International Journal of Sustainable and Integrated Studies
Volume 1, Issue 4 | ISSN: 3155-6361
DOI: https://doi.org/10.65339/ijsis.V1.I4.322

Communication - Connection: Overcoming the Complex Challenges of Parents of Deaf Children

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Publication history:
Received: October 27, 2026 Accepted: November 27, 2026
Revised: November 23, 2026 Published: November 28, 2026
International Journal of Sustainable and Integrated Studies, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 644–652, November 2026.

Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of parents of deaf children, focusing on communication, parent–child connection, complex challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems as a basis for developing an intervention plan. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed involving seven purposively selected parents of deaf children enrolled at Loon South Central Elementary School, Bohol, Philippines, during the school year 2025–2026. Data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews using an expert-validated interview guide and analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis, supported by member checking. Seven interconnected themes emerged: emotional and psychological challenges, communication barriers, financial constraints, support systems, coping strategies, parental realizations, and suggested interventions. Communication barriers emerged as the most persistent challenge due to limited sign language proficiency, while financial difficulties and emotional distress compounded parental responsibilities. Despite these challenges, parents demonstrated resilience through acceptance, patience, sign language acquisition, and assistance from families, schools, and communities. The study concluded that addressing parental challenges requires a multidimensional, family-centered approach that integrates communication accessibility, emotional well-being, financial assistance, and educational inclusion. It recommends implementing a comprehensive intervention plan incorporating Filipino Sign Language training, psychological counseling, transportation assistance, parental peer support, community awareness, and inclusive educational services. The study was limited to seven participants from a single educational institution, restricting the transferability of its findings. Nevertheless, it provides a contextualized foundation for strengthening family-centered interventions and informing inclusive education policies and practices. The proposed interventions align with Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 10, and 17, supporting long-term social and educational sustainability through equitable learning opportunities, accessible communication, parental empowerment, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders.

Keywords: Communication Barriers, Coping Mechanisms, Deaf Children, Filipino Sign Language, Inclusive Education, Parental Resilience, Support Systems

1. Introduction

Hearing parents of deaf children navigate unfamiliar communication environments while addressing emotional, educational, social, and family-related challenges. Establishing communication through sign language, gestures, visual signals, and communication devices is essential in strengthening family relationships, reducing social isolation, and supporting children's emotional and educational development. Early intervention enables deaf children to develop communication skills, express their emotions, and establish meaningful relationships. Recognizing deafness as part of cultural identity rather than a condition requiring correction further promotes

acceptance and effective parental support. Parents serve as primary advocates and communication facilitators whose psychological and social well-being influences their children's development. According to Dikeç et al. (2023), parents of children with hearing difficulties experience emotional uncertainty, fear, and expectations during diagnosis, often accompanied by insufficient information. Accessible information, family-centered services, social support, and early intervention programs are therefore essential in strengthening parental well-being and creating supportive home environments. Gillespie et al. (2023) reported deterioration in the socio-emotional well-being of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parental empathy, patience, acceptance, and appropriate communication strategies are important considerations in supporting children's well-being. Dikeç et al. (2023) identified prayer, social support, and personal time as parental coping strategies.

Parents of deaf children experience persistent emotional, social, financial, and communication-related difficulties. Marie et al. (2023) examined parenting stress and social support needs among hearing parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Dikeç et al. (2023) identified emotional difficulties and insufficient information during the diagnostic process, highlighting the importance of appropriate professional guidance and family support. Szarkowski, Moeller, et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of family support, accessible communication, child well-being, and informed parental decision-making in early intervention for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Similarly, Lieberman et al. (2024) identified barriers and enabling resources among hearing parents learning American Sign Language, emphasizing its perceived benefits for family communication and relationships. Gillespie et al. (2023) also documented financial difficulties and reduced well-being among families during the pandemic. Accessing intervention services also presents considerable challenges. Reynolds et al. (2023) documented limited local services, insufficient information, and difficulties navigating intervention choices. These difficulties increase parental responsibilities in making decisions concerning children's education, intervention, and long-term development. Aftab et al. (2022) emphasized parental involvement in the education of children with hearing impairment. Moeller et al. (2024) emphasized that active parental involvement in communication improves early intervention outcomes, while educational, professional, and emotional assistance strengthens parental confidence. Moreover, Reynolds et al. (2023) identified inconsistent information, fragmented services, and emotional burdens during diagnosis and intervention as significant sources of parental stress. Sealy et al. (2023) reported that unresolved feelings regarding diagnosis are associated with lower parenting morale and increased perceptions of child vulnerability. Parents perceived their deaf children as more vulnerable than their hearing siblings, although no differences in parenting styles were identified. Concerns regarding bullying, exclusion, and children's safety further contribute to parental anxiety. Collectively, the literature highlights the interconnected nature of communication barriers, emotional adjustment, financial constraints, parental involvement, and support systems. Effective coping strategies and accessible educational and intervention services are essential in strengthening parental resilience and improving children's developmental outcomes.

Globally, families of deaf children encounter challenges associated with limited healthcare accessibility, financial constraints, delayed intervention, and inconsistent institutional support. Hatzopoulos et al. (2025) identified delayed hearing detection, limited audiological services, financial difficulties, and inadequate support across African countries, reflecting challenges also experienced by Filipino families. Petrocchi-Bartal et al. (2026) emphasized that parents prioritize effective communication, accessible services, and supportive professionals, although inconsistent guidance and limited service accessibility remain significant concerns. Collaboration among families, educational institutions, and service providers is therefore essential in addressing these challenges. In the Philippines, inclusive education and communication accessibility are supported by Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) (Inclusive Education Act), Republic Act No. 7277 (1992) (or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability (PWDs), Sec. 1-2,14), and Republic Act No. 11106 (2018) (Filipino Sign Language of 2018). These legal frameworks promote educational accessibility, reasonable accommodations, specialized instruction, and social inclusion for learners with disabilities. Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) establishes the rights of learners with disabilities to accessible and quality education through inclusive educational policies and appropriate support services. However, Cagalitan et al. (2023) reported mixed teacher perceptions toward inclusion, highlighting the need for specialized training, appropriate instructional resources, and continued professional support. Regala (2024) examined collaborative leadership and innovation in a government school, offering a broader perspective on institutional support. Department of Education (2025) further reinforces these provisions through the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 11650 (2022). Republic Act No. 7277 (1992) promotes the rights, self-reliance, and social integration of persons with disabilities through specialized instruction, adapted learning materials, equipment, and teacher training. According to Manos and Kintanar (2024), integrating learners with disabilities strengthens social cohesion, stakeholder advocacy, and teacher confidence in addressing diverse learning needs. However, Cruz (2024) emphasized that mainstreamed learners require targeted support services, adapted instructional strategies, and specialized resources to achieve academic, social, and emotional development. Republic Act No. 11106 (2018) recognizes Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as an essential medium of communication and instruction for deaf learners, supporting the implementation of inclusive education under Republic Act No. 7277 (1992) and Republic Act No. 11650 (2022). As Tabingo and Lovitos (2025) noted, understanding FSL grammar, vocabulary, and cultural context strengthens teacher and interpreter training while

promoting linguistic recognition and equal access. Asuncion (2026) demonstrated that although parents possess basic signs related to caregiving, safety, hygiene, and emergencies, limitations in everyday household and educational vocabulary persist. Expert-validated FSL instructional videos were developed to support parent-child communication, emphasizing the importance of continuous language training for families. Within the local context, the present study focuses on parents of deaf children enrolled at Loon South Central Elementary School, Municipality of Loon, Division of Bohol, Region VII, during school year 2025–2026. It examines their experiences in managing communication barriers, emotional difficulties, financial responsibilities, and access to family, school, and community support.

This study is anchored in the transactional theory of stress and coping, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1977), and Social Support Theory as discussed by Kort-Butler (2017). These complementary theoretical perspectives explain how parents evaluate challenges, develop coping strategies, and utilize environmental and social resources in raising deaf children. The transactional theory of stress and coping, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), explains how individuals evaluate environmental demands and employ coping strategies to manage stress. Parental stress arises when communication difficulties, educational limitations, and other environmental demands exceed perceived coping resources. Active and problem-focused coping strategies contribute to improved psychological well-being. Drawing on Kort-Butler's (2017) discussion of Social Support Theory, emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance may provide a theoretical basis for understanding how social networks support parents in managing challenges. Marie et al. (2023) examined social support as a potential buffer against parenting stress. Combining personal support networks with institutional services strengthens parents' capacity to address their children's needs. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective, human development results from interactions among interconnected environmental systems, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Family and school environments are particularly important in shaping children's development and parental experiences. Szarkowski, Gale, et al. (2024) emphasized that trained intervention providers, collaborative professional teams, and systematic developmental monitoring are essential components of effective family-centered intervention. Pelz et al. (2025) further explained that human development is influenced by interconnected environmental systems, including family, school, community, and broader sociocultural contexts. Integrating these theoretical perspectives with Republic Act No. 11650 (2022), Republic Act No. 7277 (1992), and Republic Act No. 11106 (2018) provides a comprehensive foundation for examining parental challenges, communication strategies, coping mechanisms, and support systems. These foundations guide the development of an intervention plan responsive to the needs of parents of deaf children.

Existing literature establishes the importance of parental involvement, communication accessibility, emotional well-being, early intervention, and institutional support in raising deaf children. However, further understanding is needed regarding how these interconnected factors shape the everyday experiences of parents within their specific family, educational, and community environments. Despite existing inclusive education policies and support services, communication barriers, emotional difficulties, financial constraints, and limitations in service accessibility remain significant concerns. The present study addresses this need by exploring the lived experiences of parents of deaf children at Loon South Central Elementary School in Bohol. Specifically, it examines the significant challenges parents encounter, their coping and adaptation strategies, the assistance received from families, schools, and communities, and the insights gained from their experiences. These experiences serve as the basis for developing an intervention plan that addresses parental needs, strengthens parent-child communication, promotes emotional resilience, and supports the holistic development of deaf children.

The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being) by emphasizing the psychological and emotional well-being of parents and deaf children. Understanding parental stress, emotional adjustment, and coping mechanisms provides a foundation for developing appropriate support services that promote mental health, resilience, and positive family relationships. The study directly supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 – Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for deaf learners. Its emphasis on Filipino Sign Language, early intervention, specialized instruction, parental involvement, and accessible educational resources reinforces the importance of addressing barriers that affect educational participation and learning outcomes. Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities) is reflected in the study's emphasis on communication accessibility, recognition of Deaf culture, social inclusion, and equal educational opportunities. Addressing linguistic, financial, institutional, and social barriers contributes to reducing inequalities experienced by deaf children and their families. The study also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals) by recognizing the importance of collaboration among families, teachers, school administrators, government agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders. Strengthening these partnerships can facilitate coordinated interventions, accessible services, and sustained support for families of deaf children.

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability by integrating educational, psychological, social, cultural, socioeconomic, community, and institutional perspectives in addressing the challenges experienced by parents of

deaf children. From an educational sustainability perspective, the study promotes accessible learning environments, continuous Filipino Sign Language training, specialized instruction, and stronger parent-school partnerships. Its findings may assist teachers, school administrators, and the Department of Education in developing responsive educational programs and strengthening inclusive education practices. In terms of public health and psychosocial sustainability, understanding parental stress, emotional adjustment, and coping mechanisms provides a foundation for developing family-centered support services that promote psychological well-being, emotional resilience, and healthy parent-child relationships. The study supports social and cultural sustainability by encouraging acceptance of deaf children, recognition of Deaf culture, respect for linguistic diversity, and meaningful participation in family and community activities. Strengthening communication accessibility can reduce social isolation and promote more inclusive relationships between deaf and hearing individuals. Socioeconomic sustainability is addressed through the examination of financial constraints and resource limitations affecting families' access to education, intervention, and professional services. Understanding these challenges may guide stakeholders in developing appropriate assistance programs that support families and reduce barriers to essential services. Furthermore, community and institutional sustainability are reinforced through collaboration among parents, schools, government agencies, and community stakeholders in establishing responsive and continuing support systems. The proposed intervention plan may guide the development of programs that strengthen parental capabilities, improve communication accessibility, and promote the long-term inclusion of deaf children. The study may also serve as a foundation for future research and intervention development concerning parental experiences, deaf education, family resilience, and inclusive community development.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to describe and understand the lived experiences of parents in communicating, connecting, and overcoming the complex challenges of raising deaf children. Braun and Clarke (2022), in *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, described reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as an approach to exploring patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Individual face-to-face interviews facilitated the collection of detailed narratives concerning parents' perceptions, interpretations, coping strategies, and personal experiences in comfortable and familiar environments.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Loon South Central Elementary School, Municipality of Loon, Division of Bohol, Region VII, Philippines. The public school provides free educational services, specialized learning facilities, and dedicated Special Education (SPED) classrooms for deaf learners. It also operates the Loon SPED Dormitory, established through the collaborative initiatives of the Christian Blind Mission (CBM), the R.C. Trust, and IDEA Philippines, Inc. (International Deaf Education). The institution implements an inclusive education framework supported by teachers proficient in sign language and specialized instruction. It promotes holistic learner development through communication skills, functional life skills, academic competence, and personal resilience. The school was purposively selected because its supportive and accessible environment facilitated the collection of meaningful narratives from parents of deaf children.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The study involved seven (7) parents of deaf children enrolled at Loon South Central Elementary School during school year 2025–2026. The participants provided firsthand information regarding their communication experiences, parent-child relationships, challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems. Their demographic information included age, civil status, number of children, educational attainment, and employment status.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive non-probability sampling to select seven parents of deaf children based on their firsthand experiences and relevance to the research objectives. The researcher coordinated with the school head to identify qualified participants who could provide detailed and meaningful insights into the challenges, communication strategies, coping mechanisms, and support systems associated with raising deaf children.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide served as the primary data collection instrument. It consisted of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and coping strategies. Qualitative research experts validated the interview questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. The interview guide comprised five parts covering parents' lived experiences; complex challenges involving communication, interaction, emotional and psychological difficulties, financial resources, and access to support; coping mechanisms and adaptation strategies; assistance received from families, schools, communities, and other institutions; and personal insights,

realizations, and recommended interventions. Follow-up and probing questions were utilized when necessary to obtain more comprehensive responses.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted in three stages: pre-data gathering, data gathering, and post-data gathering. During the preparatory stage, the research proposal was presented and defended before a panel of evaluators at Cebu Technological University-Main Campus. Following revisions and approval, the researcher submitted a formal request to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Bohol for permission to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval, the researcher coordinated with the school head to identify qualified participants. Informed consent and permission to audio-record the interviews were obtained before conducting individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews in comfortable and private settings. Participants' demographic information was collected, followed by discussions concerning their challenges, coping strategies, support systems, personal insights, and recommended interventions. Probing questions were employed to clarify responses and obtain detailed accounts of their lived experiences. After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed, translated when necessary, and reviewed for accuracy. The qualitative data were organized through coding and categorization, followed by thematic analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing summarized interpretations with selected participants to establish the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed thematic analysis to systematically examine and interpret the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Statistical treatment was not applied because of the qualitative nature of the research. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed, translated when necessary, and thoroughly reviewed to identify significant statements relevant to the research questions. Meaningful responses were coded, grouped into categories, and developed into themes reflecting participants' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, support systems, personal insights, and recommended interventions. The identified themes were evaluated to ensure consistency with the participants' narratives and interpreted according to their relevance and significance rather than the frequency of responses. Both recurring patterns and unique experiences were considered to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Member checking was conducted to strengthen the credibility and accuracy of the interpretations. The findings served as the basis for developing an intervention plan responsive to the needs of parents of deaf children.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed ethical principles throughout the study to protect participants' rights, privacy, and confidentiality. Before conducting the interviews, participants were informed of the research objectives, interview procedures, confidentiality measures, and their rights. Participation was voluntary, and participants were permitted to decline answering questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Formal permission from the school principal and informed consent from the participants were obtained. Permission to audio-record interviews was also secured. Participants' identities and personal information were protected throughout the research process, and all collected information was used exclusively for the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Complex Challenges Encountered by Parents of Deaf Children

3.1.1 Emotional and Psychological Challenges

Parents experienced sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, pity, and uncertainty while adjusting to their children's hearing condition. P1 expressed sadness upon discovering that only one of the siblings was deaf, while P2 expressed concern about the child's limited social interaction. P3 experienced emotional distress due to communication difficulties, stating, “Miabot sa punto nga ihilak nalang nako kay dili mi magkasinabot” (“It reached a point where I cried because we couldn’t understand each other.”). Parents also expressed concerns about their children's future, vulnerability, and exposure to bullying. These findings reflect the emotional adjustment experienced by parents of deaf children. Gillespie et al. (2023) documented socio-emotional difficulties among parents and their deaf or hard-of-hearing children during the pandemic. Sealy et al. (2023) linked unresolved feelings regarding diagnosis to lower parenting morale and increased perceptions of child vulnerability. Similarly, Dikeç et al. (2023) documented emotional challenges experienced by hearing parents during diagnosis and adjustment, while Szarkowski, Moeller, et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of individualized family assistance and accessible information in supporting parental decision-making and well-being. These findings align with Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, highlighting the importance of counseling, parental support groups, and early intervention services in addressing psychological distress.

3.1.2 Communication Barriers and Interaction Difficulties

Communication emerged as the most persistent challenge among parents because of limited sign language proficiency and difficulties understanding their children's needs. P1 relied primarily on gestures, stating, “Dili ko kabalo mo sign language… mag action ra ko” (“I don’t know sign language, so I just use actions.”). P2 reported

prolonged misunderstandings, while P3 struggled to remember numerous signs. P7 experienced significant communication difficulties before the child attended school. Parents relied on gestures, written messages, and mobile phones as alternative communication methods, while those who learned sign language reported improved understanding and connection. Lieberman et al. (2024) described perceived family communication benefits of parental sign language learning. Ritmeester et al. (2026) identified barriers to accessing courses and sustaining sign language use at home. These findings align with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective, which recognizes parent-child interaction as a fundamental influence on development. Strengthening school-based and community-based sign language training may therefore reduce communication barriers and improve family relationships.

3.1.3 Financial Struggles and Resource Limitations

Parents encountered financial difficulties associated with transportation, boarding expenses, medical consultations, therapy, and daily necessities. P2 depended on family assistance for transportation expenses, while P4 struggled with boarding house payments and daily allowances. P6 described the burden of repeated hospital visits, stating, "Nag-antos mi balik-balik sa hospital" ("We suffered going back and forth to the hospital."). Financial constraints affected access to services, participation in school activities, and the ability to provide necessary interventions, particularly among families residing far from schools serving deaf learners. Reynolds et al. (2023) documented lengthy travel to access specialized hearing services. Gillespie et al. (2023) reported financial adversity among some families of deaf and hard-of-hearing children during the pandemic. In the present study, P6 also faced the demands of managing deafness and global developmental delay. These findings correspond with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective, which recognizes the influence of socioeconomic conditions on family functioning. Financial assistance from educational institutions and local government units is therefore important in improving access to essential services.

3.2 Family, School, and Community Support Systems

3.2.1 Contributions of Family, School, and Community Assistance

Parents identified family, school, and community support as important in reducing parental burdens and supporting their children's development. P7 received moral and financial assistance from family members, while P3 acknowledged the school's contribution to the child's learning and reported improved communication after participating in a three-day training program provided by IDEA. P1 received housing assistance from the barangay and local government unit, stating, "Nakadawat ko ug housing support sa barangay ug LGU" ("I received housing support from the barangay and LGU."). Assistance from teachers, the Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO), and community institutions also strengthened parental confidence and access to resources. These findings are consistent with the theoretical perspective discussed by Kort-Butler (2017), which recognizes the importance of emotional, informational, and instrumental support in addressing individual and social difficulties. Aftab et al. (2022) recognized parents as essential contributors to children's education, supported by schools and communities. Furthermore, Szarkowski, Moeller, et al. (2024) emphasized family support as a component of family-centered early intervention. These findings support Social Support Theory, which explains how supportive relationships buffer stress. Strengthening family-school partnerships, collaboration with IDEA Philippines, disability support programs, and community awareness initiatives may promote parental resilience and social inclusion.

3.3 Parental Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation Strategies

3.3.1 Acceptance, Patience, and Adaptive Communication

Parents developed coping strategies through acceptance, patience, mutual understanding, learning sign language, and treating their deaf children equally. P2 emphasized cooperation in achieving mutual understanding, while P3 highlighted patience, stating, "Pasensiya jud maoy kinahanglan" ("Patience is truly needed."). P6 expressed acceptance by treating the child in the same manner as other children. These strategies enabled parents to adjust their expectations, manage emotional difficulties, and focus on addressing their children's needs rather than their limitations. Dikeç et al. (2023) highlighted the emotional adjustment experienced by hearing parents and the importance of appropriate support in addressing challenges associated with childhood hearing loss. Marie et al. (2023) examined parental stress and support needs, while Dikeç et al. (2023) described acceptance and social support during parental adjustment. These findings correspond with the theories of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) on coping, emphasizing emotional regulation and problem-solving in reducing stress. Resilience workshops, stress management programs, and parental peer support groups may further strengthen parents' adaptive capabilities.

3.4 Insights and Realizations Gained from Parental Experiences

3.4.1 Personal Growth, Acceptance, and Child Advocacy

Parents gained meaningful insights regarding patience, acceptance, child protection, and the importance of spending sufficient time with their children. P3 identified patience as the most important parenting quality, while P4 emphasized protecting deaf children from bullying, stating, "Maprotektahan sila sa bullying" ("They must be protected from bullying."). P7 expressed personal growth and increased patience, stating, "Walay pagmahay… milapad akong pasensiya" ("No regrets… my patience grew."). These experiences reflected parents' emotional

development, commitment, and increasing awareness of their responsibilities as caregivers and advocates. Dikeç et al. (2023) described the process of parental acceptance and adjustment. Lieberman et al. (2024) documented perceived benefits of sign language learning for family communication. These findings complement participants' realizations regarding patience, acceptance, and advocacy in fostering supportive environments for deaf children.

3.5 Suggested Programs and Interventions for Parents of Deaf Children

3.5.1 Communication Accessibility, Inclusive Education, and Institutional Support

Parents recommended programs that would improve communication accessibility, educational opportunities, and community support. P2 suggested teaching sign language to hearing children and community members, stating, "Itudlo ang sign language sa normal nga bata ug komunidad" ("Teach sign language to hearing children and the community."). P5 recommended establishing schools for deaf learners closer to their residences, while P3 expressed the desire for free higher education, stating, "Libre college para nila pohon" ("Free college education for them in the future."). These recommendations reflected parents' immediate communication and accessibility needs and their long-term aspirations for their children's education. Ritmeester et al. (2026) recommended accessible, sustained sign language instruction and tailored learning materials. Szarkowski, Gale, et al. (2024) emphasized coordinated family-centered intervention structures. These recommendations align with Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) and Republic Act No. 7277 (1992), which promote inclusive education and accessible services for learners with disabilities. Expanding sign language programs, establishing accessible educational institutions, and providing scholarships may address the communication, financial, and educational challenges experienced by families of deaf children.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study revealed that parents of deaf children at Loon South Central Elementary School experienced interconnected emotional, psychological, communication, financial, and social challenges that influenced their caregiving experiences and relationships with their children. Limited sign language proficiency emerged as a persistent barrier to effective communication, while financial constraints affected access to educational, medical, and other essential support services. Despite these difficulties, parents demonstrated resilience through acceptance, patience, adaptive communication strategies, and commitment to their children's development. Support from family members, schools, community organizations, and local government units played an important role in alleviating parental burdens and strengthening coping mechanisms. Parents also recognized the importance of protecting their children from discrimination and providing equitable educational opportunities. Collectively, the findings underscore the importance of accessible communication, emotional support, inclusive education, and institutional collaboration in addressing the complex needs of families with deaf children. The study provides a contextual basis for developing targeted interventions that strengthen parent-child connections and promote social inclusion.

Loon South Central Elementary School, in collaboration with relevant educational authorities, local government units, and partner organizations, should implement regular Filipino Sign Language training for parents, teachers, hearing learners, and community members to strengthen communication and social inclusion. School administrators should reinforce anti-bullying measures, provide accessible counseling services, and conduct specialized professional development activities for teachers handling deaf learners. Local government units, the Persons with Disability Affairs Office, and partner organizations should strengthen financial assistance, particularly for transportation, educational expenses, and access to essential services. Community leaders should organize awareness programs promoting Deaf culture, disability acceptance, and inclusive communication. Parental support groups and psychological counseling programs should also be established or strengthened to facilitate experience sharing, emotional adjustment, and effective coping strategies. Furthermore, educational authorities should explore opportunities to expand accessible educational facilities and scholarship programs for deaf learners. The proposed intervention plan should be considered for implementation through coordinated institutional and community partnerships.

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design involving seven purposively selected parents of deaf children enrolled at Loon South Central Elementary School during the school year 2025–2026. Consequently, the findings reflect participants' personal experiences within a specific educational, geographical, and sociocultural context and are not intended for statistical generalization. The study relied on interview responses and thematic interpretation rather than quantitative measurements of parental challenges, coping mechanisms, or support effectiveness. Moreover, the proposed intervention plan was developed from the findings but was not implemented or evaluated within the study. Future research may involve broader participant groups, diverse educational settings, and complementary research methodologies to enhance transferability and assess intervention effectiveness.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, respect for participants' rights, privacy, and confidentiality throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of Bohol and the principal of Loon South Central Elementary School. Before data collection, participants were informed of the study's objectives, interview procedures, and their right to decline answering questions or withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent and permission for audio recording were secured before conducting the interviews. Participants' identities and personal information were protected, and all collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for academic and research purposes. The researcher maintained respect, sensitivity, and professionalism throughout data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Formal research ethics committee clearance or exemption has not been documented in the manuscript.

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