2)

"Limited job opportunities for the deaf, making it difficult to be independent." (R8)

"I want to help other deaf find jobs and become productive members of society." (R7)

"Job hunting is very challenging and intimidating for the deaf." (R9)

"I always feel I have to prove I am capable before being given a chance." (R10)

"I consider myself less privileged, and it's very hard to cope with progress." (R11)

Employment opportunities for Deaf individuals remain limited due to systemic barriers such as employers' lack of awareness, inadequate accommodations, and communication difficulties. Many participants reported feeling undervalued and struggling to secure stable jobs despite their skills and willingness to work. Common challenges include discrimination during hiring, limited career progression, and the constant need to prove their capabilities. Some participants found inclusive workplaces where colleagues made efforts to bridge communication gaps. However, most relied on writing or gestures, often inadequate for effective collaboration. The disparity in employment opportunities between hearing and Deaf individuals contributes to isolation and underutilization. Several participants described job hunting as an intimidating and frustrating experience. Even after securing employment, limited career growth opportunities remained a pressing issue. Many felt undervalued and overlooked for promotions due to communication barriers in the workplace.

Based on the findings, many workplaces lack the necessary accommodations for deaf employees, leading to underemployment and restricted career advancement. Without inclusive policies and communication support, deaf individuals often feel undervalued in professional settings. Employment offers a sense of independence and dignity, yet many deaf individuals struggle to secure stable jobs due to systemic discrimination and accessibility barriers. The lack of accessible employment leads to financial insecurity, limiting independence and reinforcing harmful stereotypes about Deaf individuals' capabilities. Delgado and Cruz (2022) noted that Deaf Filipinos are often confined to low-paying jobs due to employers' misconceptions. Globally, Shaw and Levesque (2019) emphasized that companies with inclusive hiring policies—such as interpreter services and accessibility training—experience higher employee retention rates. Research on Deaf workers in the Philippines indicates that age, employment status, and work experience significantly impact job retention (Inderscience, 2022). Tailored employment strategies addressing these challenges are essential for improving job stability and career advancement. Despite these obstacles, participants strongly

694



ETCOR Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

desired to advocate for the Deaf community and better employment opportunities. Their resilience reflects a commitment to challenging systemic barriers and promoting inclusivity through accessible hiring practices, accommodations, and awareness initiatives.

1.4 Compromised Healthcare Access

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"No SLI available, interaction was very challenging." (R1)

"My sister helps me talk to the doctor." (R3)

"I still have to pay and go to another hospital because services aren't always free." (R6)

"Going to the hospital is hard. I have to write notes to communicate." (R9)

"There is a lack of interpreters in medical settings, making access difficult." (R11)

Participants shared their experiences navigating healthcare systems where sign language interpreters were often unavailable, making it difficult to communicate medical concerns and understand doctors' instructions. Without professional interpreters, many relied on family members or writing notes, which were inadequate for detailed discussions, further hindering access to proper care.

The study highlighted the persistent issue of healthcare accessibility for Deaf individuals, emphasizing the communication barriers that compromise their ability to receive accurate care. The lack of sign language interpreters (SLIs) and visual aids leads to misdiagnoses, improper treatment, and reluctance to seek medical attention, contributing to stress and a sense of exclusion.

Participants also expressed concerns about the financial burden of healthcare, as government assistance did not always cover necessary services. These financial and communication challenges made healthcare a source of stress, deepening frustration, and helplessness.

The findings underscore the need for Deaf-friendly healthcare services, including trained interpreters and visual aids. The absence of these services marginalizes the Deaf community, preventing equitable care. Supporting research (Tan & Mendoza, 2018; Medina & Reyes, 2022) confirms that Deaf individuals in Southeast Asia struggle with communication barriers in healthcare. Accessible healthcare policies are essential, requiring hospitals to provide interpreters, visual aids, and digital tools.

1.5 Restricted Community Engagement

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"Sometimes I only observe but do not communicate" (R2)"

"Attends Sunday worship if with interpreter." (R4)

"I sometimes pay an interpreter to help with official transactions." (R5)

"Sometimes I attend prayer worship because there is interpreter." (R5)

"I learned to be more cautious when talking with others." (R7)

"I just attend mass online, because there's interpreter." (R10)

"No SLI during Mass." (R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10)

Deaf individuals often face exclusion from public and social spaces due to communication barriers, particularly the absence of interpreters in religious services, government offices, and public events. This lack of accommodation reinforces societal isolation and limits participation. Despite efforts from some hearing individuals to communicate, many Deaf individuals continue to feel misunderstood or excluded.

Findings revealed that limited social participation and restricted access to community services hinder the Deaf individual's integration into mainstream society. Public and private spaces frequently lack awareness and accommodations, further alienating the Deaf community. Religious participation also presents challenges, with many places of worship lacking sign language interpreters, making it difficult for Deaf individuals to engage in services. This exclusion contributes to feelings of loneliness and marginalization. Napier et al. (2019) noted that social participation improves significantly when public spaces provide interpreters and Deaf-friendly services. However, technological advancements, social media, and Deaf organizations provide alternative avenues for engagement and community-building. Deaf organizations, in particular, offer emotional support, empowerment, and a sense of belonging.



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

While resilience, technology, and support systems help navigate these challenges, advocacy for inclusive policies remains essential. Promoting sign language education, ensuring interpreter availability at public events, and fostering inclusive educational and workplace environments are crucial steps toward equality. Ultimately, communication barriers limit personal growth, social integration, and economic opportunities for the Deaf community. Addressing these challenges through comprehensive policies, awareness programs, and inclusive practices is essential for creating a society where Deaf individuals can fully participate without limitations.

2. Challenges Deaf individuals face in identity development and sense of belonging

THEMES

Communication Barriers in Identity Formation
Navigating Dual Cultural Identities
Isolation and Struggles with Belonging
Stigma and Misconceptions About Deafness
Limited Role Models and Representation

2.1 Communication Barriers in Identity Formation

The following are some of the remarkable statements from the participants during the interview:

- "I felt alone, being the only deaf student; My classmates didn't understand me." (R1)
- "It is hard to communicate with hearing people because I am often misunderstood." (R2)
- "It was very difficult to communicate with my family." (R3)
- "My family didn't understand me; I felt left out." (R7)
- "I use all means to communicate, including typing messages on my cellphone" (R4)
- "Growing up was difficult, but now I can interact well because I studied SL." (R5)
- "I learned to be more cautious when talking with others." (R7)
- "I try to approach hearing people even though I know they won't understand me well." (R10)

For Deaf individuals, communication barriers, cultural expectations, and societal perceptions shape identity and relationships. Limited access leads to isolation, frustration, and stigma. Participants reported struggles with identity formation, navigating dual cultures, coping with exclusion, and finding relatable role models.

Based on the findings, the lack of accessible communication methods often leads to exclusion, frustration, and limited participation in family discussions, educational settings, and social interactions. Many Deaf individuals struggle to express themselves and feel understood within their families, which exacerbates feelings of isolation and frustration. These communication barriers hinder identity formation and personal growth, as effective interaction is essential for social development. Misunderstandings and lack of awareness from hearing individuals further deepen this divide, making it difficult for Deaf individuals to establish relationships and feel included in school and social settings. The absence of accessible communication tools like sign language creates significant obstacles in personal and social interactions.

Despite these challenges, many Deaf individuals demonstrate resilience by developing adaptive strategies to engage with the hearing world. However, communication barriers can still result in social withdrawal, decreased self-esteem, and emotional distress. Without proper language acquisition and communication support, Deaf individuals face higher risks of academic underperformance and social exclusion. Early linguistic barriers, experienced at home, school, and in social settings, persist into adulthood, hindering career development and limiting future opportunities (Stemela-Zali et al., 2022).

Addressing these issues requires promoting sign language education among families, ensuring interpreter availability, and implementing inclusive communication strategies across various social settings. Research indicates that structured sign language instruction positively correlates with higher educational attainment and improved social confidence (Sagala, 2024). Therefore, institutions should integrate mandatory sign language training to mitigate the negative impacts of communication barriers on identity formation.



Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

2.2 Navigating Dual Cultural Identities

The following are some of the significant statements from the participants during the interview:

"I feel happy when hearing people try to communicate with me." (R1).

"I feel happy when I see hearing people making an effort to communicate with us." (R2).

"All people are equal, but the problem is deaf people cannot hear and need help from hearing people." (R2).

"I feel like I belong neither fully to the hearing world nor the deaf world." (R3).

"The deaf community helps me feel a sense of belonging" (R4).

"Being in a deaf organization gave me a sense of belonging." (R5).

"Growing up, the people around me accepted me and made me feel that I belong." (R5).

"It's hard to fit in with the hearing community, but I keep trying." (R6).

"I feel comfortable with hearing people because they try to understand me." (R7).

"In Manila, I met good hearing people, but in Bicol, few know SL, and that makes me sad." (R10).

Navigating dual cultural identities is a significant challenge for Deaf individuals, who often find themselves caught between the Deaf and hearing worlds. This creates cultural dissonance as they try to reconcile two contrasting social realities. Within the Deaf community, participants feel a strong sense of belonging, but interactions with the hearing world often led to disconnection and exclusion. This cultural divide creates internal identity conflicts, with many Deaf individuals feeling torn between their Deaf identity and the pressure to integrate into a hearing-dominated society.

This negotiation between cultural worlds leads to identity conflicts. Deaf individuals struggle to balance integrating into the hearing culture while maintaining ties to the Deaf community, sometimes leading to alienation from both sides. However, positive interactions with hearing individuals can foster social inclusion, self-esteem, and integration. Genuine efforts by hearing individuals to understand Deaf experiences help create a more inclusive environment.

The tension between embracing a Deaf identity and conforming to hearing norms highlights the complexity of bicultural identity. Research shows that individuals with strong bicultural identities experience better psychological well-being, while those struggling with integration face higher stress and social anxiety (Sintos, 2020). Studies also indicate that Deaf individuals receiving sign and spoken language support have better job retention and social satisfaction. Sagala (2024) emphasized the importance of inclusive workplace programs and education to reduce identity conflicts. Coworker and leader support significantly shape employees' optimism about inclusion and their belief in the impact of their own actions. While no universal approach exists, employees worldwide are more likely to trust inclusion efforts when they see leadership and peer commitment (Dalessandro & Lovell, 2024).

To address these challenges, it is crucial to promote inclusivity by educating the hearing community about Deaf culture and communication strategies. Strengthening Deaf organizations and encouraging mutual learning of sign language and spoken communication can empower individuals to navigate their dual identities confidently.

2.3 Isolation and Struggles with Belonging

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"Sometimes I only observe but do not communicate." (R2)

"It is hard to communicate with hearing people because I am often misunderstood." (R2)

"It's hard to fit in with the hearing community, but I keep trying." (R6)

"In a deaf group, I feel unrestricted. We understand each other." (R10)

"The deaf community helps me grow as a person by teaching me to do good things; I can interact with others, and develop spiritually." (R11)

"I prefer to stay at home; I'm very shy to mingle with others." (R11)

"I try to approach hearing people even though I know they won't understand me well." (R10)

Deaf individuals frequently encounter social isolation and challenges related to belonging, especially when immersed in hearing-dominated environments. Many participants described feelings of loneliness and exclusion, particularly when they are the only deaf person in their family, school, or workplace. Several participants articulated



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

their struggles in hearing-dominated environments, highlighting how communication barriers often render them passive observers rather than active participants. Negative past experiences and communication barriers often result in withdrawal from social interactions.

Findings revealed that the absence of accessible communication avenues contributed significantly to social exclusion among Deaf individuals. This exclusion often resulted in passive participation, where individuals were physically present but remained emotionally and socially detached. Such experiences undermined confidence, hindered personal growth, and restricted meaningful engagement in social activities. The difficulty in forming connections further exacerbated isolation, which, as Sintos (2020) noted, manifested in heightened anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Despite these challenges, Deaf-centric spaces provided essential environments where individuals felt understood, accepted, and free to engage fully. These supportive communities promoted personal growth, spiritual development, and overall well-being. However, the fear of being misunderstood persisted for some, leading to avoidance of social interactions even within inclusive spaces.

The implications of these findings emphasized the need for comprehensive efforts to address social isolation within the Deaf population. Creating inclusive environments in schools, workplaces, and community settings was essential to fostering acceptance and belonging. Moreover, community-driven initiatives and policies that ensured accessible communication systems and the presence of sign language interpreters were vital in reducing isolation. Ensuring that Deaf individuals felt valued and supported required structures that acknowledged their linguistic and cultural needs, ultimately promoting their well-being and personal growth.

2.4 Stigma and Misconceptions About Deafness

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"Classmates made fun of me, laughed at me, and fought with me." (R2)

"Friends bullied me. I felt hurt and angry." (R4)

"Some HP have no consideration—'Kapag deaf, alis!'" (R9)

"I want to prove that deaf individuals are just as capable as hearing people." (R4)

Participants shared their experiences of encountering discrimination across various settings, including schools, workplaces, and public spaces, largely due to harmful stereotypes that equate deafness with inability. These stereotypes, which portray Deaf individuals as incapable or less intelligent, create significant barriers to equal opportunities and inclusion. Many participants recalled facing prejudice from an early age, an experience that continued to impact their lives into adulthood. This persistent marginalization, they explained, often led to feelings of exclusion and frustration.

The misconception that deafness implies a lack of intelligence or competence continues to shape societal attitudes and complicates Deaf individuals' ability to advocate for themselves and their community. Participants highlighted how these negative perceptions contribute to bullying, discrimination, and broader social exclusion. The stigma surrounding deafness often makes it difficult for Deaf individuals to access equal opportunities, whether in education, employment, or social engagement.

These findings highlight the urgent need to challenge societal misconceptions about deafness. Participants emphasized the importance of increasing public awareness of Deaf culture and promoting inclusivity as essential steps in breaking down the barriers they face. By advocating for positive media representations, implementing inclusive workplace policies, and supporting Deaf individuals in leadership roles, society can begin to dismantle harmful stereotypes and create more equitable opportunities for the Deaf community.

These statements reveal how negative perceptions and biases contribute to discriminatory practices and exclusion, further complicating the lived experiences of deaf individuals. Misconceptions often stem from a lack of awareness about deafness and deaf culture. Sagala (2024) addressed these biases, emphasizing the need for societal change to dismantle barriers that prevent the full integration of deaf individuals into various social and professional spheres.

Effective advocacy is crucial in addressing the discrimination that Deaf individuals face. Public awareness campaigns, inclusive policies, and leadership representation are vital in combating negative perceptions and ensuring full inclusion. Only through these efforts can we reduce discrimination and build a more inclusive, supportive environment for Deaf individuals.



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

2.5 Limited Role Models and Representation

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"I wanted to finish school, but my parents didn't have jobs."

"Job hunting is very challenging and intimidating for the deaf." (R9)

"I need to comply with the requirements for the CSE but I haven't passed yet." (R8)

"I consider myself less privileged, and it's very hard to cope with progress." (R11)

The study uncovered a significant issue regarding the lack of visible role models and representation for Deaf individuals, which emerged as a critical factor affecting their aspirations and self-confidence. Many participants shared how they struggled to meet societal and institutional expectations, particularly about career advancement. A key concern expressed by participants was the scarcity of Deaf professionals in leadership positions, academia, and media representation. This absence of Deaf figures in influential roles leaves many individuals without clear figures to emulate or aspire to, further complicating their ability to envision success.

The lack of representation in these areas creates barriers to personal and professional growth. Without visible role models, many Deaf individuals find it difficult to imagine what they could achieve. This lack of mentorship and representation reinforces societal stereotypes that limit the perceived potential of the Deaf community, often resulting in feelings of marginalization. Participants described how systemic barriers hinder their ability to advance in their careers and fully integrate into society.

Research supports these findings, with Sintos (2020) demonstrating that Deaf students with access to mentors and role models are 50% more likely to pursue higher education and leadership positions. Espineda (2024) further emphasizes the power of positive media representation in shaping career aspirations and altering societal perceptions of Deaf individuals. Without these essential sources of inspiration and guidance, the Deaf community continues to face barriers to social mobility and self-empowerment.

Addressing this lack of representation requires a multi-faceted approach, including creating mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, and an increased presence of Deaf individuals in media and public life. Participants expressed the need for greater visibility of successful Deaf professionals to inspire younger generations, shift societal expectations, and promote inclusivity.

This study highlights the crucial need for visible role models within the Deaf community to help foster confidence, encourage career aspirations, and promote social integration. To break down the systemic barriers that have historically excluded Deaf individuals from positions of power and influence, it is essential to support the development of mentorship programs and increase the representation of Deaf people in leadership roles and media. Only then can Deaf individuals truly see and realize their full potential.

3. Coping strategies Deaf individuals employ to navigate communication challenges

THEMES

Use of Alternative Communication Methods

Utilizing Technology for Communication

Seeking Support from Others

Adapting to Social and Workplace Challenges

3.1 Use of Alternative Communication Methods

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"I use my cellphone, facial expressions, and gestures to communicate." (R1)

"I use facial expressions, gestures, and write notes when communicating with hearing people." (R2)

"I use hand gestures and facial expressions to explain myself." (R3, R6)

"I type messages on my cellphone." (R4)

"I use writing as an alternative when SL was not understood." (R6)

"I try to understand by reading lips, but it is difficult when people talk too fast." (R6)

"I write notes or type messages on my phone when talking to hearing people." (R7)



ETCOR Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

"I sometimes rely on lip-reading to understand basic words, though it's difficult." (R11)

A predominant theme emerging from the participants' narratives was the adoption of alternative communication methods. In the absence of sign language interpretation, Deaf individuals relied on gestures and facial expressions as essential communication tools. These nonverbal cues provided an immediate and accessible way to express thoughts and emotions, helping bridge the communication gap in everyday interactions. However, participants acknowledged that these methods were often insufficient, particularly in complex conversations requiring greater depth or specificity.

The study's findings revealed that Deaf individuals frequently turned to written communication, gestures, and lip-reading to interact with hearing individuals. While these approaches were sometimes effective, they were often time-consuming, impractical, or prone to miscommunication. These challenges were especially pronounced in fast-paced or noisy environments, where clear communication was difficult. The limited availability of sign language interpreters further exacerbated these difficulties, highlighting a critical need for broader accessibility measures to ensure effective communication in all settings. Participants repeatedly emphasized communication accessibility gaps as a persistent challenge throughout the study.

Through their experiences, participants illustrated the broader societal issue of insufficient inclusive communication tools and a general lack of awareness about the needs of the Deaf community. The study also underscored the importance of early exposure to accessible communication strategies. Research by Tan and Mendoza (2018) indicated that when families are trained in sign language, Deaf individuals experience significantly improved social engagement. This suggests that fostering communication skills from an early age can mitigate many of the challenges faced by Deaf individuals.

These findings highlight the necessity of comprehensive communication policies that include widespread sign language education, greater access to interpreter services, and the development of technology that facilitates easier communication. Implementing such measures would reduce communication barriers, enhance inclusivity, and allow Deaf individuals to participate more fully in social, educational, and professional environments. Addressing these issues is essential for empowering Deaf individuals to navigate their environments with confidence and equal opportunities.

3.2 Utilizing Technology for Communication

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

"The internet and technology are great help to the deaf and the hearing community." (R1)

"I rely heavily on the internet for communication, staying socially connected, and keeping up with news and trends." (R3)

"As a data encoder, I heavily rely on computers and the internet." (R7)

"I use my phone to send video messages and connect with my family and friends." (R7)

"I'm happy to use technology because video calls and meetings allow me to communicate with both the deaf and hearing people." (R8)

"I use video calls, texts, social media to communicate with hearing people." (R1, R5, R10)

"I watch TV with captions or use apps to translate speech." (R7, R8)

"I watch news with SL interpretation to stay updated." (R10)

"I rely on social media and online news with SL interpreters to stay updated." (R10)

Participants in the study shared their experiences of relying on digital tools, such as social media and instant messaging, to maintain relationships and access information. They emphasized how video calls and messaging applications were essential for real-time interaction, enabling sign language or text communication. Participants noted that these tools bridged communication gaps, fostering connection and self-expression, especially when face-to-face interaction was unavailable.

The findings revealed technology's central role in fostering social inclusion for Deaf individuals. Participants identified digital platforms, video calls, and mobile apps as crucial for staying connected, accessing information, and self-expression. Participants found these tools helpful in navigating communication challenges and maintaining relationships in a society where direct communication is often limited. Despite their benefits, many participants raised concerns about the affordability of assistive technologies and accessibility barriers within the Deaf community.



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Participants pointed out that while these technologies were valuable, they were not always accessible due to financial constraints. Additionally, gaps in media accessibility—particularly in news broadcasts and online content—remained a significant issue for Deaf individuals.

These findings highlight the need for inclusive digital policies that enhance affordability and accessibility for Deaf individuals. Supporting studies, such as Santos et al. (2019), demonstrate that assistive technology significantly improves access to education, employment, and social interactions for the Deaf community. However, these benefits are often limited by high costs and a lack of widespread availability.

3.3 Seeking Support from Others

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

- "My sister acts as my interpreter when needed and whenever possible." (R1)*
- "My parents studied SL to communicate with me better." (R2)*
- "My family motivates me to face challenges in life. They accept my disabilities as a deaf person." (R2)*
- "My sister helps me talk to the doctor." (R3)*
- "My best friend and mentor always give me advice." (R4)*
- "My mother and sisters are my medium of communication." (R5)*
- "My sister, who knows sign language, always volunteers to assist me when communicating with healthcare providers." (R6)*
- "My parents learned SL so we could communicate better." (R10)*
- "My mother served as my interpreter, bridging the gap between me and the healthcare workers." (R11)*
- "I feel happy when hearing people making an effort to communicate with us." (R2, R11)*
- "I feel comfortable talking with other deaf people who understand me." (R3, R4, R8)*
- "I felt comfortable in school because my classmates were also deaf." (R1, R3, R5)*
- "School felt like home because all my classmates were deaf." (R10)*

Social support emerged as a critical factor in the well-being and confidence of Deaf individuals. Participants in the study shared that having supportive family members, friends, and a strong Deaf community provided them with emotional stability and a profound sense of belonging. These social networks played a pivotal role in enhancing their self-esteem and helping them navigate the challenges they faced.

The findings revealed that Deaf individuals with strong social support systems experienced significant improvements in their mental health and psychological resilience. The emotional backing from family and friends, particularly when family members took the initiative to learn sign language, made a marked difference in the participants' lives. This effort to bridge communication gaps enhanced communication and strengthened emotional bonds. These family-centered interactions created an environment of support and belonging, helping to mitigate feelings of isolation and fostering a greater sense of security. Bautista (2020) noted that inclusive family relationships are linked to positive psychological outcomes and increased emotional well-being.

These findings highlight the importance of implementing programs encouraging family involvement in sign language learning. Such programs do more than improve communication; they foster a sense of belonging and emotional stability, which is crucial for the psychological well-being of Deaf individuals. The study also pointed to the value of Deaf-hearing collaborations to enhance social integration and resilience.

In light of these findings, policymakers, educators, and community leaders must prioritize accessible communication initiatives, culturally appropriate support systems, and inclusive education. By implementing these initiatives, they can create an environment where Deaf individuals feel empowered to participate fully in society and are provided with the tools to overcome the barriers they face.

Ultimately, the study underscores that social support, especially through family-centered education programs and Deaf-hearing collaborations, is vital to the well-being and social integration of Deaf individuals. When these support systems are nurtured and promoted, they can help reduce feelings of isolation and contribute to a stronger, more resilient Deaf community.



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

3.4 Adapting to Social and Workplace Challenges

The following are some of the insights given by the participants during the interview:

- "I use all means to communicate at work, including typing messages on my cellphone." (R4)*
- "I watch and observe how hearing people communicate." (R2, R7)*
- "I had to work extra hard to fit into the workplace." (R10)*
- "I cope with pressure by overworking or binge eating." (R1)*
- "I focus on work and manage time to cope with stress and maintain productivity." (R1)*
- "It is hard to communicate with HP, but I feel happy when I interact with the deaf." (R2)*
- "I always think that I am happy with my work and want to see beautiful faces." (R3)*
- "I explain my condition to hearing people and ask them to speak slowly." (R6, R10)*

Managing professional and social spaces poses unique challenges for Deaf individuals, who often rely on written notes, mobile phones, and direct observation to communicate in the workplace. These strategies, while effective to some extent, require significant effort, especially when accommodations are limited.

Findings show that Deaf individuals face substantial workplace barriers, including persistent discrimination and inadequate support. Many participants reported difficulty advancing professionally without proper accommodations, echoing Carter et al. (2023), who identified communication support and discrimination as key factors in job dissatisfaction and career stagnation. Self-advocacy emerged as a primary coping strategy, with participants educating colleagues on their communication needs to improve interactions.

The findings emphasized the need for greater societal awareness and inclusive workplace policies. Johnson and Lee (2022) found that companies with inclusive practices, such as sign language interpreters and sensitivity training, see improved job retention among Deaf employees. Further, accessibility policies—like assistive technologies and supportive social networks—are critical to fostering inclusive environments.

The study highlights Deaf individuals' resilience while stressing the need for systemic changes. Policies supporting assistive technologies, social networks, and workplace accommodations are vital to promote inclusivity and accessibility, empowering Deaf individuals to thrive professionally and socially.

Conclusions

Deaf individuals in the Bicol Region face significant communication barriers that impact their relationships, education, employment, healthcare, and social interactions. Despite these challenges, they exhibit resilience and adaptability. Family communication gaps often lead to emotional isolation, but learning sign language strengthens relationships. Inaccessible teaching methods and bullying hinder learning in education, whereas Deaf-friendly environments enhance it. Workplace discrimination limits career growth, though advocacy and entrepreneurship provide alternatives. In healthcare, communication barriers contribute to misdiagnoses and reluctance to seek treatment. While support from Deaf organizations, technology, and peer networks offers some relief, systemic reforms, and greater societal awareness are essential for true empowerment. These findings align with Heidegger's phenomenology and Werner's Theory of Resilience, underscoring the need for inclusive communication frameworks and resilience-focused interventions. The results emphasize the need for inclusive communication frameworks and resilience-focused interventions to promote social integration, well-being, and empowerment.

Recommendations

Addressing communication barriers among Deaf individuals in the Bicol Region requires a comprehensive approach. Strengthening family communication through sign language training can reduce emotional isolation and foster deeper connections. In education, creating Deaf-friendly environments with accessible teaching methods and anti-bullying initiatives can enhance learning experiences.

Employment opportunities must be expanded by promoting workplace inclusivity, implementing reasonable accommodations, and supporting Deaf entrepreneurship for financial independence. In healthcare, improving accessibility through trained professionals, interpreters, and visual communication aids can lead to better medical outcomes.

Technology should be leveraged to bridge communication gaps by investing in assistive devices and ensuring affordable internet access. Lastly, raising public awareness, enforcing inclusive policies, and collaborating with Deaf organizations are crucial to achieving greater societal acceptance and integration.



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Achieving inclusivity will require collective societal efforts to foster accessibility, awareness, and acceptance, ultimately creating a more equitable environment for Deaf individuals.

REFERENCES

- Bauman, H., Holcomb, T., & Nelson, J. (2020). The impact of inclusive policies on Deaf education: A global perspective. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 25(3), 210-228.
- Bautista, R. (2020). The role of family support in mental health and resilience among Deaf individuals. *Journal of Deaf Studies*, 18(4), 142-155.
- Blancaflor, D. (2022). UP webinar unpacks the silent epidemic of deafness. *University of the Philippines*. <https://up.edu.ph/up-webinar-unpacks-the-silent-epidemic-of-deafness/>
- Carter, J., Smith, R., & Nguyen, T. (2023). Barriers to professional advancement among Deaf employees: The impact of communication accessibility. *Journal of Workplace Inclusion*, 15(2), 45-63.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dalessandro, C., & Lovell, A. (2024). Workplace inclusion initiatives across the globe: The importance of leader and coworker support for employees' attitudes, beliefs, and planned behaviors. *Societies*, 14(11), 231. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14110231>
- Deaf Child Worldwide. (2019). *Championing deaf children's rights to family, community, education and independence in developing countries*. National Deaf Children's Society. <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/6523/deaf-child-worldwide-unheard-children-report.pdf>
- Delgado, M., & Cruz, P. (2022). Workplace discrimination against deaf employees: Barriers and solutions. *Employment and Disability Studies*, 17(4), 78-95.
- Espineda, M. (2024). Media representation and its influence on Deaf identity and career aspirations. *International Journal of Deaf Studies and Communication*, 19(1), 55-78.
- Garcia, M., & Santos, L. (2021). Barriers to education: Examining the impact of inadequate accommodations on Deaf students in the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Special Education Studies*, 18(1), 45-63.
- Hall, W. C., Smith, S. R., Sutter, E. J., DeWindt, L. A., & Dye, T. D. V. (2018). Considering parental hearing status as a social determinant of deaf population health: Insights from experiences of the "Dinner table syndrome." *PLOS One*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6124705/>
- Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. (2022). What is phenomenological research design? *Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data*. <https://delvetool.com/blog/phenomenology>
- Horrigan-Kelly, M., Millar, M., & Dowling, M. (2016). Understanding the key tenets of Heidegger's philosophy for interpretive phenomenological research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916680634>
- Inderscience. (2022). Age, employment status, and work experience as determinants of job retention among Deaf workers in the Philippines. *International Journal of Disability Management*, 15(3), 45-60.
- Johnson, M., & Lee, S. (2022). The role of inclusive workplace practices in improving job retention for Deaf employees. *Disability and Employment Journal*, 10(1), 78-95.



ETCOR

INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00

Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

- Leigh, I. W., Avila, T. G., Harries, R. L., & Andrews, J. F. (2022). *Deaf culture: Exploring Deaf communities in the United States* (2nd ed.). Google Books. https://books.google.com.ph/books/about/Deaf_Culture.html?id=uq4EEAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y
- Maree, J. G. (2019). Narrative research in career counselling: The career construction interview. In S. Laher, A. Fynn, & S. Kramer (Eds.), *Transforming research methods in the social sciences: Case studies from South Africa* (pp. 186–202). Wits University Press. <https://doi.org/10.18772/22019032750.17>
- McLaughlin, J., Perez, R., & Diaz, M. (2018). The impact of non-signing households on the mental health of deaf individuals. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Psychology*, 14(2), 91–107.
- Medina, A., & Reyes, K. (2022). Accessible healthcare policies for the deaf in the Philippines. *Health Policy and Accessibility Journal*, 9(3), 88–102.
- Mendoza, A. (2018). The sign language unique to deaf Filipinos. *CNN Philippines*. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/2018/10/29/Filipino-Sign-Language.html>
- Moreland, C. J., Meeks, L. M., Nahid, M., Panzer, K., & Fancher, T. L. (2022). Exploring accommodations along the education to employment pathway for deaf and hard-of-hearing healthcare professionals. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 3403. <https://bmcmmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-022-03403-w>
- Mousley, V., & Chaudoir, S. (2018). Deaf stigma: Links between stigma and well-being among deaf emerging adults. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 23(4), 341–350. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/eny018>
- Napier, J., McKee, R., & Goswell, D. (2019). Social participation and interpreter accessibility: The key to an inclusive society. *International Journal of Sign Language Studies*, 15(2), 45–68
- National Council on Disability Affairs. (2021). *Republic of the Philippines National Council on Disability Affairs: Pambansang Sanggunian Ukol sa Ugnayang Pangmaykapansanan*. National Council on Disability Affairs. <https://ncda.gov.ph/a-resolution-approving-the-guidelines-for-the-provision-of-assistive-devices-and-technology-services-in-the-philippines-ncda-board-resolution-no-4-s-2021/>
- Newall, J. P., Martinez, N., Swanepoel, W., & McMahon, C. M. (2020). A national survey of hearing loss in the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 32(5), 235–241.
- Notarte-Balanquit, L. T. (2023). Filipino Sign Language research. *Department of Linguistics - UP Diliman*. <https://linguistics.upd.edu.ph/news/liberty-notarte-balanquit-presents-filipino-sign-language-research/>
- Sagala, M. (2024). Integrating deaf employees into the workforce: Successes and challenges. *Philippine Journal of Workplace Inclusion*, 10(1), 39–55.
- Santos, L., Rivera, J., & Cruz, M. (2019). The role of assistive technology in improving accessibility for the Deaf community: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Accessibility and Assistive Technology Research*, 15(2), 87–105.
- Santos, R. (2021). The role of family acceptance in fostering a sense of belonging among deaf individuals. *Journal of Deaf Culture and Identity*, 16(4), 123–140.
- Shank, C., & Foltz, A. (2020). *Health and wellbeing for deaf communities in Wales: Scoping for a Wales-wide survey*. Retrieved August 10, 2024, from <http://deaf-communities-wales.bangor.ac.uk>
- Shaw, P., & Levesque, N. (2019). The impact of inclusive hiring policies on employee retention for deaf professionals. *Journal of Workplace Diversity and Inclusion*, 7(1), 76–89.



ETCOR
INTERNATIONAL
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Educational Research Center Inc.
SEC Reg. No. 2024020137294-00
Sta. Ana, Pampanga, Philippines



Website: <https://etcor.org>



iJOINED ETCOR
P - ISSN 2984-7567
E - ISSN 2945-3577



The Exigency
P - ISSN 2984-7842
E - ISSN 1908-3181

Sintos, D. (2020). Bicultural identity and psychological well-being in deaf individuals: A case study in the Philippines. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Mental Health*, 11(2), 55–72.

Stemela-Zali, U., Kathard, H., & Sefotho, M. (2022). The matrix of linguistic exclusions impeding career construction for D/deaf learners. *African Journal of Disability*, 11, 935. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.935>

Syed, I. H., Awan, W. A., & Syeda, U. B. (2020). Caregiver burden among parents of hearing-impaired and intellectually disabled children in Pakistan. *Iranian Journal of Public Health*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7231703/>

Tan, J., & Mendoza, C. (2018). Barriers to healthcare access for deaf individuals in Southeast Asia. *Asian Journal of Disability Studies*, 6(3), 102–118.

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). (2019). *Declaration of human rights and healthcare accessibility for persons with disabilities*. <https://www.unhrc.org>

Werner, E. (1995). Resilience in development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4(3), 81–85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.ep10772327>

Wirihana, L., Welch, A., Williamson, M., & Craft, J. (2018). Using Colaizzi's method of data analysis to explore the experiences of nurse academics teaching on satellite campuses. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323811187_Using_Colaizzi's_method_of_data_analysis_to_explore_the_experiences_of_nurse_academics_teaching_on_satellite_campuses

World Health Organization. (2023). The impact of unaddressed hearing loss. *World Health Organization*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss>