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Parenting in Silence: The Lived Experiences of Parents with Deaf Children

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of parents and guardians raising deaf children, particularly their challenges, coping strategies, support systems, and insights, to develop responsive family-centered interventions. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed involving ten purposively selected parents and guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Data were gathered through individual face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and examined using thematic analysis. Four major themes emerged: communication barriers and emotional struggles; acceptance through love, patience, and faith; family, school, and community support; and learning, resilience, and future aspirations. Limited sign language proficiency emerged as a major challenge affecting parental understanding of children's needs, emotions, and behaviors, while bullying and uncertainties regarding future opportunities contributed to emotional distress. Participants demonstrated resilience through acceptance, spiritual faith, sign language learning, and alternative communication strategies. Family, educational, and organizational assistance helped alleviate caregiving, financial, and educational difficulties. The study concludes that parental adaptation involves continuous learning, emotional adjustment, and collaborative support while recognizing children's abilities and potential. It recommends sustained sign language training, parental support circles, individualized strengths-based development plans, and coordinated community assistance to promote children's development and independence. The study's small, purposively selected sample and single-school setting limit the transferability and generalizability of its findings. Nevertheless, the study provides a context-specific, evidence-based foundation for developing family-centered interventions, strengthening inclusive educational practices, and guiding institutional collaboration toward parental well-being, deaf children's social inclusion, and long-term independence.

Keywords: Communication Barriers, Coping Strategies, Deaf Children, Inclusive Education, Parental Experiences, Phenomenology, Support Systems

1. Introduction

Parenting deaf children involves unique challenges associated with communication, emotional adjustment, educational decision-making, financial responsibilities, and social inclusion. Parents and guardians play a fundamental role in facilitating their children's language development, education, emotional well-being, and independence. However, limited communication skills, difficulties accessing specialized services, and concerns about future opportunities may affect their caregiving experiences (Reynolds et al., 2023; Terry, 2023; Terry & Rance, 2023). This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of parents and guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy (BDA), emphasizing their challenges, coping strategies, support systems, and insights as a basis for developing responsive intervention programs.

Raising deaf children requires parents and guardians to adapt to distinct communication, social, emotional, and educational needs. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), hearing impairment refers to permanent or temporary hearing loss that adversely affects a child's educational achievement (34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(5)). Communication difficulties and limited social participation emphasize the importance of early intervention and family involvement in children's holistic development. Early interventions, including hearing devices, sign language instruction, speech and language therapy, and specialized educational programs, support communication and language development (Moeller et al., 2024; Szarkowski et al., 2024). However, accessing these services may impose financial, emotional, and practical burdens on families. Parents must also make critical decisions regarding educational placement, communication methods, assistive technologies, and long-term developmental opportunities (Jones & Roberts, 2024; Reynolds et al., 2023). Sealy et al. (2023) found that unresolved feelings regarding children's hearing loss diagnoses were associated with lower parental morale and greater perceptions of child vulnerability, further emphasizing the importance of parental and emotional support. Meanwhile, Dikeç et al. (2023) reported that parents experienced anxiety, sadness, uncertainty, and eventual acceptance, employing prayer, social support, and personal adjustment as coping strategies. These experiences demonstrate the multidimensional nature of parenting deaf children and the importance of accessible support systems.

The literature highlights parenting stress, communication barriers, parental involvement, decision-making, and support systems as significant dimensions of raising deaf children. Marie et al. (2023) found that parenting stress was associated with children's behavioral and adaptation difficulties and increased parental needs for social support. Similarly, Kara et al. (2024) reported significant differences in family resilience, quality of life, life satisfaction, loneliness, and perceived social support between caregivers of deaf or hard-of-hearing children and caregivers of hearing children. Access to intervention services presents additional challenges. Reynolds et al. (2023) found that fragmented audiology services, technology fitting, and early intervention programs intensified parental stress. Likewise, Terry (2023) emphasized that hearing parents raising deaf children encountered challenges navigating professional services and accessing appropriate information and communication support. Parental decision-making significantly influences children's communication and educational development. Jones and Roberts (2024) found that parental communication decisions were influenced by children's future academic success, literacy development, educational opportunities, and social relationships. Szarkowski et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of family involvement in supporting the language, communication, and holistic development of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. However, Reynolds et al. (2023) and Terry and Rance (2023) identified challenges in accessing information and support, emphasizing the need for support systems that empower families to make appropriate long-term decisions. Parental emotional well-being and acceptance are equally important. Coto et al. (2024) emphasized the significance of parental mental and emotional health in supporting children with disabilities. Similarly, Dikeç et al. (2023) and Sealy et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of acceptance, emotional adjustment, and parental support in addressing the needs of deaf children. Communication and social support further influence parenting experiences. Lieberman et al. (2024) and Pontecorvo et al. (2025) emphasized parents' roles in learning sign language and facilitating children's language acquisition. Terry (2023) and Terry and Rance (2023) identified challenges associated with accessing appropriate information, communication support, and professional services. These studies also emphasized the importance of family support networks and connections with Deaf communities. Jones and Roberts (2024) found that parental communication decisions incorporated professional recommendations and considerations regarding children's future educational and social opportunities. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that effective parenting of deaf children requires accessible communication, informed decision-making, emotional resilience, parental involvement, and coordinated family, school, and community support.

International literature demonstrates that families raising deaf children encounter communication barriers, emotional difficulties, social isolation, and challenges accessing educational and intervention services. These concerns highlight the importance of early intervention, parental participation, and coordinated support systems in promoting children's development and family well-being (Marie et al., 2023; Szarkowski et al., 2024; Terry & Rance, 2023). In the Philippines, hearing loss represents a substantial public health concern. According to Newall et al. (2020), the prevalence of hearing loss and outer and middle ear diseases in the Philippines is higher than in many high-income countries, with a greater occurrence of severe-to-profound hearing loss. Additionally, Ramos et al. (2018) reported that approximately 8.8% of the Filipino population had disabling hearing loss, corresponding to at least nine million individuals requiring medical attention or hearing rehabilitation based on the 2018 population estimate. Locally, parents and guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy in Bool District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Region VII, encounter concerns involving limited family sign language proficiency, difficulties understanding children's emotions and needs, bullying, social participation, and uncertainty regarding educational and livelihood opportunities. Their experiences also emphasize the importance of school-based learning opportunities, family assistance, and organizational support. These circumstances establish the relevance of examining parenting experiences within the local educational and community context without generalizing them to all families raising deaf children in Bohol.

This study is anchored on the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, Social Support Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory, which collectively explain the challenges, adaptive strategies, and environmental influences associated with raising deaf children. The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explains how individuals experience and manage stress based on their interpretation of challenging situations and the resources available to address them. In this study, the theory explains how parents and guardians assess communication barriers, emotional struggles, financial concerns, and uncertainties regarding their children's future while developing appropriate coping strategies. Social Support Theory, as described by Kort-Butler (2017), emphasizes the importance of emotional, practical, and informational assistance from individuals and institutions. It provides a framework for understanding how family members, teachers, schools, communities, and other agencies help parents manage caregiving responsibilities and reduce parenting difficulties. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory explains how children's development and parental experiences are influenced by interconnected environmental systems. The family serves as the immediate developmental environment, while schools, communities, and broader social institutions influence children's educational opportunities, social participation, and access to support services (Terry, 2023). The study is further supported by Republic Act No. 11650 (2022), also known as the Inclusive Education Act, which promotes inclusive education and appropriate support services for learners with disabilities. Republic Act No. 7277 (1992), or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, supports rehabilitation, self-development, self-reliance, social integration, and access to auxiliary aids and services. Republic Act No. 9155 (2001), or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, provides the framework for educational governance and promotes access to quality basic education. Together, these theoretical and legal foundations guide the examination of parental challenges, coping strategies, support systems, and lived experiences toward developing intervention programs that strengthen inclusive education and family support.

Although existing literature highlights parenting stress, communication difficulties, educational decision-making, and support systems, concerns remain regarding the coordination of intervention services, informed parental decision-making, and access to appropriate family-centered support (Jones & Roberts, 2024; Reynolds et al., 2023; Terry & Rance, 2023). These concerns establish the need for a contextualized understanding of how parents and guardians experience, interpret, and manage the responsibilities of raising deaf children. Within Bohol Deaf Academy, concerns regarding communication barriers, emotional adjustment, bullying, educational opportunities, and future independence provide a basis for examining parental lived experiences. Understanding these concerns is essential for developing interventions responsive to the specific needs of deaf children and their families. Accordingly, this phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of ten (10) parents or guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it examined the challenges encountered by parents and guardians, their coping strategies and adaptation, the support received from families, schools, and communities, and the insights gained from their parenting experiences. The study also sought to identify appropriate programs and interventions that could strengthen family support and promote the holistic development of deaf children. Its scope was limited to the experiences of the participating parents and guardians within the identified research setting.

The study aligns with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those addressing health and well-being, inclusive education, economic opportunities, social equality, and institutional collaboration (United Nations, 2015). It supports SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being by examining parental stress, emotional struggles, coping strategies, and support systems that may inform interventions promoting parental resilience and children's emotional development. It contributes to SDG 4 – Quality Education by emphasizing accessible communication, sign language instruction, parental involvement, and specialized educational services that facilitate the academic and holistic development of deaf children. Furthermore, it aligns with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth by highlighting the importance of educational attainment, practical skill development, and future livelihood opportunities that may promote children's independence and economic participation. The study also supports SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities by addressing communication barriers, social isolation, bullying, and unequal access to educational and support services, thereby emphasizing disability inclusion and equal opportunities. Finally, it aligns with SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals by recognizing the importance of collaboration among families, educators, school administrators, community organizations, local government units, and relevant agencies in developing responsive interventions and strengthening sustainable support systems for deaf children and their families.

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability by integrating educational, psychological, socio-economic, community, and institutional perspectives in understanding the lived experiences of parents and guardians raising deaf children. From an educational sustainability perspective, the study emphasizes accessible learning environments, parental involvement, sign language development, and inclusive educational practices. Its findings may guide teachers and school administrators in developing responsive programs that support the continuing educational development of deaf learners.

In terms of public health and psychosocial sustainability, the study highlights parental emotional well-being, stress management, acceptance, and resilience. Understanding these experiences may inform family-centered interventions that strengthen psychological well-being and support long-term caregiving responsibilities. Regarding socio-economic sustainability, the study recognizes the financial challenges associated with accessing specialized services and the importance of educational and livelihood opportunities for deaf children. Strengthening access to appropriate support services may help reduce caregiving burdens while promoting children's future independence and productive participation in society. From a community sustainability perspective, the study emphasizes family involvement, community assistance, social acceptance, and collaborative support networks. These dimensions may contribute to more inclusive communities that recognize the needs, abilities, and potential of deaf individuals. The study also supports institutional and policy sustainability by providing insights that may assist school administrators, the Department of Education, local government units, and community organizations in strengthening inclusive education programs, coordinating support services, and developing responsive interventions for families of deaf children. Collectively, the study underscores the importance of sustained collaboration among families, educational institutions, communities, and relevant agencies in promoting accessible communication, parental well-being, inclusive education, social participation, and the long-term independence of deaf children.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to understand the lived experiences of parents and guardians raising deaf children. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to describe and understand the essence of individuals' lived experiences regarding a particular phenomenon. This design enabled the researcher to examine how participants perceived, interpreted, and attributed meaning to their parenting experiences, particularly their challenges, coping strategies, and support systems. Individual face-to-face, semi-structured interviews facilitated the collection of detailed narratives relevant to the research objectives.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Bohol Deaf Academy (BDA), located in Bool District, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Region VII, Philippines. The school was selected because of its established Special Education (SPED) program serving deaf children. Its educational setting provided an appropriate environment for examining parental experiences concerning communication, educational needs, family involvement, and access to school-based and other support services.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The participants consisted of ten (10) parents or guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy during School Year 2025–2026. They served as key informants whose firsthand experiences provided the primary qualitative data. Their narratives focused on parenting challenges, coping strategies, adaptation, support received from families, schools, and communities, and the meanings they attributed to raising deaf children.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to select ten (10) parents or guardians with direct experience in raising deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy. Participants were intentionally selected based on their firsthand experiences and ability to provide relevant and meaningful information concerning the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher coordinated with the SPED teacher to identify qualified participants. This sampling technique facilitated the collection of detailed accounts aligned with the study's objectives.

2.5 Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions aligned with the five research questions. The instrument was reviewed, evaluated, and approved before data collection. The interview guide consisted of four sections covering parenting challenges, coping strategies and adaptation, support from family, school, and community, and insights and proposed interventions. Questions explored communication barriers, emotional struggles, caregiving responsibilities, acceptance, communication strategies, available assistance, and recommendations for strengthening family support. The semi-structured format allowed follow-up and probing questions to clarify responses and obtain comprehensive accounts of participants' lived experiences.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted in three stages: preparation, interviews, and post-interview processing. During the preparatory stage, the research proposal was presented to the evaluators of Cebu Technological University–Main Campus. Recommended revisions were incorporated before final approval. The researcher subsequently submitted a formal request to the school principal and coordinated with the SPED teacher to identify qualified

participants. During the interview stage, individual face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the approved interview guide. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, and their rights. Informed consent and permission to audio-record the interviews were obtained before data collection. Follow-up and probing questions were employed to clarify responses and gather detailed narratives concerning parenting challenges, coping strategies, support systems, insights, and proposed interventions. During the post-interview stage, audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Responses expressed in Cebuano or other local languages were translated into English when necessary and reviewed for accuracy. The collected data were subsequently organized, coded, categorized, and analyzed to identify significant patterns and meanings that served as the basis for the proposed intervention programs.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed thematic analysis to systematically examine the participants' lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed, translated when necessary, and reviewed to establish familiarity with the participants' narratives. Significant statements and meaningful responses were identified and assigned initial codes. Related codes were grouped into categories and subthemes, which were subsequently consolidated into broader themes representing the participants' shared experiences. The identified themes were reviewed against the original transcripts to ensure consistency with the participants' accounts. Member checking was also identified in the study's research process. The analysis focused on parenting challenges, coping strategies and adaptation, family, school, and community support, insights gained, and proposed interventions. Interpretation considered recurring patterns, individual perspectives, and the contextual significance of responses rather than relying solely on response frequency. Similarities and differences across participants' narratives were examined, while translated responses were reviewed to preserve their original meanings. The resulting findings served as the foundation for developing intervention programs responsive to the needs of families raising deaf children.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the data-gathering process. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, interview procedures, confidentiality measures, and participation rights. Participation was voluntary, and individuals were permitted to decline questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Informed consent and permission to audio-record interviews were obtained before data collection.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Communication Barriers and Emotional Struggles

3.1.1 Difficulty in Understanding Children's Needs

The participants identified communication difficulties as one of the most significant challenges in raising deaf children. Limited sign language proficiency affected their ability to understand their children's needs, emotions, behaviors, and intentions. These barriers also created difficulties in responding appropriately to their children's concerns and daily needs. The findings demonstrate that effective communication is essential in establishing meaningful parent–child relationships and addressing children's emotional and developmental needs. This result is consistent with Cablas et al. (2024), who found that parents experienced difficulties communicating with deaf children and emphasized the importance of learning sign language and other communication strategies to strengthen parent–child relationships (see also Lieberman et al., 2024; Pontecorvo et al., 2025).

3.1.2 Limited Sign Language Proficiency

Participants reported that insufficient sign language skills hindered their ability to communicate instructions, explain expectations, and discipline their children. Difficulties expressing and understanding messages affected daily interactions and caregiving responsibilities. These findings emphasize the importance of developing family sign language proficiency to facilitate effective communication and parental guidance. Lieberman et al. (2024) and Pontecorvo et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of hearing parents learning sign language alongside their deaf children and developing their sign language proficiency. Similarly, the scoping review by Terry and Rance (2023) highlighted that teaching sign language to parents provides greater opportunities for effective communication with their deaf children.

3.1.3 Emotional Difficulties, Bullying, and Future Concerns

Participants experienced sadness, stress, and anxiety associated with communication difficulties, bullying, and uncertainties regarding their children's future. Parents expressed emotional distress when their children encountered negative social experiences and concerns about their long-term development and opportunities. These experiences demonstrate the relationship between communication, parental emotional well-being, and children's social adjustment. The findings are consistent with Sealy et al. (2023), who identified parental concerns regarding communication barriers, bullying, educational opportunities, and children's future development. Strengthening communication may therefore help parents understand their children's experiences and provide appropriate emotional support (Szarkowski et al., 2024).

3.2 Parental Acceptance Through Love, Patience, and Faith

3.2.1 Acceptance of Children's Hearing Condition

Participants described acceptance as an essential aspect of adapting to the responsibilities of raising deaf children. They gradually learned to acknowledge their children's hearing condition, recognize their individuality, and focus on their overall needs rather than solely on deafness. The findings indicate that acceptance facilitates emotional adjustment and enables parents to develop a more positive understanding of their children. These results are consistent with the reviewed literature on support systems for families with deaf children, which emphasizes that interventions promoting acceptance and adjustment can help families manage emotional responses and provide appropriate developmental support (Dikeç et al., 2023; Sealy et al., 2023).

3.2.2 Love, Patience, and Faith as Coping Mechanisms

Participants identified unconditional love, patience, prayer, and spiritual faith as important sources of emotional strength. These coping mechanisms helped them manage communication difficulties, overcome emotional struggles, and maintain their commitment to their children's care and development. The findings highlight the importance of emotional and spiritual resources in strengthening parental coping and resilience. Love and patience enabled parents to respond constructively to caregiving difficulties, while faith supported emotional adjustment and acceptance. These findings are consistent with Cablas et al. (2024), which highlighted acceptance, coping, and resilience among parents of deaf children (see also Dikeç et al., 2023).

3.2.3 Recognition of Children's Abilities and Potential

Participants reported a gradual shift in perspective from focusing on their children's hearing limitations to recognizing their abilities, talents, strengths, and developmental potential. They acknowledged that deaf children could learn, grow, and succeed when provided with appropriate encouragement and support. This change in parental perspective reflects the importance of recognizing deaf children as capable individuals rather than defining them solely by their hearing condition. The findings support Moeller et al. (2024) and Szarkowski et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of acknowledging deaf children's capabilities and providing accessible language and supportive environments that facilitate their development.

3.3 Family, School, and Community Support Systems

3.3.1 Family Support and Emotional Encouragement

Participants received emotional, physical, practical, and financial assistance from family members. This support helped them manage caregiving responsibilities, address their children's daily and educational needs, and maintain emotional strength when encountering parenting difficulties. The findings demonstrate that family support plays a significant role in reducing parental stress and strengthening caregiving capacity. Emotional encouragement promotes resilience, while practical and financial assistance helps families meet their children's needs. These findings are supported by Marie et al. (2023) and Szarkowski et al. (2024), who identified the multidimensional nature of social support and emphasized the importance of different forms of assistance within family-centered services for deaf children.

3.3.2 School and Teacher Support

Participants recognized Bohol Deaf Academy and its teachers as important sources of educational and developmental support. Teachers provided learning strategies, communication guidance, and opportunities for children to develop literacy, social relationships, understanding, and appropriate behavior. These findings emphasize the importance of school–family collaboration in supporting deaf children's holistic development. Schools provide educational opportunities for learners while assisting parents in improving their communication and caregiving practices. The findings are consistent with the reviewed literature identifying schools and educational programs as essential sources of communication assistance and access to relevant services for hearing families of deaf children (Lieberman et al., 2024; Terry, 2023; Terry & Rance, 2023).

3.3.3 Financial and Organizational Assistance

Participants reported receiving financial and educational assistance from Bohol Deaf Academy, IDEA Philippines, and family members. Educational sponsorships helped reduce schooling expenses and enabled families to address their children's educational and developmental needs. The findings demonstrate that organizational and financial assistance helps alleviate caregiving burdens and strengthens access to educational opportunities. These results are consistent with the Philippine study by Cablas et al. (2024), which identified emotional, practical, and financial assistance from families, the Deaf community, and government as important resources that help parents cope with challenges and support their children (see also Szarkowski et al., 2024).

3.4 Parental Learning, Resilience, and Future Aspirations

3.4.1 Sign Language Learning as an Adaptive Coping Strategy

Participants identified learning sign language as an important strategy for overcoming communication barriers. They attended school-facilitated and free sign language classes to improve their ability to understand their children's needs and communicate effectively. Even basic sign language proficiency helped improve daily parent–

child interactions. These findings highlight the importance of accessible sign language training in strengthening parental communication skills and family relationships. The results are supported by Lieberman et al. (2024), whose study involving 100 hearing parents learning American Sign Language (ASL) identified schools, educational programs, ASL courses, Deaf communities, and other learning resources as important contributors to parental communication development.

3.4.2 Alternative Communication Strategies and Parental Adaptation

Participants employed observation, gestures, facial expressions, writing, texting, and electronic messaging to communicate with their children when their sign language proficiency was limited. Patience and careful observation also helped them identify their children's needs and improve mutual understanding. These findings demonstrate parental resourcefulness in adapting communication practices to their children's needs. Alternative communication strategies provided practical means of facilitating daily interactions when spoken or signed communication was limited. The findings are consistent with the reviewed literature indicating that hearing parents and deaf children frequently employ nonverbal and alternative communication methods to strengthen mutual understanding and parent–child relationships (Cablas et al., 2024).

3.4.3 Parental Resilience and Personal Growth

Participants described becoming more patient, resourceful, understanding, and committed through their experiences of raising deaf children. Despite caregiving difficulties, they continued to experience happiness and sought assistance from teachers and other parents while encouraging their children's development. The findings demonstrate that parenting challenges can provide opportunities for personal growth, emotional adjustment, and the development of resilience. Participants' willingness to learn, seek support, and adapt their caregiving practices strengthened their ability to manage difficulties. These findings are consistent with Cablas et al. (2024), who identified parental resilience and coping as significant aspects of the experiences of parents raising deaf children (see also Kara et al., 2024; Sealy et al., 2023).

3.4.4 Educational Aspirations, Independence, and Future Opportunities

Participants expressed aspirations for their children to complete their education, acquire practical life skills, access vocational training, obtain employment, and participate actively in society. They recognized their children's talents and capabilities and emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for independent and productive living. These findings reflect parents' commitment to their children's long-term development and social inclusion. Accessible education, vocational training, practical skill development, and community participation were recognized as important pathways toward independence. The findings are consistent with the broader literature emphasizing accessible education, communication opportunities, social participation, and sustained support systems for deaf children and their families (Jones & Roberts, 2024; Republic Act No. 11650, 2022; Terry & Rance, 2023).

3.5 Interrelationship of Parenting Challenges, Coping Strategies, and Support Systems

The overall findings revealed that the lived experiences of parents and guardians raising deaf children were characterized by interconnected communication barriers, emotional struggles, adaptive coping strategies, external support systems, and future aspirations. Although participants experienced difficulties understanding their children's needs and managing emotional, financial, and educational concerns, they gradually developed acceptance, patience, resilience, and communication skills. Assistance from families, schools, teachers, and organizations strengthened their caregiving capacity and commitment to their children's development. The relationship among these themes demonstrates that parental adaptation involves continuous emotional adjustment, learning, and access to appropriate support systems (Kara et al., 2024; Marie et al., 2023; Sealy et al., 2023). Communication development, acceptance, and collaborative assistance enabled parents to manage caregiving challenges while recognizing their children's abilities and potential. These findings provide a foundation for developing intervention programs that strengthen family communication, parental coping, educational support, community collaboration, and opportunities for deaf children's future independence (Moeller et al., 2024; Szarkowski et al., 2024).

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the lived experiences of parents and guardians raising deaf children at Bohol Deaf Academy involve continuous adjustment to communication barriers, emotional struggles, caregiving responsibilities, and concerns regarding their children's future. Limited sign language proficiency emerged as a major challenge affecting parents' ability to understand their children's needs, emotions, and behaviors. Nevertheless, participants demonstrated resilience through acceptance, love, patience, faith, sign language learning, and alternative communication strategies. Support from family members, teachers, Bohol Deaf Academy, and IDEA Philippines helped alleviate emotional, financial, and educational difficulties. These experiences encouraged parents to recognize their children's abilities and potential rather than focus solely on

their hearing condition. Collectively, the findings highlight the interconnected roles of accessible communication, emotional adjustment, parental involvement, and collaborative support in navigating caregiving challenges. The study provides a contextualized understanding of parental experiences that serves as a foundation for developing responsive interventions promoting deaf children's holistic development, social inclusion, and future independence.

Bohol Deaf Academy should strengthen family-centered intervention programs by implementing regular sign language training, establishing consistent home communication routines, and facilitating parent–teacher consultations to address communication barriers. School administrators and community partners should organize parental support circles where parents and guardians can share experiences, exchange coping strategies, and strengthen emotional resilience. Teachers and families should collaboratively develop individualized plans that recognize deaf children's strengths, nurture their talents, and enhance practical life skills and self-confidence. IDEA Philippines, local government units, and barangay officials should strengthen coordination to facilitate access to financial assistance, disability benefits, educational resources, and vocational training opportunities. Community-based deaf awareness initiatives should also be promoted to address bullying, reduce stigma, and encourage social participation. Furthermore, educational institutions and relevant stakeholders should maintain collaborative support mechanisms that prepare deaf children for educational completion, future employment, and independent living. These recommendations reflect the identified communication, emotional, educational, and socio-economic needs of the participating families.

The study was limited to ten purposively selected parents and guardians of deaf children enrolled at Bohol Deaf Academy in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, during School Year 2025–2026. Its qualitative phenomenological design relied on participants' personal accounts gathered through semi-structured interviews and interpreted using thematic analysis. Consequently, the findings reflect context-specific experiences and cannot be statistically generalized to all families raising deaf children. The single-school setting also limits the transferability of findings to different educational and community environments. Future studies may involve larger and more diverse participant groups across multiple educational institutions and communities to examine similarities and differences in parental experiences and available support systems.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study observed ethical considerations throughout the research process, emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for participants' rights. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, interview procedures, and confidentiality measures before data collection. Informed consent and permission to audio-record interviews were obtained from all participants. Participants were also given the freedom to decline questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

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