

How do educational experiences and deaf identity relate to employment success?

PhD in Education

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Declaration of original authorship

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all materials from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

For several years, there has been little research on how deaf people have managed at their workplace, where their success in terms of career progression (or lack of) might depend on the qualifications they will have achieved prior to entering their workplace.

Considering challenges at work, this study focused on those deaf people who work in a predominantly hearing environment where the deaf person would often be the sole deaf staff in the whole company to investigate the impact on his self-esteem.

146 participants filled in the questionnaires and completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work scales. 10 participants were selected purposively for in depth interviews looking at their life histories.

Applying thematic analysis within the mixed methodology approach, themes emerged such as resilience which is key to managing in the challenging workplace environment, good command of English language is also critical to maintaining confidence in terms of career progression; those with better speech and perhaps wearing cochlear implants are more likely to have better self-esteem through better coping mechanisms.

These findings also suggest that different levels of hearing loss, current age, school types which they attended, etc. does not influence the self-esteem scale. Having a Deaf Identity is irrelevant in terms of maintaining one's self-esteem at work mainly because the work colleagues are typically hearing.

This study thereby indicates that in the first instance having a strong command of English language regardless of schooling methods is key to a deaf person having good self-esteem within workplace.

Developing resilience at an earlier age is an essential component of a young deaf person starting work.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 My initial reasons for the thesis choice

In this introduction chapter, I aim to explain my reasoning for the choice of my PhD thesis which looks at the impact of mental health amongst deaf people mainly in employment but also when seeking employment during periods of unemployment. How their formative years might have impacted on their self-esteem when either maintaining their jobs or seeking suitably appropriate employment.

Over the years I have noticed that some deaf people are more successful than others in their career achievements and there have been various suggestions about why this might be the case – such factors [either solitary or in conjunction with one or more others] would have come into play such as embracing Deaf Identity, familial influence, methods of communication, types of education, etc.

1.1.1 Research question – background information influencing my choice

This brings up the question on how the deaf people do cope within the hearing society, in the work environment. How much they can hear what is going on in the workplace? Would missing out on critical information impact on their career progression? It is noted that some cope better than the others and can become successful.

I suspect it might be interrelated to amounts of self-confidence in a deaf person in dealing perhaps in a lonesome manner 8 hours a day, 5 days in a week for a typical 45 working weeks per annum. Those with lower self-confidence threshold would find this a struggle and may find it hard to hold down a job matching their skills and ability – leading to less motivation perhaps coupled with lower self-esteem, resulting in either underemployment or periods of unemployment.

Mental health issues, while a taboo subject in the 1970s and 1980s when I was growing up, is now widely discussed, and analysed with recent publications of books and articles. It is accepted that generally those with low self-esteem would have a higher chance of developing mental health issues at some point in their lifetimes. I am interested in seeing whether the level of job satisfaction is linked to mental wellbeing, and so consequently explore the underlying factors such as lack of communication, lack of appropriate qualifications and lack of Deaf identity self-acceptance, combining to create a huge 'snowball' in causing mental health breakdown in a typical Deaf person.

Yet looking at the other deaf people making successful careers for themselves [to a varying degree], apart from the self-confidence, I am interested in exploring which factors are critically the key to their success not just in their work progression but also in coping with mainly hearing workforce in terms of communication skills [or perhaps the lack of]. I want to test my hypothesis that by selecting common factors through my interviews with the 'successful' deaf people, I would then find a way of applying the findings to create an action list to support the new generation of young deaf people coming out to the new workplace of this decade 2020s and beyond with enhanced self-confidence.

I would like to end this section with an anecdote from 1989. Working for a computer firm specialising in delivering software to the City institutions, I was introduced to a new line manager in a team. He noted my deafness and remarked that we would need to communicate by lip-reading and jotting down notes, etc. Luckily, I was and still am a pretty good lip-reader, so readily agreed but somehow added that as a deaf person, I do know sign language to which he retorted that he doesn't know and, in any case, he saw no point in learning it as I was the only deaf person in a 700-man firm. He then reminded me of this proverb, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do!"

I merely laughed it off, but then looking back at my conversation with him since then, his attitude would be off-putting to any young deaf person, who might not be as good a lip-reader as myself and might not have a good command of the written or spoken English as I would have.

1.1.1.1 Writing style for this chapter

Having ended the previous sub-section with a personal anecdote, it would be necessary to inform the reader that there are autobiographical instances interspersed throughout this chapter only, to illustrate my initial thinking strands leading to the formulation of my thesis.

By taking this approach, there is a danger of this chapter having some informal writing whenever narrating my recollections, because it might contain some elements of humour, slang, and contractions – these are not typical of such an academic writing one would expect from a PhD thesis. My reasoning for adopting this style in certain parts of this chapter is to link the initial research ideas with my personal experiences gained from over 30 years working in diverse workplaces in addition to some information on my upbringing prior to entering workplace in the mid-1980s.

My approach would be characteristic of British Sign Language (BSL) storytelling, where several studies (Earis & Cormier, 2013; Sutton-Spence & Napoli, 2010; Morgan, 2006) have noted that the BSL storyteller tended to narrate a story from a given character perspective giving rise to semi-formality in

the narration, which would be in contrast to a hearing person telling a similar story which would likely be from a narrator's perspective thereby maintaining neutrality as well as likely formality.

Based upon that, it became imperative to find a fine balancing line between the general informality of the BSL storytelling of my own recollections and the formality of this chapter looking at research ideas. This is bearing in mind that the BSL structural style and thinking is rooted in the traditional Deaf cultural storytelling, (Sutton-Spence, 2010) which are seen as a key part of the Deaf communities and passed onto the next generation, thereby preserving linguistic and cultural heritage of BSL.

Stahl (1977) emphasised that attitudes implied in the stories, even if never explicitly stated, may be the most significant feature of personal narratives, since they enable these tales to reveal and transmit the beliefs, values, and aspirations of a social group. This is the key to understanding personal narratives of signing Deaf person, of which I am one, as an exemplar of general British Deaf folklore (Sutton-Spence, 2010)

To sum it up, this introduction draws on a storytelling approach which is reminiscent of the storytelling conducted in BSL by members of the Deaf community. As a member of the Deaf community, it was important to me that the 'story' of the research, my motivation, and my position within it reflected the element of Deaf culture. For this reason, anecdote and humour are incorporated alongside analysis of academic literature.

1.2 Choice of terminology

The following sub-sections would briefly explain different terminologies in use by the signing Deaf community which might not be familiar to the non-deaf readers.

1.2.1 Definition of Deaf [as opposed to 'deaf']

In 1972, James Woodward, a research lecturer at Gallaudet University in the USA, proposed a distinction between deafness and deaf culture, where he suggested that by using deaf (written with a lower-case d) one would refer to the audiological condition of deafness and thus Deaf (written with an upper-case D) referring to deaf culture as embraced by the signing deaf people within the linguistic community (Padden, 1990).

Looking at the UK today, based on the statistics from RNID, it is estimated that roughly one in seven in the UK has some form of hearing loss, of which it roughly translated into 9 million people (RNID, 2003) However in 2018, RNID has revised its statistics stating that as many as 12 million people has hearing loss and this is now equivalent to roughly one in five adults in the UK. RNID (2018) calculated this figure

based on using the data from prevalence of hearing loss of different age groups combined with the latest available population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

But sticking to the commonly quoted figure of 11 million, a high majority of these are older people, typically 65-plus, who would lose some hearing in their declining years. It is estimated that it amounts to just over 10 million people. Out of the remainder, there are groups of deaf people with different levels of hearing loss and needs.

One group, numbered as low as 50,000 up to as high as 87,000 according to various statistics sees themselves as having own culture, language and community, and would be classed as Deaf, i.e. written with an upper case D.

iBSL (2015) indicated that a Deaf person, with a big D, would be an individual who moves within the social networks that make up the diverse Deaf communities throughout the world, a social network which is centred on the use of sign language by the participants. Thus, a person with a Deaf Identity would often indicate that he is culturally Deaf.

By corollary, a deaf person with a small d, would be a person who uses spoken or written language rather than sign language, and moves within networks where many people use spoken language. In some cases, these people function in networks that may include medical or social work professionals such as audiologists and lip-reading clubs or circles (iBSL, 2015)

1.2.2 Choice of terminology linked to deafness in general

There is a baffling array of different terms used to describe different forms of deafness or hearing loss. There is no real difference between the two terms 'deafness' and 'hearing loss' – however these people who use the term 'hearing loss' are typically those who might see 'deafness' as a form of disability or affliction. They might be those who will have recently experienced some hearing loss typically through advancing age or will have known someone who has this experience. Once again it can be argued it is linked to social perceptions of deafness in general – i.e. lack of deaf awareness is a likely factor in the choice of terminology.

As a corollary, deafness will then be seen as a medical term, for instance by GPs, surgeons, consultants, audiologists, etc. who would typically have been trained to look at it as occurring due to the ear(s) malfunctioning.

1.2.2.1 Term: Hearing-Impaired

This leads to the term often used by society 'hearing impaired', a term detested by the culturally Deaf community as the word 'impaired' has negative connotations, which contrasted with the pride felt by the Deaf community in their language and culture due to their deafness. This term is typically used mainly by those working in the fields of deafness, not just the medical professions, but also by the social welfare and teaching professions.

Additionally, this term is somewhat much preferred by hearing people, largely because they view it as politically correct. In the today society in general, it is sometimes seen that to state boldly one's disability (e.g. deaf, blind, etc.) is somewhat rude and impolite. To their way of thinking, it is far better to soften the hard reality by using the word 'impaired' along with 'visual', 'hearing' and so on. 'Hearing impaired' is a well-meaning word that is much resented by the signing Deaf people. (DeafHear, n.d.), yet accepted by the other deaf people who are reliant on what is left of their hearing and speech as they seek to minimise the impact of own hearing loss in order to continue participating in the general society.

Paradoxically, it is not politically correct to use the terms 'deaf and dumb' and 'deaf-mute' as these are nowadays seen as quite demeaning and to some extent offensive

1.2.2.2 Term: Deaf and Dumb

The term 'deaf and dumb' was probably first coined by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, because he thought that deaf people were incapable of being taught, of learning and of reasoned thinking. To his way of thinking, if a person could not use his/her voice in the same way as hearing people, then there was no way that this person could develop cognitive abilities (Gannon, 1980).

However, in the years since Aristotle's pronouncement, the word 'dumb' came to mean 'silent'. It is important to bear in mind about this definition, which still applies mainly because that is how people see Deaf people. The signing deaf community sees this term as offensive for several reasons.

First, Deaf people are by no means 'silent' as they use sign language, lip-reading, vocalisations, and so on to communicate. Communication is not reserved for hearing people alone and using one's voice is not the only way to communicate.

Secondly, the term 'dumb' has another meaning, i.e. stupid. Over time, the Deaf people [myself included] have encountered those people who subscribe to the philosophy that if you cannot use your voice well, you don't have much else 'upstairs' and have nothing going for you. (DeafHear, n.d.)

For instance, I once had a colleague at work who was shocked to discover I had a university degree and literally did a double take before collecting himself and repeating the question, just to confirm my answer. Consequently, it affected the previously good working relationship I had with him, as afterwards he tended to keep his distance from me, perhaps feeling threatened or embarrassed that the 'deaf and dumb' man does have an ability to achieve a degree. I could not elicit further from him regarding his sudden change of attitude towards me.

Thus, it can be argued that the Deaf people in general can and repeatedly does prove that they have much to contribute to society at large.

1.2.2.3 Term: Deaf-mute

There is another term from around the 18th century, 'mute', meaning silent and without voice. Once again it is similar to 'dumb', and this label is technically inaccurate since Deaf and Hard of Hearing people generally have functioning vocal cords. The problem lies with the fact that to successfully modulate your voice; you need to be able to hear your own voice. Again, because Deaf people use various methods of communication other than using their voices, they are not truly mute. True communication occurs when others understand one's message and they can respond in kind. (DeafHear, n.d.)

1.2.3 Use of the term: Deaf – for my research thesis

Following on from the 1972 Woodward definition of the Deaf, i.e. written with an upper-case D, as a way of distinction between deafness [as a form of disability – a medical condition] and deaf culture – I am focusing my research on those from the deaf culture and community – thus the Deaf people. While the number of Deaf people in the UK is comparatively low, the lack of support for this group can and does place a burden in the society in terms of support, costs, and mental well-being.

The motivation of looking at this specific grouping is that the results of my research might perhaps be applied not only in the UK, but worldwide as WFD (2016) stated that there are 70 million deaf people all over the world. It stated that they would use sign language as their first [i.e. preferred] language or mother tongue – a clear reference that those deaf people from hearing families would learn sign language perhaps after learning the language of their home country but then adopting sign language as their first or 'preferred' language.

Thus, for my research, I shall be using the term 'Deaf' to confirm my focus on those who would use sign language though I will be using some deaf people who do not use sign language for comparison purposes. This will be explained in the next Chapter, as most young deaf people go to mainstream

schools and will not always have had exposure to sign language in depth so may find themselves more reliant on speech [coherent or otherwise] as their mode of communication.

1.3 Mental health in deafness

Mental illness and health issues were historically a taboo subject, not only in general but also within the deaf community. When I was growing up, people would whisper and say stuff with sadness; for example, my father was recalling his childhood friend, explaining that when he became an adult, he 'went funny in the head and ended up dying in a sanatorium.' Over the years, I would come across deaf people with mental health problems during my work at Springfield Hospital – learning from colleagues that communication would typically be one of the main issues leading to 'nervous breakdown'. The 'communication breakdown' issues could be attributed to workplace environment when a deaf employee might find it daunting trying to fit in within all-exclusively hearing environment.

1.3.1 General observations on mental and deafness

Mental well-being is a very much discussed topic these days, such an example occurred in the BBC News looking at how the online social media can lead to feelings of exclusion and social alienation. This research suggested that 'the more time a person spends online, the less time they have for real-world interactions' (BBC News, 2017)

Referring to this news item, a professor from this study argued that it is an important report confirming that 'mental health problems and social isolation are at epidemic levels among young adults.', arguing that the introduction and explosion of social media in recent years might adversely impact on those hoping to fill out any social void in their lives, indicating a potential vicious cycle in attempting to overcome their mental health issues.

At the time of writing, I am a dissertation supervisor for several BA Education students as part of their ATP [Advanced Teaching Programme] at the University of Reading. One of the recent dissertations looked at the prevalence or otherwise of mental health issues amongst the primary school children and my student was testing the hypothesis on whether these 'problems' some of the adults are dealing with, are perhaps linked to how we all cope during childhood. My student argued that while there is already a lot being researched amongst the secondary school children, she was keen to investigate whether these mental health issues actually began to surface well before adolescence. Following this, she wanted to explore what kind of support is already there and perhaps new ways of early prevention and intervention tactics could be introduced.

This is an area of research which hitherto has not been deeply analysed, and this made me think back to my childhood in primary schools and how we all coped, about a half a century ago. There is one critical factor leading to increase on mental health awareness – it is less of a taboo these days.

But this begs the question, putting aside the social pressures [via the higher usage of social media] leading to ever-increasing incidence of mental health issues amongst teenagers and young adults [regardless of whether they are deaf or hearing], of whether a deaf pupil attending a deaf school would have less possibility of developing mental health issues in contrast to a deaf pupil attending a local mainstream school due to the lack of common disability-related peers within the environment that each pupil would find himself to be in several hours a day, 5 days a week for about 35 weeks per annum.

On the other hand, it has been stated time and time again that a higher proportion of deaf people would have mental health issues in contrast to the hearing people. For instance, Fellingner et al (2012) wrote that there is a higher incidence of mental health issues in general within the deaf community all over the world, by illustrating a table showing the studies of prevalence rates of mental health problems in deaf adult problems [using examples from New Zealand, Holland, Austria, and Norway] amongst other studies.

This brings up the question I have in mind, would the incidence of higher percentage of deaf people with mental health issues be due to the lack of communication with other people who are not deaf.

In the national population of some 65 million people in the UK, it has been stated that from several sources such as Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), disability.co.uk, etc. that approximately one in seven have some form of hearing loss – of which the high majority would be those aged 60 and above, having declining hearing levels one would associate with advancing age.

It is also stated from disability.co.uk website (n.d.) that there are at least 50,000 Deaf people in the UK who uses British sign Language [BSL] as a preferred mode of communication typically in lieu of the spoken/written English. There are other sources which gives a slightly higher figure than the generally accepted figure of 50,000 – where some have given a rough estimate of 70,000-odd Deaf BSL users.

The highest figure I could find and with reasonable confidence can support is from the British Deaf Association (BDA, 2022) where one of its pages in its website states that by using official statistics they believe that there are 87,000 Deaf BSL users. They added that the total number of BSL users is 151,000 of which the 64,000 of them are non-deaf, typically family members. The same website page explained that their statistic calculation is *'based on the percentage of "BSL users at home" from the Scottish census in 2011 because the question about BSL was badly phrased in the Census for England, Wales, and*

Northern Ireland. Therefore, this figure does not include professional BSL users, Interpreters, Translators, etc.' (BDA, 2022)

Even using the upper limit of 87,000 Deaf BSL users, it represents 0.14% of the national population which would seem negligible but for the fact that there has been increasing levels of support in recent years for the signing Deaf people, who had been diagnosed with a range of mental health issues – such as the National Deaf Services and Sign Health.

1.3.2 Mental health as taboo in the 1980s

By default, people in the deaf community would behave similarly. I recall my first exposure to a person who had some form of mental illness in 1985. I started chatting with him, and I noted he was struggling with his signing and sometimes not paying attention not only to myself but seemingly of the surrounding environment. I thought it odd and wondered whether to persist with him or not, when my friend, who happened to hover nearby, discreetly signed to me 'Preston' and walked away.

I subsequently found out that in the deaf community, 'Preston', a place in North-West England is a code word to indicate those suffering from mental illness. It was described as a 'big, grey and forbidding place set in Preston for all deaf people suffering nervous breakdown to be set up there to be rehabilitated back into society' to quote the same deaf friend. While he means well, he tended to have an unfortunate habit of, without warning, suddenly signing 'Preston' furtively with his eyes dextrously glancing at the unsuspecting deaf person. In time, I would start to know some deaf people who had been 'Preston-ed' often without them realising that their friend(s) might have loose tongues.

It was actually the Whittingham Hospital, now closed down, which was the then largest mental hospital in Great Britain, and it was where the use of electroencephalograms (EEGs) was first pioneered (Pattinson, 1999). This hospital had a department of Psychiatry for the Deaf People, set up in 1964 by the Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr John C Denmark (1924-1998), who was the only consultant psychiatrist serving for deaf people in the UK from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s (Monteiro, 1999)

1.3.3 Dr John C Denmark's views on education of deaf children

Dr Denmark played a fundamental role in bringing about a crucial change in the education of deaf children in the UK (Monteiro, 1999) and through his research he became convinced and argued that deaf children were being inappropriately educated using speech and oral/aural methods, causing controversy and debate.

From his various articles and lectures, he made professionals and the general public in this country and worldwide aware that young deaf people could be prone to psychological and emotional problems because of the communication difficulties with their hearing parents and teachers; remarking repeatedly through his varied research (Denmark et al, 1979) that the communication difficulties of prelingually profoundly deaf children can have serious consequences in terms of cognitive and orrectic development, especially if parents do not receive the appropriate counselling and guidance to enable them to communicate effectively with their child in the early formative years.

Monteiro (1999) stated that his influential opinions were instrumental in bringing about changes in this controversial field. Moreover, being in a position of authority, he enabled the acceptance of BSL as a language in its own right, a philosophy strongly embraced by the deaf community, and now accepted by most authorities.

1.3.4 National Deaf Services at Old Church

By 2000, there were three specialist mental health services for deaf people based in Manchester, Birmingham, and London, of which the first two are named after Dr Denmark. The one in London is Springfield University Hospital where I worked on an ad hoc basis for several years.

The National Deaf Services (NDS) is based at the Springfield Hospital. One of the sites that NDS used for several years was in a converted church building at Balham, known as Old Church. It is a 16-bed inpatient unit but also provided assertive outreach community support coupled with psychological therapies and assessment by the multi-disciplinary community team. It came about as from the 1960s onwards, there has been gradual change in its services into providing more outpatient facilities, thus consequently it now has several sites for mental health services primarily focused on care and trust. (Talling, 2017)

I was a relief worker working as a Health Care Assistant (HCA) between 1998 and 2004 as I used to work as a freelance actor, so had a lot of free time as an 'resting actor' to do occasional shifts there. First thing that impressed me there was that there was a strict policy for the staff of which a slight majority were hearing – which stated that whenever a deaf person is in the room, a hearing person must communicate using signs [it didn't matter too much if the person is not fluent or knows minimal sign language if there is access].

I started to develop better understanding of some of the inpatients and they opened up, not only about their reasons for being at the hospital but also their backgrounds including what schools they went to. Someone once told me 'Death is a great leveller' – I could argue that the same for the group of

inpatients. Quite a few were former pupils of Mary Hare, and despite what I wrote in the last paragraphs about that school, querying whether those from Deaf families left Mary Hare with less than expected set of qualifications one would perhaps expect from that school, these inpatients I chatted with, were generally not from deaf families.

They, in common, with others had communication issues to deal with – usually with other family members, work colleagues, etc. leading to frustration and struggling with everyday life expectations, etc. On top of this, isolation through insufficient communication and/or access to information would thus trigger episodes of breakdown leading them to be sectioned usually at the local hospitals which has no deaf support and a colleague once said that those patients at Springfield Hospital are the ‘lucky ones’ as the staff has deaf awareness and can communicate using sign language.

It was an eye-opening experience working there and it put all in perspective regarding my life experiences in that while I didn’t have access to sign language, I was lucky enough to be able to communicate with my parents because apart from my sister, the other family members don’t really communicate with me that much.

The only reason I stopped working there in 2004 was that I started teaching BSL on a more frequent basis up in the Midlands, leaving less free time which I saved aside for my occasional acting and interpreting work.

In September 2017, I returned to Springfield Hospital as an actor for the day doing role-play of an inpatient as part of the training for staff – I caught up with two former colleagues who mentioned that the demand for these services is still ongoing especially with the younger population – similar underpinning reasons, i.e. lack of access to information and communication issues. I asked them if it is because the young deaf people go to mainstream schools these days, one of them cryptically responded with a twinkle in his eye that I should speak to them directly asking about whether they had ample access to information as well as communication when at mainstream school or not.

1.3.5 Incidence of mental health issues in a deaf child

Within the Deaf Unit at Springfield Hospital, there is a separate unit called Corner House. Corner House is a six-bed national specialist assessment and treatment unit for deaf children and adolescents up to their 18th birthday, with severe complex emotional and psychological problems. They would typically be treated for a wide range of issues such as anxiety disorders and depression.

Like the adult services, the young people would have an assessment of their mental health state and needs. They are usually referred via a range of services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), paediatricians, audiologist, doctors (GPs), social services and even schools.

I have never worked there but used to meet staff from there, where they would explain a variety of reasons the children might have these mental health needs. They added that it is usually a combination of factors, such as parental support [or lack of]; school issues, communication breakdowns [e.g. family members or school staff perhaps not understanding what the deaf child was trying to say, thus perhaps missing his needs, etc.]

There is a 1989 study by Leigh et al indicating that the 'deaf college students were significantly more depressed, as a group, than hearing peers' (Leigh, 1989 cited in Ridgeway, 1998, p.19). It is essential to consider why there is incidence of deaf schoolchildren and young adults do have depression, leading to mental health issues. It is a wide area which also looked at whether parental inter-relationships or the lack of, does contribute to their children's mental health issues

Luterman (1987) noted that this is due to the parents' failure to accept their child's deafness and so not being able to meet their emotional and development needs – thus confirming the statistics where as much as 45% of deaf children can develop issues with regards to their behaviour and mental health as compared to the national average of 25%. This statistic is three decades old, and there are many different reasons for now-increasing mental health incidence amongst the general youth, mainly linked to social media – however young deaf people are still more likely to develop these said issues than the hearing. It remains to be a similar situation 30 years later as research by Berry (2017) confirmed.

1.3.6 Deaf genes linked to mental health – do they exist?

Not very much has been written regarding the possibility of a deaf gene linked to mental health. It is ongoing research by the scientists looking at to isolate and identify different genes linked to deafness first before associating with other symptoms [examples are Usher's and Waardenburg's, etc.].

In the 1970s, Dr George Fraser undertook his research looking at the causes of profound childhood deafness in over 3500 patients and this led to himself making this observation where he felt that it is certain that whatever diagnostic refinements are employed, it will remain impossible to assign an exact cause of hearing loss in a substantial proportion of deaf persons. (Fraser, 1976)

On the other hand, Sessa and Sutherland (2013) made no reference to genetics when looking at mental health in deaf but argued that early language acquisition (signed or spoken) is a protective factor against mental disorder.

From other papers, it is noted that deaf individuals generally face higher mental health burdens than hearing individuals (Kvam, Loeb, & Tambs, 2007), due to factors such as access to effective communication, childhood trauma including abuse, socioeconomic issues, and experiences with stigma and discrimination (Fellinger, Hofzinger, & Pollard, 2012).

This got me thinking about genetics research and while huge advances have been made in recent decades, we still are very much in the dark about whether there is correlation or not within the specific [perhaps yet undiscovered] genes incorporating deafness and mental health.

My curiosity regarding the possible links between deafness and mental health was whipped up at the 2007 Deaf-Blind International Conference in Perth, when one speaker, Prof Claes Möller, of Örebro University and the Swedish Institute for Disability Research mentioned in passing that the newly discovered Type IV of the Usher's might have some links to mental health. Prof Möller, a specialist in medical disability and audiology, has been working some 20 years with syndromic deafness with particular reference on deaf-blindness with a main focus on Usher's syndrome. With his team, he has been responsible for clinical assessment of different Usher syndrome types, which have made it possible to link clinical and genetic research leading to discoveries of mutations and cloning of genes, leading to the largest prevalence study of Usher syndrome with over 400 patients which have been clinically and genetically evaluated.

However, in recent years, I cannot find confirmation from latest research on whether Usher's Type IV has possibly some form of connection with mental illness, as for instance, indicated in National Organisation for Rare Disorders [NORD] which simply stated that while it is an acknowledged fact there have always been 3 types of Usher's, there is a possibility of the 4th as an X-linked genetic trait. NORD (2017) went on to explain that the Usher syndrome type IV predominately affects males and in common with the first 3 types, is also characterized by hearing loss and progressive vision disturbances. NORD (2017) emphasised that it is an extremely rare form of Usher syndrome and is thought to be inherited as an X-Linked trait.

This is possibly indicative of the fact that genetics linking certain types of deafness with mental illness is either yet to be discovered or simply not present.

However, I do know of at least 3 different deaf people who have Usher Type I who have admitted having been outpatients in a mental hospital and one of them did wonder aloud, whether it was linked to the deaf gene(s) – these were during my time working at the Springfield Hospital [supporting deaf outpatients and inpatients with mental health issues] between 1998 and 2004. This is in addition to a

rather disproportionate number of deaf people having mental health breakdown at least once during their lifetime for a variety of reasons (Sessa & Sutherland, 2013, Kvam et al, 2007, Fellingner et al, 2012)

1.4 Levels of hearing loss [deafness]

The following sections demonstrates different levels of hearing loss and how these would impact on a deaf person and thereby influence their choice of communication which could be spoken language or sign language or even a mixture of both, before a brief look at how I communicate with my hearing family members in the final sub-section

1.4.1 Levels of deafness explained

Sound is an invisible vibration. It travels in waves, spreading outwards from the source of the sound. Sounds are different both in loudness and pitch, often known as frequency. Loudness is measured in decibels (dB). Audiologists often describe loudness as 'intensity'. Frequency is measured in Hertz (Hz). All sounds are made up of different frequencies. We can describe this as the pitch of a sound. The frequency of a sound affects the pitch that it is heard at. For example, if you look at a piano keyboard from left to right, the low pitch notes are on the left and high pitch notes are on the right.

The audiologists use the audiogram as a picture to show how much we can hear. Basically, the audiogram is a graph on which a person's ability to hear different tones (frequencies) at different volumes (intensities) of sound is recorded.

Hearing loss is often classified by means of different levels. The same definitions are not always used, but the following succeeding the three diagrams of audiograms are typically used jargons.

With kind permission from the colleagues working at the Audiology Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, I reproduce some diagrams of the audiograms giving us some visual ideas of what hearing loss can mean:

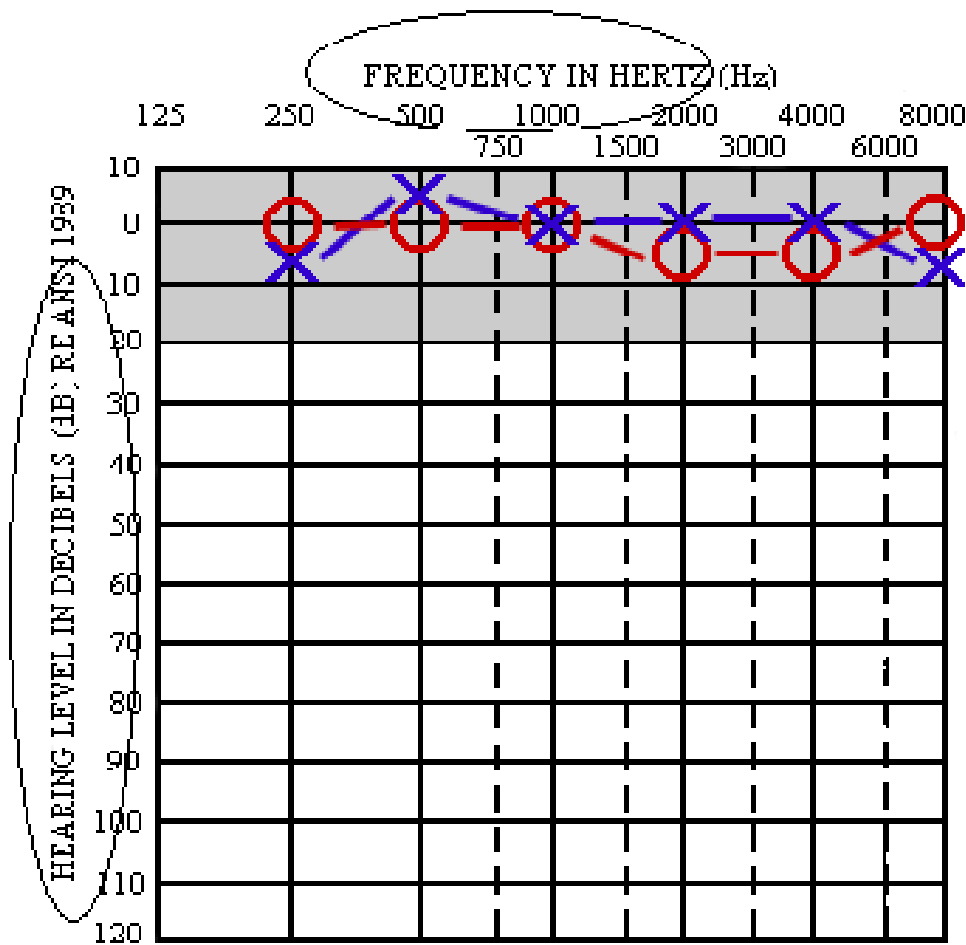
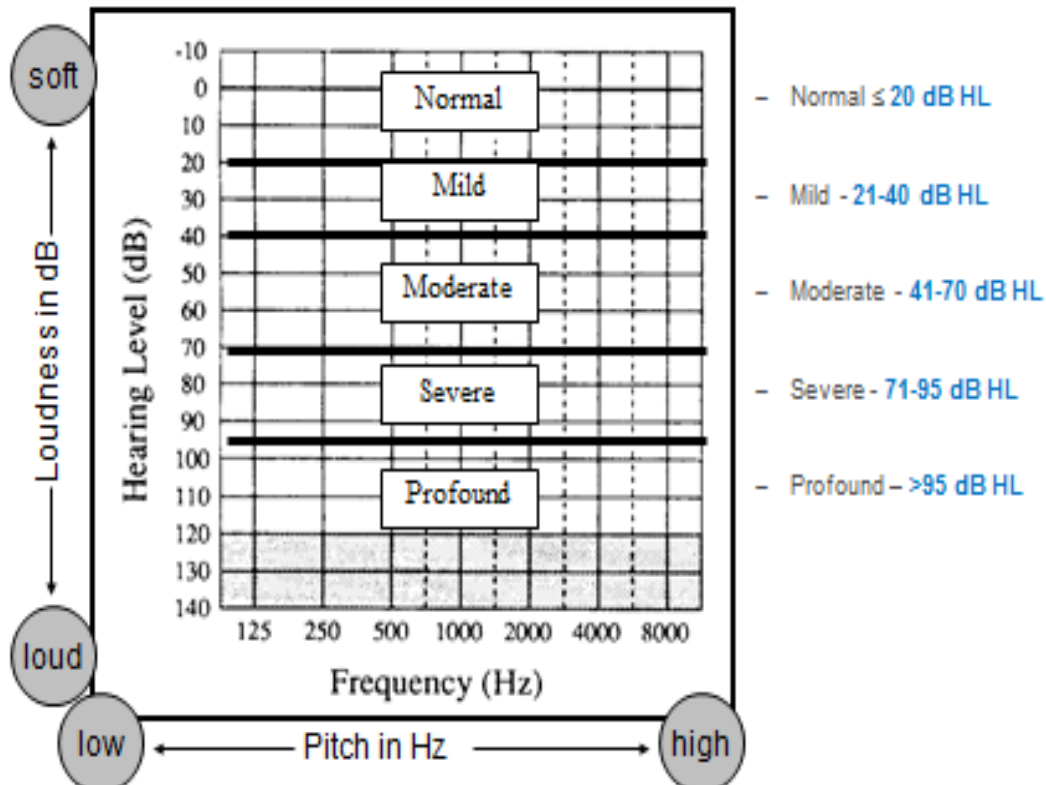


Fig 1. Audiogram of Normal Hearing

On an audiogram frequency, sometimes known as pitch, runs along the top, the volume level in dBHL is down the side. Plotted is a hearing test that is what we would class as within normal limits. When we are born, we can hear between 20-20,000Hz, everyone starts to loss there hearing from the moment they are born, the rate depends on multiple factors, such as family history, past noise exposure, general health, head trauma etc.

Degrees of Hearing Loss



10

Fig 2: Degrees of hearing loss

So here we see the audiogram with the degrees of hearing loss plotted. Normal conversation speech tends to average 40-45dB, but can be between 30-60dB, thus in a basic 'v' shape [i.e. shaped like banana – see next Figure] speech is most powerful in the mid-frequencies.

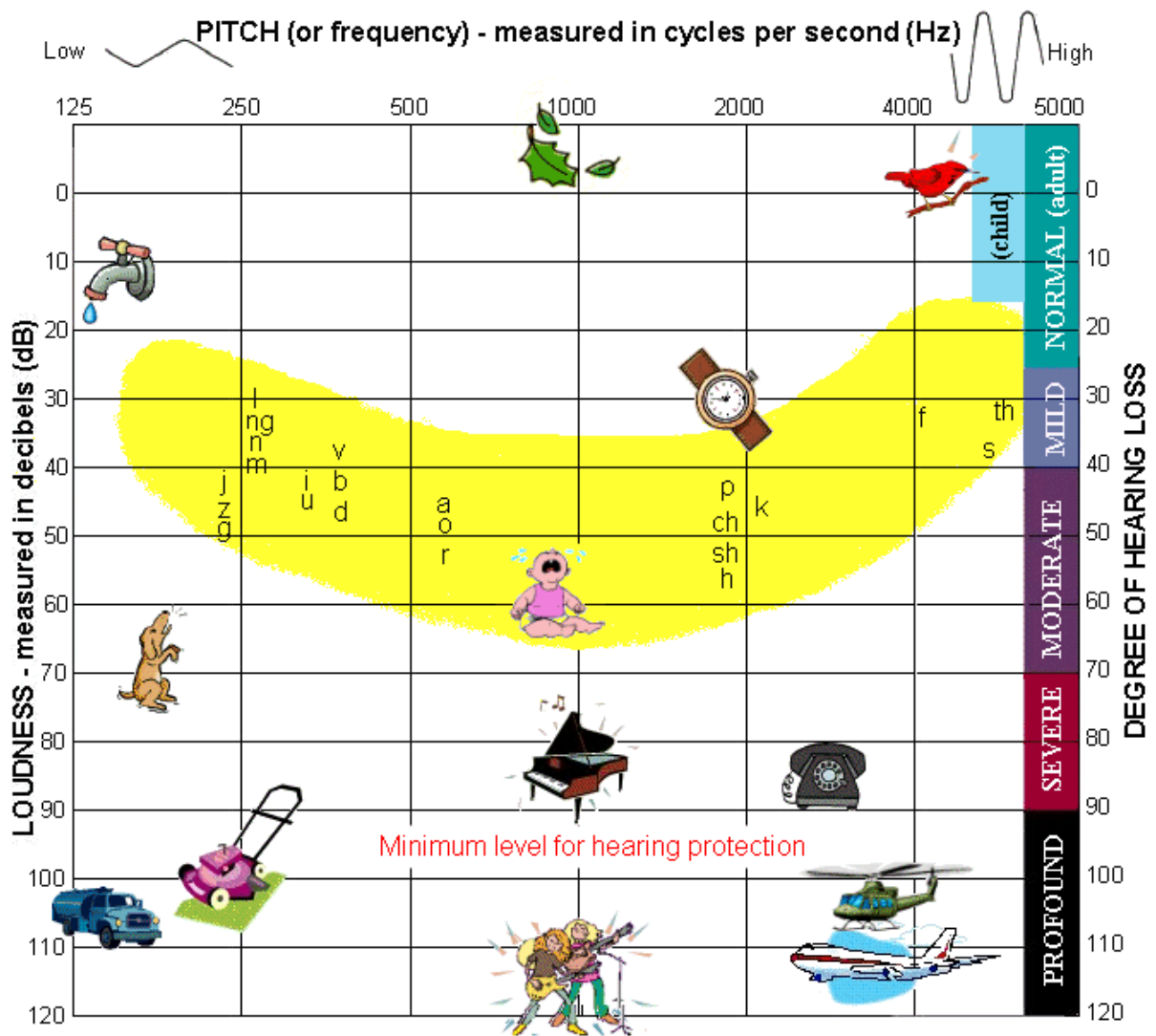


Fig 3: Speech banana

This figure 3 shows the difference of speech sounds plotted, with the vowels predominantly low frequency and the consonants generally of the higher frequency.

1.4.1.1 Mild deafness [also termed as 'Hard of hearing']

On average, the quietest sounds that people can hear with their better ear are between 25 and 40dB. People who suffer from mild hearing loss have some difficulties keeping up with conversations, especially in noisy surroundings.

1.4.1.2 Moderate deafness

On average, the quietest sounds heard by people with their better ear are between 40 and 70dB. People who suffer from moderate hearing loss have difficulty keeping up with conversations when not using a hearing aid.

1.4.1.3 Severe deafness

On average, the quietest sounds heard by people with their better ear are between 70 and 95dB. People who suffer from severe hearing loss will benefit from powerful hearing aids, but often they rely heavily on lip-reading even when they are using hearing aids. Some also use sign language.

1.4.1.4 Profound deafness

On average, the quietest sounds heard by people with their better ear are from 95dB or more. People who suffer from profound hearing loss can be said to be 'stone deaf' and rely mostly on lip-reading, and/or sign language. They may hear very loud sounds, but can rely on vibrations for loud noises such as heavy metal music, road drilling, etc.

On a personal note, with the aid of powerful hearing aids, I would hear noises but would still struggle to decipher or even distinguish between these noises. When not wearing hearing aids, I hear nothing except perhaps on one occasion when I was near a bomb going off late at night in North London during the IRA campaign in London in the late 1980s, and at other time I heard a slight jarring note but aided by vibration via a minor earthquake in the Midlands in the early 2000s.

1.4.2 Communication – How my family communicates with me

Having a deaf child presents a problem of communication. As mentioned in the next chapter, Moores in 1987 researched that approximately 9 out of 10 deaf children are born to hearing parents who would typically never have met a deaf person before the birth of their deaf child. This presents a challenge for the hearing parents, who would then have to find ways of overcoming communication gaps. That should be unsurprisingly in view of the statistics from Section 1.1.1 where it is stated that roughly 0.14% of the national population is deaf AND uses sign language.

Now that I had been diagnosed as deaf, my parents were then seeking questions for which they probably received conflicting answers. In the next few years, they were faced with an onslaught of decisions they would have to consider such as fitting me with hearing-aid, how to communicate with me through speech [as signing was frowned upon by the education professionals in the 1960s which was a long-lasting legacy from the infamous Milan Conference of 1880 which passed several resolutions banning the use of sign language in education of deaf children]

One interesting thing that both my parents never really considered till much later was the cultural impact on my life and clashes with my embryonic deaf culture leading to identity confusion during my formative years. I will be looking a bit more about Deaf Culture later in this chapter.

Thinking back, I did wonder whether my parents were confident in their decision-making regarding the best way forward for their deaf child – as the choices they embarked upon can impact on a typical deaf child's development, self-concept, and own development. Having such a limited background knowledge, their decision-making would have been rather a scary and overwhelming undertaking.

My mother used to take me to the Nuffield Hospital in London King's Cross for hearing tests as well as obtaining advice for 'learning to speak' – which was a challenge as it was confirmed that I am profoundly deaf – so even with the help of the then comparatively powerful body-worn hearing aids I would be able to hear some noises but not distinguishing between different types of noises, e.g. being unable to decipher from the noise whether it might be the telephone ringing or the toilet being flushed, etc.

I was fitted with two hearing aids and taught to talk mainly at home as my mother was a housewife for several years. Talking with my immediate family, i.e. the four of us was fine – it was always trickier with extended members of the family as they wouldn't understand what I was saying and vice versa. I did wonder whether the fact their non-English accents had made it more difficult to lip-read them. For instance, both my grandmothers were native French speakers, although one of them was already fluent in English so were able to converse in general. The other never learnt English and I didn't know French till I started learning in secondary school, so we never spoke to each other till my late teens; yet it was difficult as she spoke French with strong Egyptian accent which I still wasn't able to understand! Some family members never spoke to me and now as an adult I simply 'wrote them off' but as a child, I found it frustrating.

Family gatherings were always 'boring' for me as I sometimes had to wait till afterwards for my parents to tell me what was happening or sometimes, they might be telling me on the spot if they could sneak in a few words sideways. As I grew up, I knew I was missing quite a bit in general conversation as well as

family news – so would start to find ways of avoiding such gatherings wherever possible with varying degrees of success. None of my family ever learnt to sign – I recently asked my mother if she would start to learn BSL, her retort was “I am too old now and, in any case, you understand me!”

Looking back, learning to speak was supposedly for my benefit but, it was more for their benefit as they would not be able to communicate with me otherwise. I cope fairly well in conversing with hearing people in small quantities – but would this be the case if I was brought up learning sign language instead – as the extended family members would then not be able to communicate with me and moving forward similarly for my work colleagues. This is a paradox of oral communication for a profoundly deaf child who cannot hear much with or without hearing aids.

On the other hand, I was also encouraged to read a lot – learning new words along the way – which complements or rather compensates for the lack of clarity in my speech such that I can confidently recourse to the written notes instead as a way of conversation – for instance on more than one occasion I would converse with a great-uncle using paper and pen with a few utterances in between!

1.5 Deaf Education

This section briefly looks at the history of the education of deaf children and the latter sub-sections looked at my experiences of learning which goes some way to form the basis of the thinking behind my thesis choice.

1.5.1 Milan Conference 1880

In 1880, there was an international conference of deaf educators, the Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf. At this conference, held September 6-11 in 1880, a declaration was made that oral education was better than manual (sign) education. There were 8 resolutions concerning the arguments stating that oral method should be preferred to that of signs in the education and instruction of deaf-mutes – all of which were passed almost resoundingly.

Akech (1997) explained that the conference came about since there was a traditional belief that deaf people were deviant people who needed to be rehabilitated into the mainstream of hearing society. This view was mainly held by medical practitioners and the teaching profession. While doctors strove to reinstate the hearing sense, teachers endeavoured to teach deaf children using the oral method. This method involved teaching and communicating with the deaf through the medium of spoken language (speech).

Akech (1997) added that the belief that the deaf could be taught to acquire speech naturally was so strong that in 1880 at a conference in Milan, an attempt was made to eradicate sign language from the face of the earth. The conference, which was attended by hearing teachers and educationalists, excluding the deaf, passed a resolution which banned sign language from use in schools for the deaf. Sign language became an underground language. Deaf children, however, continued to use sign language outside the classroom situation and it remained a living and natural language.

It was not until 1960 that the American linguist, Stokoe, argued that ASL [American Sign Language] is a language in its right – leading to a revolution in the understanding of ASL in the United States and by implication on other sign languages such as BSL in the UK. His research, published in 1965, led to a widespread recognition that sign languages are true and human languages like other spoken languages.

Despite this, it remained several years before schools for the deaf in the UK started using sign language as part of their educational system. As we enter the decade of 2020s, several schools for the deaf are still adhering to the oral method of education.

1.5.2 My early years

I was born in 1965 to my parents who are hearing. They suspected that I was deaf when I was about 1, as I was not responding either to stimuli or to big noises – they took me to the doctors who did the rudimentary testing of going behind my back and banging a drum to which I did not respond. Naturally, my parents, who have never met a deaf person in their lives, were shocked, upset and grieving that their first-born child should be deaf. They unsurprisingly asked their respective family members if they knew of any incidences of deafness in the family – there was none as far as it is known.

I am the first deaf person ever in the family and my parents were relentless in seeking answers for my 'affliction', so they spoke to different doctors, educational experts, consultants, etc. They even researched on whether there are operations available to fix my deafness - these were the days before the advent of cochlear implants, which though first used in 1961, were not widely available till the mid-1980s when I was already a young adult.

I have a sister who is 4 years younger and is not deaf. She has since married and have two children who are not deaf. In the half-century following my birth, there is no one else born deaf on both sides of my parents' family, I have 4 children from different relationships and none of them are deaf, even though their mothers are deaf like me.

1.5.3 Causes of my deafness

It needed to be added that both my parents, though born in different countries in the Middle East and hardly knowing each other in their formative years, are first cousins. A consultant explained to my parents about the increased risks of disability in babies born to first cousins. He stated that for any couple who are first cousins, the probability is 1 in 1,000, but if the first child has a disability, then the probability is drastically reduced to 1 in 4 for future children having the same disability.

My parents naturally dithered about having a second child; but they claimed that they decided to go ahead as there is 75% chance that the next one will be hearing – but if the next child is deaf then it will not matter so much as I ‘would have company’ – an interesting perspective! Have a sister who is hearing, this completes the typical modern average family, i.e. the two of us siblings plus the parents.

1.5.3.1 Causes of my deafness – are the deaf genes the reason?

In the intervening years, people naturally asked me about the causes of deafness and apart from my parents being related to each other, I naturally wondered about whether there is genetic mutation. If this is the case, would this be passed onto my offspring? I have been told of genetic counselling where they can confirm whether I do possess mutated genes or not.

For instance, a mutant gene which is prevalent in causing deafness is called connexin-26 (Cx26) and I have come across several Deaf friends who were able to confirm through genetic counselling that they have that gene. Kelley et al (1998) wrote that the said gene is associated with the type of autosomal recessive non-syndromic neurosensory deafness known as “DFNB1” and referred to other studies which indicates that this type of deafness “DFNB1” is responsible for approximately one in five of all childhood deafness.

And then there were other Deaf acquaintances who have mentioned different mutant genes such as connexin-30 and connexin-32, etc. or certain syndromes such as Usher’s, Pendred’s, Waardenburg’s and CHARGE, etc. A small number of them do have deaf children, and I know of a few Deaf couple who have made conscious decision not to have children for fear of passing on deafness to the next generation(s) for a variety of different reasons.

Without recourse to genetic counselling, I would speculate that I would most likely have a monogenic form of deafness as Bruzzone et al (1994) indicated that combining for instance both mutant genes [connexin-26 and connexin-32] might increase a possibility of developing a digenic form of deafness that could exhibit a dominant pattern of inheritance.

1.5.4 School experiences

As these were the days before the Warnock Report of 1978 (leading to Education Act 1981, etc.) advocating integration of SEN pupils into mainstream, I attended all three specialist schools for the deaf, between 1969 and 1984.

1.5.4.1 My first primary school

In 1969, I started going to Blanche Nevile School, in Tottenham, North London. This school for deaf children employed teachers who all used the oral method of education. I was with other deaf children communicating orally, gesturing as well as picking up fingerspelling and a few basic signs particularly from fellow class pupils who are from deaf family.

The eminent educationalist, Dr Dale, used to come to this school periodically and see how we are getting on in the class, learning stuff and simultaneously observe the teachers as he was a trainer of teachers of the Deaf. He wrote books on how to educate deaf children and he applied a strongly pro-Oralism approach [more of this in Chapter 2], and my father bought a book written by him. Perhaps naively, I recall with great excitement telling my father it was amazing to be able to say I know the author! Dr Dale, a charismatic man himself, always made time to chat with us in between his classroom observations, asking us how we are, and what we have been learning at classrooms of late.

There were about 80 deaf children of which around 70 of them are of primary school age, typically 10 in a class, and then there would be around 12 secondary school pupils at one end of the school all lumped together regardless of their actual ages which would vary between 12 and 16. Most of the school-leavers would leave with very little or no qualifications usually Certificate of Secondary Exams (CSE) exams on woodwork or mathematics. Girls would do cooking and needlework practical exams.

My parents were naturally concerned at the limited scope of possible qualifications I would achieve had I stayed on till age 16. They then found out about Mary Hare Grammar School, which in those days, a pupil has had to pass 11-plus exam and then attend the school for an interview to perhaps win a place at the school.

The headmaster of Blanche Nevile freely admitted to my parents that in the previous decade prior to my admission to this school, only two successfully gained a place at Mary Hare, as apparently it was a low priority for this school to educate the pupils to such a standard for the entrance exam. My parents looked around and found a different school for the deaf which was enjoying a reputation in sending pupils to Mary Hare Grammar School and Burwood Park School – the then top two schools for the deaf.

1.5.4.2 My second primary school

In 1974, when aged 9 I changed schools, and was a pupil at Woodford School in East London for the next 3 years. This school incorporates a mix of day-pupils and boarders – as I lived in London, I commuted to the school daily and I noted that the standards of teaching was somewhat geared to acquiring as much general knowledge in addition to mathematics and English (i.e. the three Rs – Reading, Writing and Arithmetic)

This school was set up by Mrs Beatrice 'Jo' Ingall in 1951 and closed for good in the mid-1990s, a few years after the retirement of Mrs Ingall. It was only in recent years that there was news of sexual abuse at the hands of Mrs Ingall's husband on the vulnerable young deaf pupils who were residing at a boarding house a street away from the school (BBC Newsnight, 2015)

Just like at Blanche Nevile School, Woodford School also employed teachers who all used the oral method of education. In common with the previous school, I was with other deaf children communicating orally, gesturing as well as picking up fingerspelling and a few basic signs particularly from other pupils who are from deaf family.

Mrs Ingall was a strict adherent of the oral method of education once stating that those who used sign language belonged in the monkey cage at the London Zoo! Those who were caught signing, myself included, were severely punished in variety of ways, such as being given 100 lines (such as 'I must not sign and wave about like an ape'), being made to stand outside in a corridor corner for an hour at times, sometimes being given a smaller portion of school dinner, etc.

Similarly sized as the first school, there were roughly 100 deaf children of whom around 60 of them are of primary school age, typically 8 to 10 in a class, and then there would be around 40 secondary school pupils at sited at a different building down the same street. Most of the secondary school-leavers would leave with very little or no qualifications usually Certificate of Secondary Exams (CSE) exams on vocational subjects.

Those who passed the 11-pass exam would go to Mary Hare Grammar School and Burwood Park School and they would then leave school usually with more qualifications than those who stayed on behind at these two secondary schools – it was perhaps sadly inevitable that the friendships formed during the primary school years did not develop further as these children were sent to separate schools – I recalled visiting the school reunions of the Woodford and Blanche Nevile School and with two class-mates who went onto Mary Hare like myself, we felt very much as strangers at these events because the majority of

the attendees stayed throughout the whole time at both primary and secondary schools and consequently developed strong and intimately life-forming friendships.

I did my 11-plus exam in 1977 and went for an interview in Mary Hare Grammar School, which was a success so I started that school end of August 1977 for what would be 7 years leading to attainment of GCE O-Level and A-Level examinations

1.5.4.3 My secondary school: Mary Hare Grammar School

1.5.4.3.1 Brief historical background of Mary Hare Grammar School

Mary Hare Grammar School was seen as the elite of the schools in the UK such that the other deaf people who never attended this school would jibe at those who went there as 'snobs' or 'cannot sign properly', etc. In the years after I left this school, I would be chatting with other deaf people at deaf clubs or events and on being asked which school I attended, they were always surprised to learn I went to this school in that I am fluent in sign language and perhaps not snobbish enough!

It is a residential co-educational non-maintained special school for the deaf pupils of secondary school age. It currently has about 230 pupils [though there were around 180 pupils in the early 1980s when I was a pupil]

It was always stated that this school was founded in 1946, but it was first established by Miss Mary Adelaide Hare (1865-1945) in 1916 as *Dene Hollow School for the Deaf* in Burgess Hill, West Sussex. After Miss Hare's death on 5 November 1945, it was renamed as *Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf* on 1 January 1946.

The school bought Arlington Manor and surrounding estates in Newbury, Berkshire in 1947, and moved from its old site in Burgess Hill to the refurbished premises in 1949. Several building projects have since followed, expanding the school to its current size, including a classroom block, school hall, boarding house for boys, staff flats (now boarding house for year 7 pupils), new updated swimming pool, science block, sixth form campus, arts and design centre, Arlington Arts Centre which includes a theatre seating 250, music therapy centre, and recording studio (Mary Hare History Timeline, n.d.)

As was the case way back in 1977, this school continues to teach a variety of subjects at GCSE and A-Level. This school naturally boasts that their reputation of providing good and solid education for deaf children is evident by the fact that a good percentage of them end up going onto university and other further education.

1.5.4.3.2 Speech Competition

In common with the other two schools, this school implements the oral communication methods which clearly indicated that sign language is forbidden in the classroom.

However, during a recent visit to the school [May 2017], I was informed by a teacher of the Deaf that it is permissible for some pupils to use sign language outside of class, also confirming that the 'dreaded' speech competition was abolished some three decades ago.

This is the competition where the four houses of pupils would compete against each other in gaining good speech marks and trying not to get caught out signing where they would be penalised with a bad speech mark [one bad speech mark would lose you three good speech marks]. At the end of each term, points would be toted up and the winner announced with the house captain being invited up to the stage at the end of term assembly to collect the trophy. This was a compulsory contest within the school with the primary aim of encouraging speech and thus explicitly discouraging any forms of signing.

I use the term 'dreaded' to describe the speech competition as it was in my opinion played out at a non-level playing field, i.e. those who are profoundly deaf would have much harder time in making clear and eloquent speeches in contrast to those who are either severely or moderately deaf [and there were quite a few at the school – just to illustrate their level of hearing loss – the BBC's 'Top of the Pops' was a favourite for some of these pupils].

I managed to get a few good speech marks, but also bad speech marks – so acquiring a term 'Minus' i.e. I would have a minus score at the end of the term. Each year I would have a different house captain, who is typically a sixth-former. They all react in different ways to 'Minus' house members. I had one really losing his cool and screaming at me 'You fool!', while simultaneously poking at my ribs incessantly and the other year I had one who coolly gave me lines to complete [I had to write something like this: 'I must learn to speak properly so I do not let others down']

Yet there was one term where I was suddenly acquiring a set of good speech marks resulting in winning the individual cup for the term only, not only to mine but also my close friends' surprise. That was a one-off, before I collected a few more bad speech marks yet again.

When I was a senior, I got to know two juniors who shall be named as A and B. Both boys are profoundly deaf like me but unlike me they hailed from deaf families and grew up using BSL but were quite

confident in lip-reading and their speeches were not too bad. They were always getting bad speech marks that they decided to compete against each other to see who would get the most for the term.

They would end up with ten bad speech marks each and they would laugh it off much to the displeasure of their house mates and captains who were taking this competition seriously – after a similar story at the second term, the house captains enlisted the teachers who would then punish them severely.

A was an all-round sporting type, and he was dropped from the school football teams for quite some time as well as being banned from training sessions. He was also forced to sit outside staffroom after lunch to do ‘additional’ homework so he would miss out on friendly games of football.

B wasn’t a sporting type like A yet enjoyed football without being a regular in the school teams but was similarly punished.

Subsequently, they curtailed their bravado and became more careful with not getting bad speech marks. They were labelled as ‘troublemakers’ by their peers as well as teachers. I recalled them leaving school with just a smattering of GCSEs and didn’t get into further education.

That naturally raised a question on whether the attitudes of the teachers on these two induced lower self-esteems on their ability to achieve the qualifications one might have expected of someone at a typical grammar school.

Historically, with the strong leaning towards the Oralism method of teaching, the teachers would naturally develop stronger rapport with those pupils who can have good and clear speech than the so-called miscreants who were perhaps a bit more reliant on other methods apart from speech.

While there is no hard statistics to indicate otherwise, but I cannot help but notice that those from typical deaf families would tend to leave Mary Hare with perhaps not as much academic qualifications as those who are not from deaf families and thus more likely to be reliant on oral communication.

During the late 1970s when I was there, the number of pupils from deaf families were comparatively few and far in between. Out of some 30 pupils in one year, there would be one or two from deaf families so making it some 15 to 20 pupils out of 200 in any given year.

It is not the case in recent years, with the proliferation of deaf children going to local mainstream schools, more and more deaf parents are sending their deaf children to Mary Hare and one parent [a family friend] recently said she wouldn’t be surprised if someone suggested that some 40% of the pupils at the school today are from deaf families.

I wonder whether this has massive implications on the attitude of the teachers as this school still maintains a strong oralist approach within teaching – and what is the effect on the deaf children [especially those who uses sign language as their first language] achieving their qualifications upon leaving this school. This is an area of research not within my remit, but it remains to be seen whether someone else would undertake this which might potentially open a can of worms.

1.5.4.3.3 My time at Mary Hare Grammar School

I was a boarder there for the whole duration, 1977 to 1984. I made some good friends there of which I still keep in touch. I managed to follow the teachers as many of them obviously spoke clearly enough for us to follow and participate.

After the school finished for the day, we would have homework, some recreational activities [I did chess and occasional table-tennis], watching TV [there were no subtitles – so on Saturday night we all used to watch a foreign film cos of the English subtitles] then bed at rather ridiculously early times, ranging between 8:00pm for the first years [Year 7] to 10:00pm for the Year 11. Weekends was mostly school matches, TV, recreations, church [for those who opted in], plus any catching up of the homework for those so inclined.

I did a good range of GCSEs and passed them all. While Mathematics was my favourite and strongest subject for A-Level choice, I was in a dilemma as for the other 2 A-Levels as I had wanted to do History and English Literature. The advice from the teachers was simply that you do a batch of science-related or Arts-related subjects. One does not mix these, so I checked with my father who simply said the same thing. Being a naïve young teenager, I simply opted to do Physics and Chemistry as well as Mathematics. With hindsight, I would have done things differently perhaps for instance leaving the school and going to a local sixth-form college to do the subjects I would have enjoyed. I did not so much enjoy the Physics and Chemistry which was evident in the results I obtained which was a narrow pass for Physics and a narrow fail for Chemistry – while I passed Mathematics A-Level without any real snags along the way. With 2 A-Levels passed, I managed to obtain a place at Hatfield Polytechnic [now known as University of Hertfordshire since 1992].

1.5.4.3.4 Technological support during my time at Mary Hare Grammar School

While I was there, I was still wearing the traditional body-worn hearing aids which had been in supply by the NHS since 1947. It was not until the late 1960s that technological advances in this field lead to hearing aids becoming smaller such that it can be put on the ear, thus doing away with harness we would have had to wear to support the body aids which would typically be 3 by 5 inches in shape and 1 inch thick.

However, at the time of advent of Behind-The-Ear (BTE) hearing aids, these were made available for those with moderate hearing loss as these were not yet powerful enough to assist the profoundly deaf children like myself.

During the 1970s, the children were divided into the 'Hearing-Aids' and the 'Ear-Levels' as the BTE was colloquially known. Those with BTE hearing aids would look down at the others saying they can hear better than us. We would retaliate back saying that they were not properly deaf!

By the late 1970s, the BTE hearing aids were getting more sophisticated and more receptive to louder sounds, which would then the children with severe and profound hearing loss, and it was not until 1981 when I was fitted with the BTE hearing aids. I was one of the last 10 out of 200 pupils at Mary Hare, and I recall thinking I had finally 'joined the club.', such was the snobbery abound within the deaf school community where we were encouraged to think we ought to try being as 'hearing' as possible in order to fit into the so-called real world upon leaving school.

After telling my parents about the advantage of having this type of hearing aids, which was that I no longer need to take off hearing aids whenever playing cricket, but on the other hand, no significant improvement in my hearing, my father told me that he knew of someone who can look at my ears and perhaps fix through operations.

By chance, he bumped into an elderly man, who was the father of a pupil who attended the same class as my father in the 1940s, and his surname, though spelt differently, was phonetically the same as our surname. Upon learning of my deafness, he told of his other son, Mr Ellis Douek, who was an ENT surgeon, specialising in the ear.

He was a cochlear implant pioneer based at the Guy's Hospital. Blume (2009) explained that the research on operating on ear as linked to deafness begin in Britain in the early 1970s soon after Ellis Douek's appointment to a senior ear, nose, and throat post at London's Guy's Hospital. The Department of Health, prompted by the Labour MP, Jack Ashley, the deafened Member of Parliament active on behalf of the disabled suggested to Douek that his speciality was doing far too little on sensorineural deafness, and why didn't he do something in that area?

At that time of my appointment to see Douek soon after my acquiring of the new BTE aids, the research on cochlear implants was still in its infancy and primarily operated on the adults who would typically have lost their hearing during their childhood or even as adults thus would have retained sufficient aural

memory, which was important for these patients' post-operation to be able to identify as part of the rehabilitation process.

I recall Mr Douek looking at my ears and wrote notes before then explaining my deafness is too profound and that I do not have any aural memory or recognition of sounds and made the decision not to explore any possibility of an operation in my ear. I recall the disappointment in my parents' faces, but oddly enough I was relieved, though I didn't understand why at that time.

Upon reflection, I believe that the feeling of relief was three-fold: one is that I was starting to get used to the BTE hearing aids; two is that there was already an older girl at school who did have that operation with unexpected post-operation problems leading to hospitalisation for quite a while; three is that at my age, I already realised that deafness is a lifetime condition which I was happy to accept for myself but that my parents, maybe feeling guilty, were understandably determined to try help eradicate my disability.

I saw Mr Douek about 15 years later at an event and we chatted briefly. He was then on the verge of retirement, and he explained that a lot had changed due to massive technological advances, where profoundly deaf children nowadays do have cochlear implants. He then added that because I am now an adult, it would be up to me if I wanted to consider having cochlear implants, but he doubted it would be beneficial for me because of my cultural links to deaf community! He was either diplomatic or well-versed on the controversy of certain members of the deaf community railing against the cochlear implants!

1.5.5 My tertiary education 1984-1988

At Hatfield Polytechnic, I enjoyed studying for my BSc (Hons) sandwich degree in Mathematics as it was simply my favourite subject and fun learning a range of mathematical-related topics such as logic, numerical analysis, applied mathematics, pure mathematics, statistics, and the then new module on computing. I ended my 4 years [3rd year was on placement – doing statistics and computing for the Department of Environment] achieving a 2.1

There was not much additional support for a lone Deaf student in a large grouping of some 30-odd students. Most of the lecturers were happy to see me for up to 30 minutes each week to cover whatever I might have missed during their lectures – and as some were not easy to lip-read, they were often willing to write down what they said. And in the first year, I managed to obtain a BSL interpreter but for 2 hours a week only which was not ideal as I had between 10 to 15 hours of lectures each week,

so I chose the one with more group discussion and less of writing theorems and calculations on the board.

In the second and final year, I was not successful in obtaining an interpreter for support so relied heavily on lip-reading the lecturers as well as copying notes from the blackboard. I developed friendship with a couple of other students who were willing to photocopy some of the useful notes for my perusal and revision.

Looking back at how I managed to follow bits and parts of each lecture, it was not easy and tiring at times. Without realising at that time, I managed to re-energise myself for the next lecture by either going to the canteen or the library to relax on my own for a few minutes – a useful coping mechanism which would be explored in more detail at the next Chapter. Intriguingly I was still wearing hearing aids as a legacy of being forced to wear hearing aids at school despite my profound deafness, but I always used to take these off when having a break – even losing them on 2 occasions only to miraculously find these at the following day from the canteen staff and the librarian respectively, who both recognised me as one of the very few deaf students at the whole campus!

Education aside, the real challenge was the social aspect of university life. Having attended three specialist schools for the deaf children, we all were equals; that means when I started at the Polytechnic, I found myself being the only Deaf person in the whole class and suddenly it was difficult, nigh impossible to be able to communicate with other students and some did back off when I tried approaching them. It was very frustrating for me, and it was a matter of time before I could work out whosoever of my fellow contemporaries would be more amenable to chatting with a deaf person and is always the case some are more confident in chatting with me than others. From this small group, I developed some rapport which was enough for me to join in the group activities and perhaps ask to look at their notes which they often are happy to photocopy, etc.

However, outside the lecture hours, I had little social hours perhaps by accident or design. When I was offered a place at the Polytechnic, it was calculated that I lived just under the 15-mile radius which meant I wasn't eligible for the halls of residence accommodation, yet because of my registered disability it was waived and so they offered me a room at the halls of residence. I declined on the account of the good public transport running from my home to the campus!

Whether it was a right decision or not is difficult to calculate, however there was an old school friend, known as C, who ironically was at the same class with me in Woodford School, then onto the same year but different class in Mary Hare Grammar School before entering the same Polytechnic. He was reading

Chemistry, profoundly deaf male from hearing family background [though he did have an older deaf brother who uses oral mode of communication even with other deaf people] – but because he lived some 60 miles away, he was automatically given a room at the halls of residence regardless of his disability.

He used to say that it was very difficult forming friendships at the halls, and it was rather lonely existence for himself, and he brought a small TV with him to install at his room and that helped pass the dark winter evenings quickly.

We did meet every now and then for a drink at the campus which was a very welcome relief from the everyday struggles and loneliness, we endured at the campus.

Upon reflection, I compensated for this by ensuring I developed friendships with other deaf people in London via attending Deaf clubs and events. Having known rudimentary sign language prior to 1984, I acquired BSL quickly enough to become more fluent and thus a full participant in the Deaf scene. C did not have the same opportunity and towards the end of our 4-year sandwich course, I had to refrain from signing too much to C as he wouldn't understand what I was saying, even though we both are Deaf.

It was clear that it was around that time, I began to develop Deaf Identity as well as appreciation of Deaf culture – something that C missed out not only at that time, but for several years afterwards before we lost touch in the early 1990s.

1.5.6 My tertiary education 2011-13

As recently as 2010, I was mulling at different career opportunities as having taught BSL as well as occasional drama workshops at private-led training agencies. I thought of college and university posts, of which I applied to several but all to no avail. I asked for feedback and one common thread emerging from their feedbacks was that I was not qualified to teach.

By then living in Wolverhampton, I applied for and got a place at Birmingham City University studying the PGCE-PCET [Post Compulsory Education Training] on a part-time basis for 2 years including work placements.

As a mature student, I realised immediately things have changed a lot during the two decades from my graduation, i.e. I was able to apply for and obtain an interpreter for all my lectures as well as a note-

taker, this was crucial as there were a lot of group practical activities and discussions. I found this to be very helpful in ensuring almost full participation as possible, which really was very instructive for my essays I was doing for this course. Additionally, I was able to bring my interpreter for my work placements as I was teaching a group of SEN pupils at Queen Alexandra College School in Harborne, Birmingham.

As the lectures were once weekly on Monday evenings, it was perhaps easier for me to manage as I had an interpreter and note-taker with me. I no longer wear hearing aids, having stopped these just after I left Hatfield Polytechnic more than 2 decades earlier. As I was middle-aged in comparison to most of the students, I was probably seen as a bit of an ancient relic to them, yet I developed good rapport with some of the students, and that surely made learning fun especially when doing group-related activities at the lecture room.

1.6 Deaf Culture - Overview

This section briefly looks at the definition of culture and whether there exists Deaf culture and how it came to be coined, with examples of uniqueness of deaf culture. Denmark was commenting about the links between disability and deafness, so was explaining how one might consider the definition of the term 'Disability' itself in the following passage:

'When writing about deafness, a decision must be made whether to consider it to be a disability. As has been pointed out elsewhere, deafness is a blanket term covering many different degrees and types of deafness with different implications. There can be no doubt that those who became deaf in adult life have a disability. However, many pre-verbally deaf people hold the view that they are not disabled but are a cultural and linguistic minority. When using the term 'deafness' in a generic manner, it is convenient to regard it as a disability' (Denmark, 1994, p. 3)

Ladd (2003) and Lane et al (2011) expanded on this to explain that members of the Deaf community who use sign language as their main mode of communication would tend to view their deafness as a difference in human experience rather than as a disability or disease.

As recent as the late 2000s, Deaf culture is recognized under Article 30, Paragraph 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states that "Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture."

This leads to the important point about the need for any Deaf child to have an exposure to sign language, thus:

Sign language should be recognized as the first language of a deaf child. The sign language used with the child must be the national sign language, i.e. the language of the adult Deaf community of that specific country. It is important that deaf children have early exposure to sign language and have the right to be educated as bilinguals or multilinguals regarding reading and writing because sign language is the only language that a deaf child can acquire without someone specifically teaching it. Deaf children learn to use sign language from their environment as hearing children learn spoken languages from their parents and others. (WFD, 2016)

1.6.1 Definition of culture

Culture is defined as the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). It can be used to demonstrate a particular organisation or group consisting of the habits of the people in it and the way they generally behave (Collins English Dictionary, 2017)

1.6.2 Origins of the term Deaf culture

I think it is essential for readers to consider the importance of Deaf culture and whether one should embrace it or not, even after spending a full childhood within the mainstream schools with little or no contact with other deaf peers or adults. Ladd (2003) stated that the term 'Deaf culture' came into being in the 1970s even though it had been around for decades if not centuries. He argued that it came about as the Deaf communities contained their own ways of life as sustained via the usage of their common sign languages; he also claimed that the task of understanding Deaf communities cannot be said even to have begun whilst the Deaf cultural research is still comparatively an area of virtually no in-depth research.

Ridgeway (1998) added that 'culturally Deaf' people are those sharing similar beliefs, values, and norms and who identify with other Deaf people. Culture consists of language, values, traditions, norms, and identity (Padden, 1990). Deaf culture meets all five sociological criteria for defining a culture.

It is also unusual in that the Deaf people [with the exception of the small minority of just under 10% who are born into deaf parents and family] are not born with an ingrained deaf culture, but then acquired over time usually during their childhood during their time at the schools for the deaf, when they would meet other likeminded deaf children for the first time and note that they might communicate with them in different ways to how they would communicate with their hearing parents and/or siblings.

1.6.2.1 Recognition of the term Deaf culture

Prior to 1980, the term 'culture' is generally applied to groupings who would have their own unique practice – but that they are hearing. Padden et al (1990) described how as the idea of Deaf culture as a way of describing Deaf people and their own unique practice was beginning to circulate among Deaf people, but that needed convincing the rest of the world on 'how a group of people who did not have distinctive religion, clothing, or diet – or even inhabit a particular geographical space they called their own – could be called cultural' (Padden et al, 1990, p.1)

This probably came about as the sign language as it was then known became more defined as a true language through the research of Dr William C Stokoe et al (1965), which led to the deaf community gaining pride of having their sign language placed on an equal footing as the spoken language, i.e. a human language. It was not until 1975 via Brennan writing in American Annals of the Deaf made a first documented reference to the term British Sign Language.

By having own language as recognised in the academic world, the deaf community began to explore the meaning of everything linked to being Deaf, i.e. community, identity, culture, and appreciation of history. While the term 'Deaf culture' is first coined around the late 1970s, we have Deaf people already appreciating this unique culture without implicitly realising its latent presence in every signing Deaf person everywhere in the whole world.

1.6.3 Examples of Deaf culture

There are various instances of Deaf people's behavioural norms and interaction modes, but below is just a few of those I fully identify with as a fully-fledged member of the deaf community.

The golden rule of communication between two or more Deaf people is eye contact as this not only enables effective communication, but also for the ability to read the nuances of facial expressions and body language for additional information This is where light is extremely important – as partial or full darkness would hinder the ability to communicate, as one would not be able to see the signing as well as facial expressions (iBSL, 2015)

It gives rise to the typical saying within the Deaf community: 'signing under the lamp-post.' This is evident late at night when the Deaf congregants leaving a pub or even a nightclub, would need to walk to the nearest lamp-post in order to have sufficient light on each other faces and continue their conversation!

Another example of importance of eye-contact would be at a restaurant. A hearing person would typically carry on eating during the conversation, but the Deaf person might remove flowers, menu-stand, even candles from the table if these interfere with their line of sight across the table – and then converse with each other in sign language but not eating at the same time as it would be considered impolite! (iBSL, 2015)

Unlike the hearing community, deaf people are generally more tactile for example to catch someone else attention would be done in a variety of ways, i.e. touching, pointing, hand-waving, tapping on the shoulder or arm, switching the lights on and off repeatedly, tapping on the table, etc.

Deaf people are more likely to hug rather than proffer a handshake, though perhaps a bit more warily during and post the global Covid-19 pandemic. Even when meeting a stranger for the first time, they might not hug upon introduction, but quite possibly so at the end of the conversation.

They also tend to be rather open and direct about their lives in general – such as describing visits to the toilets (that can include passing the stools described in rather too much detail!); asking how much the others earn; insatiable curiosity on other deaf people [usually on what schools they attended, connections to other deaf people and/or relatives, etc.]

Additionally, the Deaf humour is very different from hearing humour. It is recently well illustrated when watching stand-up comedy on TV with my adult son who is hearing. He would often laugh at some jokes which I would look at the screen and the subtitles with bafflement. It is basically wordplay and sometimes coupled with intonation for emphasis [this is always missed upon translation into subtitles] A typical hearing joke on word play might go like this: ‘Have you heard of a cheese-making factory in the Middle East?’ The reply would be: ‘Yes, it is called “Cheeses of Nazareth”’

The deaf joke would be more reliant on visual humour as well as having linked to the deaf culture. An example of deaf-culture based jokes would typically focus on one of the two things common to Deaf community, i.e. legendary tightfistedness of the deaf people [they would grab anything if it is free] and love-hate relationship with sign-language interpreters [it is an unfortunate fact that some sign-language interpreters, competent or otherwise at their jobs, do get rich through working for the deaf community and some have been disparagingly referred to by some deaf people as the so-called fat cats]

1.6.4 Importance of Deaf culture and its relationship to Deaf sign language in general

WFD (2016) demonstrated the links between sign language and culture, such that it made the following statement:

The development of any language signed or spoken, and the culture where the language is practiced always is mutually influenced. No culture can emerge without language and no language can emerge without culture. In short, language and culture are closely related. However, cultures have a powerful influence on the development of language, both spoken and signed. Several countries sharing the same language can have different cultures, i.e. industrialized versus developing. The vocabulary of any language, both spoken and signed, in every country always is influenced by social, industrial, technological, and other changes, known as cultural changes. Signed languages in different countries speaking a single language cannot be forced to become a single language.

WFD then argued that any forcible purification or unification of sign languages, conducted by governments, professionals working with Deaf people, and organizations for or of the Deaf, is a violation of the UN and UNESCO treaties, declarations, and other policies, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As per the Deaf Culture, WFD (2016) expressed clearly that it should be that the Deaf people in every country have the sole right to make changes, if necessary, in their own local, provincial, and national sign languages in response to cultural changes. The control of the development of any Sign Language must be left to any social group where the particular sign language is exercised.

1.7 Deaf employability rates

Some of us will know of the important and seminal 1979 Conrad Report which stated that reading age of a typical deaf school leaver is just under 9 [more of this in Chapter 2], and upon reflection I do know of many deaf friends who are either unemployed or perhaps 'under-employed' i.e. doing the jobs that is below their levels of attainment of qualifications achieved at school or post-education.

1.7.1 Deaf employability rates from publications

There have been things written about disabled people being out of work in comparison with the general population – as a rough guidance, during periods of economic prosperity, it would usually be the double in terms of percentage of disabled people being unemployed; but during periods of recession, the figure would be much higher, i.e. 3 to 4 times higher.

As a corollary, this has the same implications for the deaf people. In 2006, there was an article in BBC News with the headline 'Third of deaf people without work' penned by Geoff Adams-Spink. It stated that less than two thirds of deaf and hard of hearing people are in work in contrast to 75% of the general population according to a survey by Royal National Institute for Deaf (RNID).

It says the problem ranges from the attitudes of potential employers to a basic lack of deaf awareness, and that it represents a "serious barrier" to deaf and hard of hearing people finding work. More than half of those surveyed said it was employers' attitudes that prevented them from getting a job. And for those in work, the same barriers were hampering people's career prospects and creating glass ceilings. Almost half of those who had a job felt that they had been held back from promotion because of their deafness and more than a third thought that their job did not make full use of their qualifications. (Adams-Spink, 2006)

Barlow (2012) opined that finding jobs can be difficult in part due to the Job Centres lacking in Deaf awareness and often poorly equipped to support deaf jobseekers. Barlow, a Deaf employment consultant himself, noted that the lack of deaf awareness tends to indicate that they often do not provide either equipment or telephone support whenever a deaf person identified a job worth applying for.

It is not only seeking the job that is a challenge but also maintaining the job can be tricky too, as Adams-Spink (2006) would note from the same survey, that over 50% of the respondents who have a job felt isolated at work and about 25% found it difficult to communicate with their colleagues.

Totaljobs did a survey in 2016 which gave out similar results though it stressed it was based on data collected from some 400-odd deaf participants, of which the majority are white and middle-class – also that over half wears hearing aids while just a third use BSL. This is important to state this as it shows that not only the Deaf, i.e. the culturally deaf, but also the non-culturally deaf are affected in some way with regarding to gaining meaningful employment.

The statistics from that survey made for daunting reading:

- 72% of deaf people have received no support because of being deaf in finding a job
- 65% believe developments in technology have made it easier to be deaf in the workplace
- 56% have experienced discrimination in the workplace due to being deaf or hard of hearing
 - 62% from colleagues
 - 53% from management
 - 37% during a job interview
- 25% have left a job due to discrimination
- 19% have not told their employer they are deaf or have experienced hearing loss

On a final note, Barlow (2012) explained about the Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) working at Job Centres as being quite often over stretched and their knowledge of supporting deaf people can be limited.

From my personal experience, this is unfortunate as I have had a similar experience of dealing with a DEA in 1990 when I was briefly unemployed. The DEA was at that time known as Disability Resettlement Officer (DRO), and I met him explaining I was seeking a job in the field of computing as per my qualifications and experience at that time. He merely nodded and explained that there is no work for me in computing – to which I responded that I could see plenty in the Computing magazines as well as some newspapers. He shook his head and remonstrated that I should not be wasting time, as he knew of some factory work that I could apply for and gave me an appointment to meet him where he would hopefully give me a list of interviews at the local factories. I was naturally gobsmacked which gave way to feelings of irritation when I left the meeting.

I never made the return appointment, but the DRO was so annoyed at my non-appearance that he rang my mother to tell her off for my wasting his time. She was stunned but she recalled how unimpressed I was, so retorted saying that her son would very much rather chance his luck seeking computer jobs than being stuck in a factory.

This experience of seeking jobs which I have encountered several times over the past 30 years can be rather debilitating and frustrating. Thinking back, I was quite fortunate in having the support of my immediate family during my periods of unemployment, having some good qualifications from Mary Hare and then the universities, this might probably explain why my mental wellbeing is not so much affected comparatively.

The last word for this section goes to a deaf bloke from the Midlands, who once remarked he never found easy to find jobs, never mind holding it, that he became ill with depression and stopped looking for work for over a decade, becoming reliant on the state benefits to get him by. He half-joked that thanks to unemployment, he became an expert on angling as he explained the importance of whiling his time away in fresh air on Mondays to Fridays while several of his contemporaries would be 'stuck miserably at work', quote unquote.

1.7.2 Counting heads at deaf clubs

Through my encounters with two tailors, who became firm friends over the years, I started looking around and counting who is employed and what is the percentage.

At the London Deaf Chess Club, in 1995 there were 18 members, and 4 of them were computer programmers; one was a carpenter; 2 worked at a bank; one a watch-repairer. Two were retired; 2 were students. That left 6 who were unemployed – making it 33%

Recently at the London Deaf Chess Club, I counted and there are 13 members – the remarkable thing is that there are no computer programmers – I for one no longer worked at this job; the other had changed jobs – two more have left the club. One is an engineer and the other in publications; 3 worked as support workers; one a lecturer. Two are retired, one is a student. That left 4 who are unemployed – thus similar statistics, i.e. roughly one in three.

Visiting a deaf club in North London a decade ago, I got chatting with a friend who said she was lucky to be an Outreach worker for the Social Services working with Deaf and non-Deaf clients. There were 12 of us who went onto a local pub afterwards that evening and 5 of us were seeking employment. She claimed that it can be as high as 50% unemployment rate for the Deaf people in general, but that is strictly anecdotal.

1.7.3 Anecdotes of deaf people seeking employment

There are quite a few who lost their jobs when in their 40s, and will sometimes have difficulty in finding new jobs, such that they either remain unemployed for many years or undertake training to acquire new skills with a purpose of gaining different employment, with mixed success.

1.7.3.1 Tales of the two tailors

I started working as a computer programmer in 1988, after graduation from Hatfield Polytechnic. One evening at a Deaf club, I got chatting with two men in their mid-50s, half-joking I was probably in the wrong job. They both looked at me as if I was deranged and then they told me of their experiences.

The first tailor, named D, who was profoundly deaf, was unemployed for 3 years at that time, and was undergoing training for new skills as he was fed up with failing to find employment in his field. He decided to train for book-keeping skills as he recalled he was good at maths when at school 4 decades earlier. His wife, also Deaf, was also unemployed for a while but only recently managed to get a part-time job as a receptionist for a Deaf charity.

The second tailor, named E, claimed he was luckier than D, as he was severely deaf and with help of his hearing aids, managed passable speech. He was a tailor for many years but for 3 different firms. The first two went bust and he was unemployed for about a month each time before getting a new job.

However, he made a point that his job tended to be very repetitive and boring but being deaf, he argued that we should accept whatever was given to us.

His wife was also Deaf and worked early mornings as an office cleaner.

As the years passed by, D managed to get a job as a bookkeeper after his re-training which he greatly enjoyed and was earning more money than he ever did when employed as a tailor. E continued as a tailor changing two more firms as years went by before calling it a day at age of 71, claiming he couldn't afford to retire when aged 65 at that time and to live on a state pension only.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this review of literature, I attempt to demonstrate a range of different achievements of Deaf adults of all ages, by critically examining the following issues in the six main sections:

- 2.2 Levels of deafness and its impact on a Deaf person's educational development
- 2.3 Family influence in the Deaf person's upbringing
- 2.4 Type of education of which a Deaf person attended and preferred communication methods in use – including the history of deaf education
- 2.5 Different technological aids in use during education and how these assisted a Deaf person's learning
- 2.6 Highest level of qualification a Deaf person might achieve and whether it is typical
- 2.7 Interrelationship between Deaf Identity and mental wellbeing

At the end of each section there will be a brief paragraph summarising the section and thus indicating whether there needs some further research. These paragraphs would lead to the formation of three research questions at the end of this chapter.

2.1.1 General Overview of this chapter

Through a critical reflection of the main issues listed above regarding a Deaf adult working in a non-deaf environment, I aim to be able to show whether education is a key factor in the long-term career challenges faced by a Deaf person who might be under-qualified and/or under-employed. Additionally, I would then explore several other factors such as lack [or otherwise] of Deaf Identity, familial influence, methods of communications, etc. in formulating a young Deaf person leaving education and attempting to get into workforce. By analysing these additional factors, I aim to indicate whether these are of relevance. This is particularly relevant today, where there seems to be an increasing incidence of mental health issues facing young adults in general.

By focusing on the working deaf adults whose age range would be sufficiently wide, i.e. between age 30 and approaching 70, I hope to find key factors which helped their resilience in their jobs so these can be considered or even applied in practice for the younger adults of today especially with regard to their wellbeing. The aim of the results of this research is to inform interested professionals in this field to consider the relevancy of such uniquely different factors perhaps compounding on the mental stresses within the everyday life, not necessarily for young adults but also the general working age deaf employees.

I would also look briefly at the history of education of the deaf here. It has been an area of debate over decades with particular regard on how the teachers might communicate with the deaf pupils, which could be via the use of sign language [i.e. Manualism] or via speech [i.e. Oralism], or in a few schools a combination of both methods of communication. It has been argued over time on which of Manualism and Oralism benefit deaf pupils better in terms not only in communicating but also with achieving qualifications in school prior to either seeking employment or entering further and higher education.

2.2 Levels of deafness and its impact on a Deaf person's educational development

In terms of education, it has been argued that perhaps the deaf children are inherently different to hearing children during their educational years – perhaps leading to potential difficulties in securing appropriate employment as young adults. It can be said to be linked to different levels of hearing loss such that those with minimal hearing loss can perhaps manage better in securing appropriate employment due to the fact he can communicate better with non-deaf colleagues and managers – albeit perhaps with minor difficulties. That might be something beyond profoundly deaf prospective employees who cannot hear much or very little even with technological aids, and also may not have sufficiently coherent speech for conversing at employment.

2.2.1 Different levels of deafness

There are different levels of deafness, and these are usually split into 4 levels. More details on these are found in Chapter 1 beginning with section 1.2.3.1 – however these 4 levels of deafness are:

- Mild [also known as 'hard of hearing']
- Moderate
- Severe
- Profoundly

There are a variety of reasons for having different levels of hearing loss which might be linked to either acquired or hereditary causes, which also included in damages from drugs or infections (Wright, 2011) Berry (2017) gave an explanation re levels of deafness stating this:

'Deafness . . . is being used here to describe hearing loss, which corresponds to hearing level of 95 dB+ (the quietest sound that can be heard is >95 decibels). Severe hearing loss is 70-94 dB, the equivalent of the sound from a lawnmower or airplane nearby, for moderate hearing loss is 40-69 dB, the sound level of a baby crying or dog barking causing difficulty following speech even with hearing aids.' (p. 129)

2.2.2 Interrelations between levels of deafness and educational development

This is looked in more depth in sections within 2.3 and 2.4, so not to repeat this information, but it suffices to say that there have been historical debates on the merits of reading and writing irrespective of levels of hearing loss. For instance in the late 17th century, a British teacher of the deaf, George Dalgarno wrote in his pamphlet, 'I do not doubt but the words, *hand, foot, dog, cat, hat*, etc., written fair and . . . often presented to the deaf child's eye, pointing from the words to the things and vice versa, . . . would be remembered' (Power & Leigh, 2000).

This would indicate that irrespective of the ability to create coherent speech or to have some limited listening ability, one might argue that it is more than sufficient for a deaf child to assess the national language via reading and writing. This view carried on for centuries and even the famous telephone inventor, Alexander Graham Bell (1929), who was also a teacher of the deaf, insisted on the need to introduce any deaf child, the younger the better, to the practice of reading.

Further on from the Conrad Report of 1979 (see section 2.4.1.4) which looked at the comparatively poor literacy skills of deaf school leavers, some studies have since shown scant, if any, improvements in reading skills but not even matching the age-appropriate levels of the national reading and writing skills (Allen, 1986; Holt, 1993).

This raises the question of the multi challenges of a typical deaf child in education – needing to be juggling between catching up on reading and writing as well as developing to a certain limit their speech and listening skills as well as learning the usual core subjects such as mathematics and English. This would not augur well for the deaf school-leaver seeking employment when already at a disadvantage.

2.2.3 Resilience of a deaf child in educational settings

It considered the development of one's resilience during the school education and how this transfers to their employment experiences, dealing with a variety of challenges one might associate with a typical job in addition to different issues linked to one's deafness.

This leads to a question about personality development of a deaf child in the 21st century where Radovanovic et al (2020) argued that while hearing loss is a risk factor for a deaf child's appropriate social development, it is not a risk factor in the development of one's resilience. He also noted the prevalence of deaf children in the mainstream settings and explained that there remained some social isolation of deaf children due to lack of intervention from the staff, resilience is a key factor in managing their schooldays.

This is critical as peer relationships during schooldays are when these teenagers would tend to share information and feedback from their peers rather than parents (Prinstein & Giletta, 2016) but this is not usually the case for the deaf teenagers when trying to develop meaningful as opposed to superficial relationships with hearing peers (Terlektsi et al, 2020). This concurs with the study by Schwab (2017) which showed the ongoing challenges with students' attitudes towards their peers with disabilities in schools.

Freitas et al (2021) looked at resilience with the starting point that communication and language are typically identified as barriers in a deaf child's development. He then added that because having full hearing is tantamount to achieve full access to learning, language acquisition as well as interaction socially and environmentally, a deaf child would miss out on some of these making it harder to fit in with others in mainstream surroundings.

Wright et al (2013) confirmed that perhaps unsurprisingly that each deaf child responds differently to the challenges thrown upon himself such that it also depends on the inner and external resources he has at his disposal, e.g. support from family or staff, acquired relevant knowledge.

These recent studies confirmed that it is necessary for a deaf child to develop some form of resilience in order to deal with everyday world of which they are already in a minority due to their hearing loss, and Listman & Kurz (2020) looked at lived-in experiences of deaf adults and their challenges in dealing with the communication and language barriers over their lives, and so had developed their skill in navigating life in general with pitfalls along the way. Mertens (2014) argued that the deaf people in general would cope better and thus less requirement for resilience via having the language made accessible and available to them – whether it be sign language or spoken language.

Looking at how a deaf person copes at work, and the abundance of resilience is needed to deal with different and perhaps additional challenges of being within a hearing environment when he is the only deaf person in office, is something that might be linked to the development of a deaf child's personality in the formative years.

2.3 Family influence in the Deaf person's upbringing

As per the statistics [see 2.3.1] showing that roughly 9 in 10 deaf children have hearing parents, the focus of the hearing parents will be expected to start almost immediately after the birth of a deaf child.

They will be faced with an onslaught of decisions they will need to make regarding hearing-aid technology, 'effective' communication methods and soon-to-be pervading issues on cultural identities.

The choices being made will impact on a child's development, his self-concept, and his own development. It is important to bear in mind that they will have limited background knowledge so the decision-making can be viewed as frightening and an overwhelming undertaking.

2.3.1 General statistics

The first consideration regarding the parents is that approximately 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents as stated by Moores in 1987, which is still the case today according to Mitchell and Karchmer in 2004, which stated that it is 92%. This effectively confirms that deaf children are typically born to hearing parents who would typically have not had any exposure to a typical signing person in their lives. It is imperative to note that there is approximately 50,000 signing deaf people in the UK [population of 64.1 million as in 2013], roughly translating into less than 1 per thousand who is deaf and use sign language in the UK.

2.3.2 Parental attitudes to a Deaf child

Luckner & Stewart (2003) conducted a study by interviewing 14 successful deaf adults who were given 10 questions as linked to their family support, education, personality traits and social life, in which some of the key responses is that they have had to work harder with ongoing support from own families. This study clearly emphasised the importance of a deaf adult receiving ongoing support from family. However, one key factor noted in their responses is '*effective communication skills*' – unfortunately this is not evident on what mode of communication each of the 14 deaf adults used when growing up.

2.3.3 Deaf child born to hearing parents

It is clear that different levels of deafness would have some impact – which can be said to be adverse on the children's ability to acquire spoken languages. Marshall et al (2017) argued that while sign languages can offer accessibility in terms of language acquisition, it is not the case for the vast majority of deaf children who are born to hearing parents who do not sign [and likely to have never met a deaf person prior to the birth of their child]. Thus, it is argued that the potential early exposure to sign language is limited – leading to 'high risk of language delays'

There have been several papers written about this over several decades. Goldin-Meadow & Feldman (1975) kicked off with a simple argument in that if one speaks to a child in English, then the child would learn to speak in English; similarly for Japanese if one speaks to a child in Japanese – thus ditto for ASL [American Sign Language]. This then begs the question, they asked what happened if a parent neither talks or sign to a child, would the child be able to communicate with others and if so, will his spontaneous communication have any of or all the properties of the natural language? By implication they meant deaf children who cannot hear or speak, and their study looked at 4 deaf children under the

age of 4, whose hearing parents have consciously decided not to teach their children any sign language but instead using oral education methods.

This study indicated that the deaf children used gestures as part of their 'communication' as they didn't seem to use their speech naturally 'undoubtedly because of their hearing losses'.

The implications of falling behind with language acquisition can lead to retardation in other areas of development such as lower academic achievement typically coupled with poorer social emotional and mental well-being in the longer term. Convertino et al (2009) reminded that one needs paying attention to certain demographic factors which is linked to family i.e. parental education, stay-at-home or working parents, number, and age of siblings – showing implicit expectation that the parents and siblings are expected to be hearing.

It must however be recalled that when a child with a 'defect' is born, then the parents would naturally react with sadness, despair, worry and grief. This is applied when a child is born deaf, and parents would naturally be upset and sad. They would spend the months, if not years, following their deaf child's birth coping in different ways – a mix of positive and negative. Bolger (1990) described 'coping' as personality in action under stress. Kurtzer-White and Luterman (2003) sees it as parental grief, which they argued is chronic. They indicated that it is mainly because the parents did not have time to "enjoy" their child as "normal" – and this can impact on the success of the parent-child bonding.

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances (Pipp-Siegel et al., 2002). Lazarus & Folkman (1984) described stress as the ongoing relationship between a person and environment factors, referring to the emotion experienced when a situation is perceived as more threatening or demanding than the person's resources can manage. As a corollary, it might thus be said to apply to the hearing parents of deaf children, where any of the challenges with caregiving may potentially be perceived as threatening or demanding. Parental stress has been defined as "the aversive psychological reaction to the demands of being a parent" (Deater-Deckard, 1998, p. 315).

Dirks et al (2016) interestingly noted that the Dutch parents of children at 30 months old with moderately hearing loss would more likely have similar stress levels as the parents of similarly aged hearing children but queried whether early intervention processes would eliminate such worries leading to less stress for parents. It also acknowledged that it might be a different issue if the child is older. However, Plotkin et al (2014) looked at various studies on parental stress and indicated that found that the extensive body of literature focusing on stress in parents who have deaf children varies in results,

with some studies showing higher ratings of stress levels for parents of deaf children, whereas other studies show no differences. Hintermair (2006) made the similar argument while discovering that parents who experience less stress have children with better socioemotional development.

He added that the key question of cause and effect has not been fully answered in his cross-section study, he emphasized that his findings support the hypothesis which stated that parental stress experience is the cause rather than the effect. The research on early parent–child interaction suggests that parent variables are largely responsible for successful child development (Pipp-Siegel et al. 2002; Pressman et al. 1999). The importance of parental experience and behavior for child development is thus corroborated.

There was a parent expressing concern about her son who wears hearing aids, but had some difficulty not seeing himself as deaf, so was struggling at college (Archbold et al, 2015). The parent stated that ‘he knows he has a hearing problem, but he is more into the hearing world’ (Archbold et al, 2015, p.39). It is perhaps linked to an ongoing argument from Crouch (1997) and similarly espoused by Lane (1997) that it is imperative for a deaf child with implant to have their language skills matching those of hearing children in order to develop good and possibly equal relationships with their peers, otherwise they will have difficulties in becoming fully integrated into the hearing community. It would be something that some parents might have had difficulty in acknowledging.

Yet Blume (2009) investigated how the potential implantation of cochlear implants leads to arising of hope and expectations of the parents, with the consequence of empowerment. He noted that some of the parents were less willing than others to consider such implantation, a good number who went ahead with the implantation of their deaf children placed great faith in technology.

However, it should also be noted that the research mostly looked at the hearing parents of deaf children and consequently very little is known concerning the stress experience of deaf parents with deaf children as linked to social relations (Mauldin, 2011).

2.3.4 Deaf child born to Deaf parents

In contrast, the deaf children born to deaf parents would have different experiences. For instance Scheetz (2012) stated that ‘For parents who are Deaf, the child is usually welcomed with joy and anticipation of what the future holds for them.’ Braden (1995) remarked that he found a better superiority of those born to deaf parents on a number of scales from non-verbal tests of IQ in the USA – utilising a review of just over 200 studies involving some 175,000 deaf people. It should be noted that the deaf children would typically grow up in signing environment and yet paradoxically attend oral or

mainstream schools. It might come as no surprise that several of the successful deaf people or leaders in the UK are typically children of deaf parents

This is perhaps backed up by this citation:

‘There have been many studies of attainments of deaf children, a number of which indicated that deaf children of deaf parents were more successful academically than those with hearing parents. These results emerged in studies of reading, writing and academic achievement and, in some instances, spoken English. Attributing this to the early use of sign language in these families lead to the conclusion that sign language could be beneficial in the education of deaf children . . . it may be that deaf parents are better at establishing the general pre-linguistic skills that are essential for later language development, and this facilitates higher levels of attainment. However, at the very least it could be said that the early use of sign language with deaf children does not inhibit intellectual and linguistic development’ (Gregory, 1996, p.1)

This begs then the question why a large majority of deaf schools are not churning out enough successful deaf school-leavers unless they happen to have deaf parents in which case their education will have played a smaller part in their academic development.

2.4 Types of education of which a Deaf person attended and preferred communication methods in use

This section looks at how educational choice may impact on the self-esteem of a young deaf adult upon leaving education and seeking employment.

2.4.1 History of deaf education

2.4.1.1 Pre-1880

Sign language has a very long and rich history- the very first record of sign language dates back to 5BC, where Greece produced a form of communication using hand gestures. But the earliest written records of sign language in Britain date from 1644 and it is linked to the publication of Dalgarno’s two-handed alphabet printed in 1680 (Johnston, 1989)

After the 1760 establishment of the first British school for the deaf in 1760, there were over twenty-two schools by 1880 (Kyle & Woll, 1985).

Johnston (1989) explained that for these schools, different communication modes were applied depending on which school a deaf pupil attended, thus in the mid-eighteenth-century different methods

were tried (signing, oral, combined) but by the mid-nineteenth century signing, and fingerspelling (with reading and writing) were clearly widely used.

It should also be noted that until the late 19th Century the education for school children was generally patchy and elementary. The setting up of educational structures for children with impairments can be traced back to the eighteenth century in England, although there were many earlier examples of institutions established by religious orders, and later examples set up by lay voluntary associations funded by charities. (Sutherland, 1981)

The Education Act of 1870 was the first ever Education Act and the first time the government set out to educate all children of all social classes. The Act stated that there would be 2,500 school districts in the country, with an elected School Board in each one. This was followed by the Education Act of 1880 making attendance of school children compulsory – though it was not easily enforceable for several decades. By coincidence this was also the year of the Milan Congress looking at provision of deaf education.

2.4.1.2 Milan congress 1880

Then in 1880, the Second International Congress of Education of the Deaf was held in Milan, where educators came from all over the world to discuss three main topics. These were: 'School Buildings', 'Teaching' and 'Methods'. The conference, which was organised by those who favoured oral education, quickly focused on the last topic 'Methods', which saw a lot of pro-oral presentations which were heavily in favour of the oral method.

It would be necessary to have a brief background leading to the Milan Congress, where there had been a controversy raged in Europe between the Frenchman de l'Épée and the German Heinicke on the virtues of a 'combined method' {a mixture of signing and speech} versus an 'oral method' in the education of the deaf a hundred years earlier, and that continued with a schism between two types of education on offer for deaf pupils which carried on up to 1880 (Kyle & Woll 1985).

One example was a demonstration at a local Milan deaf school, where the pupils were paraded as a success of the Oral Method, as they could receive and answer questions orally. It has been speculated that what happened at this part of the conference was that these questions were asked by the teachers at the schools, and any attempts from sceptical delegates to ask oral questions were rejected (Sturley, 2003).

The conference passed eight resolutions, two of which were that the Oral Method be used in the instruction of the Deaf, and to discourage sign language in the education of the deaf. The resolution was passed in favour with 160 voting for, and only four against, meaning sign language in the education of the Deaf was to be discouraged/suppressed and the Oral Method used instead (Sturley, 2003)

Over the next 100 years, the Oral Method was the only way of educating the Deaf, and still plays a major role in Deaf Education. It has been debated on the pros and cons of this approach only for deaf children with some achieving better than the others – there has been research ever since offering opposing views on the merits or otherwise of applying Oral Method.

There are some statistics linked to the consequences of Milan 1880 such as for example, over 70% of UK Deaf children left school with a reading age of 7 and with few qualifications and social skills. [see 2.4.1.4] Hearing parents were told not to use signs and to only use speech and lip-reading with their deaf children. Consequently, paternalism and poor attitudes towards deaf children grew.

2.4.1.3 After 1880

Following the setting up of the Royal Commission led by Lord Egerton which reported in 1889 recommending the compulsory education for deaf children aged 7 to 16 [this same report recommended compulsory education for the blind children but from age 5 to 16], leading to the Education Act of 1893 which required the education authorities to make special provision for the deaf children (Egerton (1889) as cited in Armstrong, 2007)

The 1944 Education Act ensured that sign language stayed away from the classrooms in Britain - any schools of the Deaf who used the 'oral' system were given a rise!

The big impact in education for deaf children since the 1960s include the following developments such as new-born screening for deafness leading to much earlier diagnosis; different enhanced hearing aids including cochlear implants; increasing number of deaf children in mainstream schools coupled with much higher expectations of educational attainment. (BATOD, 2015a)

The 1990s saw rules being relaxed with some schools allowing sign language to be used in classrooms. BATOD (2015a) added that this inevitably led to continuing debates and discussions on BSL and the use of signs in education compared with oral-aural approaches still applied in schools – leading to a side-line debate on the implications of deaf people being considered as disabled or as a cultural linguistic minority group. This in parallel with the introduction and proliferation of cochlear implantation, which

might be seen as a surgical intervention to treat deafness – i.e. an application of medical model, which would be espoused by the surgical professionals.

The same decade also saw Her Royal Highness, Diana, the late Princess of Wales use some signs at the celebrations of our 100th anniversary during the BDA Brighton Conference.

BSL was finally recognised as a language on 18th March 2003 by the British Government. Deaf and hearing people together are now campaigning for sign language to be used in education.

In 2009, UK signed the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which viewed sign language on par with spoken languages.

At the time of writing, with the Scottish Parliament having put into law the BSL Act (Scotland) in 2015, the British Parliament was due to have a third reading of the BSL Act late March 2022, which shows the long journey into acceptance of BSL in governmental policies which should lead to knock-on effect on the public consciousness of deaf people now having option to access via BSL.

2.4.1.4 The Conrad Report 1979

Dr Reuben Conrad did the ground-breaking research in the late 1970s proving that depriving the deaf children of the opportunity to sign hindered their education (Turner, 2016). Turner argued that the psychologist Dr Conrad is respectfully recognised within the Deaf community as his research formed the critical backbone for the recognition of BSL – where his 1979 book came out 99 years after the Milan Congress of 1880.

The clearly influential International Congress on Education of the Deaf, which is also known as the Milan Congress of 1880, passed several resolutions recognising and approving the method of oralism, i.e. educating of the deaf children by using speech, hearing, lipreading and literacy. The educators at the Congress argued that this is the ‘correct’ and the only worthwhile approach to the education of deaf children. Nearly a century had then passed during which this way of thinking had continued in the UK.

So Conrad was up against ingrained attitudes of the educational establishment of the day with several experts continually dismissing the sign language. One such educational expert, Anthony van Uden from the Netherlands, wrote (as late as 1977) that signed languages were not “of the same value as oral languages... signs are not arbitrary codes, but iconic and dramatizing ones, keeping thinking much too concrete... sign-language cannot be acknowledged as a fully humanizing language, [it is] only to be used

when no other form of communication is possible.” (Turner, 2016) Dr van Uden even went as far as to claim in a press interview that ‘sign language is only used by imbeciles’ (Jacobs, 1989, p33)

Conrad (1979) found that “when deaf children leave school, half of them have a reading age of less than seven point six; half of them lipread worse than the average hearing child, untrained and inexperienced; seventy percent of them have speech which on the whole is too difficult to be understood, and only ten percent have speech which their own teachers considered fairly easily understood.” In other words, Conrad showed that many Deaf children were leaving school at 16 able to read only as well as the average hearing 7½-year-old. And the very same teachers who had insisted that oralism would enable them to ‘function in a hearing world’ were now admitting that the pupils’ speech was rarely understandable.

He then argued in his conclusion that to be able to teach a profoundly deaf child, it must be done using a medium which they will be able to access, i.e. BSL for instance. He thus gave a corollary saying that to deprive a deaf child of the opportunity to sign, the teachers are hindering rather than helping their education.

Conrad’s 1979 Report was confirmed in 1985 by King & Quigley who did their research finding that the typical school-leaving deaf student in the USA would have achieved standard reading level which is the equivalent of a typical 9- or 10-year-old hearing student; adding that the written language of that deaf student would vary greatly from the written language of the typical hearing student. Harris & Terlektsi (2011) found out in their study, that deaf teenagers, even with cochlear implants, are not reading at an age-appropriate level.

2.4.1.5 The Warnock Report and Mainstream Education

The landmark Warnock Report (DES, 1978) advocated a move away from seeing special needs in ‘deficit’ terms. The Report acknowledged that some disabled children would always attend special school, and that integration was good for some children but not for others.

2.4.1.5.1 Origins of the Warnock Report

In 1974, the UK Government set up the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People in order ‘to review educational provision in England, Scotland and Wales for children and young people handicapped by disabilities of body or mind, taking into account medical aspects of their needs, together with arrangements to prepare them for entry into employment; to consider the most effective use of resources for these purposes; and to make recommendations’ (Priestley, 1978, p294)

This partially came about from the 1960s permissive decade where one growing feeling was that 'no child was 'uneducable' [as per the exceptions made for uneducable children from the 1944 Education Act] leading to the Education (Handicapped Children) Act of 1970 which made local education authorities responsible for the education of *all* children, bringing every child into education, regardless of impairment or learning disability (Armstrong, 2007)

There were 27 members of the Committee led by Mrs H M Warnock, who was the Senior Research Fellow at St Hugh's College, Oxford. Priestley (1978) stated that there were several sub-committees set up to look at several areas such as:

- Services for parents of pre-school handicapped children
- Pre-school education
- Employment experiences of handicapped school leavers
- Views of teachers in special and ordinary schools on special education
- Comparison with other countries in terms of their provisions

The main focus of the Warnock Report is two-fold, i.e. consideration of how teaching and learning might best lead to enlarging a child's knowledge, experience, and imaginative understanding and then secondly to enable him to achieve the maximum independence as an active participant in general. Priestley (1978)

Gregory (2015a) stated that the subsequent publication of the Warnock Report coincided with the ongoing discussions of the day looking at the rights of disabled people in general and the emphasis on their right to be a full member of the society in general.

2.4.1.5.2 Implications of the Warnock Report on Deaf Education

The Warnock Report put forward the following definition with respect to children in education:

A child will have a special educational need if s/he has a learning difficulty requiring special educational provision. The 'learning difficulty' includes not only physical and mental disabilities, but also any kind of learning difficulty experienced by a child, provided that it is significantly greater than that of the majority of children of the same age. (Gregory, 2015a)

It also argued for the education of children with SEN, to be carried out in ordinary schools, wherever possible.

Armstrong (2007) saw the Warnock Report as having challenged the then current dominant assumptions that there were 'two types of children, the handicapped and the non-handicapped' and that the categorisation of impairment was a justification for 'special' provision. It argued that the term 'handicapped' provided no information about *educational* need, marking an important change of emphasis. Disabled children were not to be seen as the recipients of therapy and care, but as learners with an entitlement to education.

2.4.1.5.3 Education Act 1981

The general findings of this Report were influential in the setting up of the Education Act of 1981 [enacted in 1983]. Gregory (2015a) stated that the consequence of this is for the need to treat each child on own merits in terms of education needs instead of clustering them together in according to own specific disabilities.

The Education Act which effectively rejected the philosophy emanating from the Education Act of 1944 and introduced the new terminology 'Special Education Needs' as noted in this citation:

'The 1981 Education Act which followed enshrined the term 'special educational needs' in legislation, ostensibly replacing the categories of impairment encoded by the 1944 Education Act. Provision was made for the introduction of statutory assessment of learning difficulties to establish whether a child had special educational needs, introducing the new label 'SEN', and what these needs were. 'Statements' of special educational needs, stipulating the nature of the 'needs', how they should be met, and the resources required, were drawn up for some children as an outcome of multi-professional assessment procedures. These procedures themselves had important implications in terms of educational provision and resources and engendered a massive rise in the number of professional assessments carried out. Paradoxically, although the term special educational needs focused on educational needs rather than individual impairments, it became a globalising category denoting difference or learning difficulty which co-existed with the established categories of impairment, and alongside new ones.' (Armstrong, 2007, p.7)

Gregory (2015a) readily acknowledged that it would be seen as 'positive' she realised that initially it became rather difficult in collecting data which would enable the monitoring the progress of children with a specific disability, such as deafness. For a while it was much more difficult as the information was not collected in this way. This situation has been remedied for deaf pupils by the BATOD survey, now known as CRIDE, which collects data from schools and services on the deaf children known to them [see Chapter 1]

2.4.1.5.4 Aftermath and Impact of the Warnock Report

Post-1981 there were several Education Acts since then of 1988, 1991, 1992 and 1996 leading to a reconstructed special education (Kumsang and Moore, 1998) suggesting that the original concept emanating from the Warnock Report was continually evolved based on feedback and research from the education provision for Deaf children.

One instance of the aftermath of the Warnock Report is that for instance there were very few deaf pupils educated within mainstream education in the 1960s, it has increased significantly over the years. In 2015-16 academic year. It is reported that in England, there are 41,261 recorded deaf pupils of which some 35,500 of them are in mainstream schools, in comparison with less than 500 in 1962 (CRIDE, 2017) The independence of the committee has since been questioned, for it is now apparent that the members were forced to accept the case for integration well before the report was published. Jackson (2005) argues that the last-minute incorporation of clause 10 in the 1976 Education bill (which legislated for provision of special education in ordinary schools) was the result of pressure applied by an influential lobby who wanted physically handicapped (but intellectually able) children to attend ordinary rather than special schools.

Jackson claimed this pressure group succeeded in outmanoeuvring the government and others, in case the Warnock Committee did not give unqualified support for integration. Baroness Warnock herself saw the concept of SEN as a very fluid one, and she regarded special needs as something a child might have in certain circumstances, when faced with learning tasks.

It was in recent years that Warnock acknowledged that the concept of integration which then became inclusion would not always work for every SEN pupil, acknowledging the views of some critics of inclusion who wanted to see special schools continue to serve as part of the provision for SEN and thus queried the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of all learners. (Warnock, 2005)

Mary Warnock, seen by several as the modern-day founder of inclusion, has re-considered much of her original thinking since the 1970s. She believes that inclusion and statements are not working, and that SEN provision needs to be completely reviewed. (Barton, 2005)

She feels that pupils with SEN in mainstream schools are often taught apart from other pupils and do not receive the attention from teachers (rather than assistants) that they deserve. Her recommendation is for children with statements to be taught in small specialist schools. Moreover, she argues that pupils with SEN should only be accommodated in mainstream schools when they have the capacity to do so. Warnock has succeeded in stirring up debate over the question of SEN provision with critics claiming

that her work contains 'a mixture of important historical insights, but also a reflection of naivety, arrogance and ignorance on the part of the author' (Barton, 2005).

Barton (2005) argued that despite Warnock's New Look comments from 2005 which seemed to acknowledge her reluctance for 'full inclusion' this concept of inclusive policies should be explored further and continually refined giving more say to disabled people supporting inclusive education – I would add whether this group does include deaf people as well.

While there were arguments on both sides regarding the 2005 pamphlet by Warnock, this pamphlet looked at several key points – of which I selected a few as pertinent to deaf school children, i.e.

- Bullying of children with SEN is inevitable in mainstream schools.
- SEN should only be catered for in mainstream schools when it can be supported from within a school's own resources.
- Special equipment may make it possible for some children with sensory deprivation to be taught in the ordinary classroom but when educated in mainstream schools, many children are not included at all.
- The refusal to address genuine differences can wholly undermine attempts to meet children's needs.
- Too often children with special needs (with or without statements) in mainstream schools have been taught almost entirely by teaching assistants who are not fully qualified, and therefore they have not benefited from the best teaching.
- SEN children increasingly tend to be lumped together indiscriminately.
- Children with SEN are not as vulnerable to bullying in special schools as they inevitably are in mainstream schools (particularly secondary schools), but some parents see attendance at a special school as a bad thing which is likely to expose their child to abuse; the tendency of children to bully those they see as different should be addressed.
- Inclusion in practice often means that children are physically included but emotionally excluded

From recent studies, there have been documented incidences of deaf children in mainstream schools being bullied by the hearing peers (Weiner & Miller, 2006). It is not unique to the UK as Wauters and Knoors (2008) found as per their research in the Netherlands, who explained the challenges in the social development of deaf children in comparison with their hearing peers in the mainstream settings leading to them being perceived as different and thus prone to bullying. Wauters and Knoors (2008) argued that the consequence of this is the consequent difficulty in attaining good qualifications on par with the non-deaf pupils thereby creating bigger challenges in seeking future employment. Koutsouris, Anglin-Jaffe & Stentiford (2020) found that the general perception of participants in the study of social inclusion was

that people would be happier to be amongst other similar people as communication could be smoother and at a deeper level where applicable, via shared language

2.4.2 Types of education in the UK

2.4.2.1 Schools for the Deaf children

Most Deaf schools are BSL medium schools. Some parents opt for Deaf schools as they want a Deaf cultural and linguistic experience for their deaf child. Also deaf children with additional needs are often placed in Deaf schools. Deaf schools can be day or residential.

One of the contributory factors of the Warnock Report is the eventual decline in the number of specialist schools for the deaf children. As at the beginning of 2017, there are 22 specialist schools for deaf children in the UK. At one point, there were as many as 75 schools for the deaf in the UK in as recent as 1982 (Moore, 2008) and that was consistent for several years since the years preceding the World War II. Lee (2004) researched and found that there were 81 schools for the deaf pupils but added that there were a large number of pupils in many of these schools with the largest residential school for the Deaf being in Margate with 401 pupils and the Liverpool School for the Deaf – a day school – had 200 pupils. It should also be noted that the official policy at that time was Oralism with signing strictly forbidden during classroom study, though unofficially accepted as a mode of communication outside school hours.

The Lewis Report of 1968 echoed the developing concern at the apparent lack of attainment of deaf children in these schools and one part of the report stated:

Disquiet about the results of the education of deaf children has been expressed many times by workers among the adult deaf who are conscious of the speech and language deficiencies of members of the deaf community who seek their help, and of the inadequate educational attainments of many school leavers coming into their care which impoverish the quality of the social, recreational, and working lives of these young people. (DES, 1968)

It was preceded by the Conrad Report [see 2.2.1.4] which confirmed these concerns leading to the burgeoning general desire for change leading to a move towards fuller integration and inclusion away from the traditional deaf education.

Ladd (2003) bemoaned the decline of the schools for the deaf emphasising their importance as not only being educational but also by their role within the deaf community, pointing out that the first Deaf

cultural site which represents the tradition we know today is the deaf residential school experience - deaf schools – the domain where the community language was learned, overtly at first and covertly after Oralism; where manifold aspects of socialisation into the Deaf experience occurred. Anglin-Jaffe (2020) concurred in her recent study explaining that ‘special schools for deaf children held cultural significance beyond educational provision. However, with the closure of many of these schools alongside the decline of Deaf clubs, there has been a reduction in the opportunities for access to culturally significant places for deaf children and adults’ (p.1481)

These days, the remaining schools for the deaf have had to adapt to changing circumstances, for instance by admitting more children with complex needs in addition to their deafness were admitted. This was probably due in part at least to the fact that many more premature babies and babies with disabilities were surviving due to advances in medical care. Many schools adapted to include deaf children with complex needs (Gregory, 2015b)

2.4.2.2 Mainstream schools with Resource Base

Although known by many different names across the UK, a unit/resource base may be defined as specialist provision within a mainstream school. Some resource bases for deaf children may be attached to a specialist school catering for another primary need e.g. for learning difficulties (BATOD, 2015b)

Specialist provision in these bases may include:

- Separate teaching area
- Teachers of the Deaf
- Teaching assistants with experience/additional qualifications n working with deaf children
- Specialist equipment and resources
- Access to support from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy

According to individual need, pupils will receive specialist support in mainstream classes and spend some time in the base for individual and small group work.

In some services, the resource base is a fluid idea with resources moving with the child to and from locations, resources being fixed or moveable – both people and equipment. For many practitioners, the idea of a “unit” as a place with fixed resources set aside for the hearing-impaired child to return to does not accord with their view of best inclusive practice. Where the funding is delegated, the most effective practice may be seen where the school and the support services maintain strong links. (BATOD, 2015b). However, it should be noted that these are now in decline in recent years (NDCS, 2019 as cited in

Anglin-Jaffe, 2020), leading to higher than ever number of deaf pupils attending mainstream schools without specialist provisions.

2.4.2.3 Mainstream schools without Resource Base

Deaf students who are mainstreamed miss out on the feeling of belonging that individuals from the Deaf culture associate with their residential schools and their experience is very different from those who attend residential school. Mainstreamed students often are singled out in many respects. Although they have access to interpreters, notetakers and other special assistive devices, they still may be loners, especially in a mainstream environment where there are few other students with hearing losses (Gilliam and Easterbrooks, 1997).

One of the recurring issues of mainstream schools is that it is a 'postcode lottery' in which school would work well for a deaf child irrespective of own hearing loss. Research suggests there is great variation in mainstream teachers understanding and recognising the needs of deaf pupils (Iantaffi, Jarvis & Sinka, 2003).

In 2015, it was reported that partially deaf children were 'overlooked' at school (BBC News, 2015), where a National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) carried out survey in conjunction with the Ear Foundation finding that nearly half of the children with limited hearing fall behind in comparison with their hearing peers at school with the suggestion that they struggled at classrooms with poor acoustics and a lack of understanding by staff.

While this is not applicable to profoundly deaf children, it still indicated that those with mild or moderate hearing loss might not be doing as well as expected in comparison with other deaf children, which is partially borne out by anecdotal evidence from some specialist education services for deaf children (Archbold et al, 2015)

There has been concern about the success of inclusion within mainstream education as argued by Ladd (1981). He argued that if inclusion is to mean anything, then it should come to indicate a truly full participation in the education process which suggests the need for easy communication. However, he stated that for many deaf children this cannot be achieved in a classroom where everyone else is hearing and is more easily achieved when deaf children are educated with other deaf children. Some have suggested that it may not be just the community of pupils that is important, but the community of teachers. How much harder it must be where pupils are individually included, as the Teacher of the Deaf

must cover a range of schools and visit only occasionally. Ladd (1981) then pondered on the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the pupil or the efficacy of the equipment should fall upon the shoulders of either the visiting Teacher of the Deaf, the class teacher, or the head of the mainstream school.

2.4.3 Communication methods influencing choice of education

This looks briefly at different communication methods in use either during their school education or during their adult life.

2.4.3.1 Sign language [including British Sign Language]

Manualism, by definition, is the definition of teaching deaf students to communicate with each other or with deaf people by means of sign language (Oxford University, 2017). Manualism came about partly because in the 15th and 16th centuries, the monks who live by their vows of silence saw the opportunity to save the deaf-mutes from descending into hell for not saying the Lord's Prayer by initially teaching them to say the Lord's Prayer but in sign language.

Sign language or British Sign Language (BSL) only became officially part of the education provision for deaf pupils in the UK in the early 1990s. Stokoe (2001) explained that after a century of where the educational use of sign language in most countries of the world has declined, the recent linguists have liaised with the deaf community to argue for application of sign language as an integral part of the education of deaf children. This arose in the 1980s and 1990s partly linked to the general growing discontent with the low achievement of an average deaf child in school (Conrad, 1979) and as far back as 1972, O'Rourke (1972) commented that poor performances led to gradually wider acceptance of sign language, garnering more attention to its use as well as other forms of manual communication.

In the 21st century, with the mainstream schools accepting a high number of deaf children, it is unsurprising that 88% of deaf children communicate using spoken English as their main language in school or other education settings, 7% mainly use spoken English together with signed support whilst 2% mainly use British Sign Language (CRIDE, 2022). According to the CRIDE Report of 2020-21 (CRIDE, 2022), there are at least 45,060 deaf children in England, plus a few thousands more from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland combined.

This begs the question on the relevance of attending a school which likely would be reliant on the oral method approach, with one of the aims which is to better prepare a deaf child to cope with the hearing world of work when they finish their schooldays.

2.4.3.2 Oral method

Oralism, by definition, is the system of teaching deaf students to communicate using speech and lipreading instead of using sign language (Oxford University, 2017). Oralism came about partly as by product of socio-economic factors around 16th Century in Spain as by encouraging deaf people to speak, they would be able to inherit (Cohen, 1995) Historically, to be able to speak would be seen as a representation of higher classes and intellect, whereas signing would be seen to be representation of lower classes and intellect (Cohen, 1995)

Initially up to 1880, some schools would use Oralism and others Manualism, but after the Milan Congress right up to the Stokoe research in the 1960s, Oralism held sway in the education of deaf children.

Following the research stating that the sign language becoming more defined as a true language through the research of Dr William C Stokoe et al (1965), there was severe criticism by leading education experts such as van Uden and Dale arguing against the use of sign language in deaf education. Dale (1967) criticised the use of sign language stating that a typical deaf child who signed 'Bed-me-there' instead of saying 'My bed is in there' left out two important words 'is' and 'in', is confusing 'me' with 'my' and puts 'bed' first instead of second. Dale then argued that there is a danger that this jumbled way of thinking could become so ingrained that if the deaf child continues to persist with signs, then he would have difficulty in both reading and writing, therefore it would be imperative he must learn as soon as possible to say complete sentences.

The thinking at that time was that sign language was not recognised as a full language thus detrimental to the deaf child's development due to the 'primitivism' of the sign language (Fry, 1964, Dale, 1967, Ling, 1968)

Van Uden (1970) argued that combining audio-visual reception of speech results in better speech perception by the deaf children than by utilising just one sensory system alone. He referred to Numbers and Hudgins (1948) research which found that speech perception scores by lipreading alone were higher than by audition alone for all children tested, irrespective of the hearing loss levels. Numbers and Hudgins also found that speech perception scores would tend to increase when listening and vision are combined, again regardless of whether they actually understand speech by listening alone or not. Hudgins in 1954 discovered that those with severe to moderate hearing loss [i.e. range of 55-86 decibels] would have made gains in audio-visual scores [i.e. combination of both senses as per the 1948 research by himself and colleague]; he then added that those who are profoundly deaf [i.e. range of more than 90 decibels hearing loss] did make some gains.

Van Uden explored the tests using auditory, visual, and combined audio-visual recognition of words of those who are profoundly deaf and found that the lipreading performance levels were improved. It is interesting to note he focused on lipreading rather than auditory improvements as there was another paper by Erber in 1972 acknowledging that those who are severely deaf tend to make almost perfect recognition score through audio-visual reception, while the profoundly deaf children scored only slightly better than through lipreading alone.

As explained in the previous section, the CRIDE Report for 2020-21 (CRIDE, 2022) stated that most deaf pupils, almost 9 out of 10, do not use sign language at all. This is an important statistic although sign language usage is more accepted nowadays, this remains to be considered whether the young deaf people would be successful in their future employment while relying on the spoken communication.

There are several older deaf people who are also reliant on spoken communication, and they will form part of the data collection to ascertain whether it is unnecessary to know sign language even though it is unlikely to be used at work for the obvious reason in that most [if not all] of the hearing work colleagues would not know sign language.

2.4.3.3 Bilingualism

It is not very commonly used within education in the UK, but it is basically a combination of utilising both the sign and spoken languages as part of the education system. A recent study of 39 European countries by Krausneker, Becker, Audeoud & Tarcsiova (2020) revealed that the bilingual education is increasingly implemented in deaf education in some countries, however it is also noted that this is limited to special schools and is rarely offered in inclusive mainstream schools.

Another argument in favour of the so-called 'Combined Method' is that most of the deaf pupils do not have deaf parents or have access to sign language, Meek (2020) argued that they missed out on incidental learning, which begins at home and is referred to as the dinner table syndrome. Alqahtani (2022) expanded on this arguing that as deaf children would already be at a disadvantage, when starting school, the education system must support them by enabling the use of native sign language in a more effective way in liaison with the spoken language, to minimise the likelihood of the deaf learners leaving school with lower literacy skills.

2.5 Different technological aids in use during education and how these assisted a Deaf person's learning

Throughout the past century, there have been technological advances in types of 'aids' in assisting a Deaf child to 'hear' a bit more within and outside the school classroom.

From the late 1960s throughout to the early 1980s, I used to wear the body-worn hearing aids as a school pupil. Though readily available a decade earlier, the Behind-the-ear hearing aids was only given to me around 1980 as these used to benefit the severely and moderately deaf – it was only due to further improvements in sound reception, i.e. these type of hearing aids were getting more and more powerful so as to give some benefit to the profoundly deaf children such as myself.

The cochlear implants though around since the 1960s in its rudimentary form, became more frequently applied to younger deaf children, typically under the age of 5 since the 1990s, following several decades of research and improvement to the effect of the cochlear implants. Unlike the hearing aids, these cochlear implants require invasive surgery on the head, just behind the ear.

Deaf adults would also, upon meeting specific criteria, be eligible for the cochlear implants, and it would typically be the deafened adults who would take up this offer, as they were born hearing and then after years of gradually or suddenly losing their hearing, they still retain memories of aural hearing which would then facilitate the sound recognition post operation

2.5.1 Hearing Aids

It is the traditional mechanical piece of equipment which takes in sound and converts into electrical currents which are then amplified and changed back into amplified sound to assist the hearing at certain levels.

2.5.1.1 Brief History of Hearing Aids

Mills (2011) outlined that it is partly due to the invention of the telephone and microphone in the late 19th century that led to the construction of experimental hearing aids around 1898. It is also thanks to the development of transistors in 1948 that hearing aids were much improved in general (Mills, 2011). It was also first available in the NHS from 1947 onwards.

Deaf pupils at specialist schools for the deaf were given hearing aids with the purpose of enabling them to hear as much as was possible as linked to their own hearing loss. In recent years, while there have been developments such as the hearing aids becoming digital and widely available in 2002 limitations were evident such as the challenges of identifying different sounds at the same time, which occurred

around the same time as the prevalence of the more sophisticated cochlear implants from the late 1980s onwards initially in the USA, then the UK and Europe, etc.

2.5.2 Cochlear Implants

There has been a lot of media hype surrounding the cochlear implants, which was hailed as a “miracle cure” for deafness (Blume, 2009). It is necessary to consider exactly what a cochlear implant is and why it is seen as a solution to the problems of deafness.

2.5.2.1 Brief History of Cochlear Implants

The origins of the cochlear implants went as far back as 1930s when it was first thought out, however there is some historical anecdotes preceding this, such as in 1800, Alessandro Volta experimented with inserting the metal rods inserted inside his ear canal creating a form of auditory sensation, like a ‘boom within his head’ (ASHA, 2004).

However, the first ever attempt at the actual cochlear implantation was attempted in Paris in 1957 as performed by Djourno and Eyriès (they placed a wire on the auditory nerve of a patient undergoing surgery) which lasted several months before it stopped working. (Blume, 2009, ASHA, 2004 and Wilson & Dorman, 2008)

It was in 1961 that the first two American patients were implanted by Dr William House for short term clinical trials. Consequently, Dr House was developing a ‘workable/wearable’ implant, leading to children receiving cochlear implants in the USA from as late as 1989 (ASHA, 2004 and Norkus, 2007)

The technological improvements on the cochlear implant are noted by Zeng (2004) stating that functionally, the cochlear implant has evolved from the single-electrode device that was used mostly as an aid for lip-reading and sound awareness to modern multi-electrode devices that can allow an average user to talk on the telephone.

2.5.2.2 Functions of Cochlear Implants

Cochlear Ltd (2017) describes a cochlear implant is an electronic medical device that replaces the function of the damaged inner ear. Unlike hearing aids, which make sounds louder, cochlear implants do the work of damaged parts of the inner ear (cochlea) to provide sound signals to the brain.

In other words, these are electronic devices containing a current source and an electrode array which is then implanted into the cochlea, in which the electrical current is then used to stimulate the surviving auditory fibres (Wilson, 2000)

2.5.2.3 Cochlear Implant – Miracle Cure?

Consequently, it was necessary to bear in mind the general society perspective on the impact of cochlear implants to ‘cure’ deaf children, as the general population

‘. . . share this faith in medicine ability to protect or cure us. Our children no longer run the risk of being crippled by polio. We appreciate all the efforts to reduce the risks we run and eliminate obstacles to our living long and health lives. Since there are now therapies to slow down or even reverse processes of ageing, we need no longer accept the decline of our bodies as the years go by . . . researchers are even working on brain chips to give us knowledge without the need to study. Since we believe a solution is just around the corner, we are susceptible to media announcements of a *miracle cure*’ (Blume, 2009, p.9)

Blume (2009) pointed out that the original aim of the cochlear implants was for the benefits of the deaf adults, but it was discovered that a few deaf adults were wanting this, so that the focus shifted onto the deaf children as at least 90% of them have hearing parents. This necessitated some modification of technology for use with deaf children.

There has been a continuing debate on the merits or otherwise of cochlear implants on deaf children and whether it actually improves their educational prospects. A medical psychologist from Australia, Heather Mohay wrote in 1991 that the educational results achieved by oral methods had generally been poor and with the slowly changing attitudes at that time towards use of sign language in education, she argued that it would be better than nothing but only one step on what remained a long road. She then looked at the promise offered by the introduction of cochlear implants and reminded that it was an “impressive technological breakthrough but no panacea”.

There were already discussions about the concerns regarding the portrayal of cochlear implants as the “miracle cure” from the late 1980s as seen by this citation:

‘Both the British Deaf Association and the National Deaf Children’s Society in Britain have made policy statements cautioning against the expectations of a “miracle cure”. The statements from the National Deaf Children’s Society concludes: “This Society is committed to a whole child approach where education, health, social and personal needs are dealt with together. Cochlear implants must only and always be part of that approach and not an alternative to it.” Many deaf adults place a high value on their language and their culture and prefer to see themselves as a cultural minority group rather than as disabled. As a result, many of them are opposed to the use of cochlear implants’ (Mohay, 1991, p.719)

Mohay was said to be ahead of her time making such cautions, and it was probably unsurprisingly that she was 'shouted down' by the likes of the principal of the school of hearing-impaired children who argued that the children have the right to the language of their family adding that as 95% of the hearing-impaired children are born to hearing parents, they have the right to the spoken English language (Blume, 2009)

There have been several announcements that even children with profound hearing loss can learn how to listen and speak by combining enhanced hearing technologies and intense early intervention (The Oberkötter Foundation cited in Norkus, 2007). This has been cautioned against in other studies which instead looked at reading abilities not the listening abilities (Geers, 2003; Harris & Terlektsi, 2011; Hassanzadeh, 2012)

On the other hand, Lane (1992a) criticized the authors of papers looking at the cochlear implants, giving own interpretation that utilizing different tests on cochlear implanted children gave significantly different answers thus leading to 'a false impression being created'

Lane went on to explain that the parents would naturally ask the doctor this question: 'Can you make my deaf child hear?' – where he insisted that this fundamental question does not actually translate into 'Will implant surgery give him any hearing at all?' but instead wanting the deafness undone such that this deaf child should be able to hear well enough to learn the language, communicate with parents, teacher and other hearing people.

This citation from Lane looking at cochlear implants went like this:

'It is highly unlikely that an impoverished auditory signal such as the implant provides will yield the same benefits for later language acquisition that normal hearing does; indeed, the coding carried out by the speech processor of the implant may work against the usefulness of the auditory input for language development, since the human nervous system did not evolve to acquire language from cochlear prostheses (Lane, 1992b, p.224–225).

In the same year, 1992, there was the first ever European Symposium on Paediatric Cochlear Implantation at the University of Nottingham, where one of the keynote speakers was Professor Robert Ruben who, while reminding of the need for the child to develop a competence in language use as early as possible, argued for the need to distinguish between speech and language, explaining that language is not the same as speech. Ruben remarked that the bulk of literature on outcomes of cochlear implantation in children focused on speech production and reception, but virtually nothing on language.

He stated that the cochlear implant had to be used to augment the sign language which the child would have had some access to. He said to the distinctly uncomfortable audience that it would be a great disservice to the child to obtain better speech at the expense of language (Blume, 2007)

On the other hand, the so-called naysayers were dismissed by Wilson & Dorman (2008) who argued that they and the cochlear implant patients alike owed a great debt gratitude to the pioneers who persevered in the face of intense criticism.

2.5.2.4 General Impact of Cochlear Implants on deaf children

There are two sub-sections for this as it is necessary to distinguish deaf children who have cochlear implants into two groups – one a much bigger group of deaf children from hearing parents and family, i.e. not likely to use sign language at home and then the second a smaller group of deaf children of deaf parents and family who would typically use sign language at home regardless.

In recent years, an ever-increasing number of deaf parents have been taking their deaf children to hospitals and clinics to organise cochlear implantation for them (Harris & Paludneviene, 2011). Their arguments for supporting this requirement are varied but mainly to enable better access to spoken language by hearing a bit more than they would have had if they relied on traditional hearing aids rather than the more powerful cochlear implants – while maintaining the need to continue using sign language at home (Mitchiner, 2015).

However, Mitchiner (2015) discovered that while ‘deaf families have the advantages and tools needed to support deaf children in acquiring both languages, families had some challenges supporting spoken language development, a similar dilemma that many hearing families with deaf children experienced in facilitating and supporting sign language at an early age’ (p.61).

2.5.2.4.1 General Impact of Cochlear Implants on deaf children in general

Tomblin et al (1999) looked at English language achievement of 29 prelingually deaf children with at least 3 years of cochlear implant usage in comparison with the other prelingually deaf children who does not have cochlear implants but instead would have hearing aids, where his research indicated that there is evidence that children who received cochlea implants benefitted in the form of improved English language comprehension and production.

This underpinning arguments for the application of cochlear implants is well illustrated by Tomblin et al:

‘One of the primary benefits intended for children receiving CIs is an improvement in communication skills. More specifically, the selection of a CI for a child implies an obvious desire by the parents to have the child participate within, and use the language of, the hearing community. Therefore, one of the expected benefits in communication derived from CIs in an English-speaking community is the acquisition of spoken English.’ (Tomblin et al, 1999, p.2)

This research is typical and commonly found in research articles such as those by Wilson (2014) and ASHA (2013). Nicastri et al (2021) went further than that stating that parental support and their ability to ‘tune in’ to their cochlear implanted children is another factor in enhancing further the improvement in communication skills.

It is naturally embedded in the philosophy that in order to address the negative effects of deafness on spoken language acquisition, many clinicians suggest using cochlear implant and oral education and advise against sign language, even when combined with spoken language (i.e., bilingualism), believing that it may slow down spoken language development.

For instance, Wilson (2014) used the adjective ‘marvellous’ regarding the continuing advances of cochlear implants since its ‘breakthrough in 1989 enabling most users to understand conversational speech with their restored hearing alone. He argued that the cochlear implant of today is the ‘standard of care for the profoundly deaf person’

ASHA (2013) commented that over the course of the last two decades, technological developments in cochlear implant design have yielded substantial gains in spoken word recognition for the average multichannel cochlear implant user.

While very supportive of the need for cochlear implants and claiming success in general, Wilson and Dorman (2008) however urged caution regarding the use of cochlear implants reminding for the need for further improvements, such as that the cochlear implanted deaf people even with the best results will still not hear at the same level of the hearing people especially in noisy environments.

Yet Swanwick and Tsverik (2007) pondered upon the two concepts, i.e. bilingualism with the associated role of deaf adults in deaf children’s education and cochlear implantation which basically is to maximise the potential for a deaf child to hear and improve speech perception – and whether these can be merged to provide effective education settings for a deaf child post cochlear implantation. It was then developed some good bilingual practice for such children in allowing for exposure to both languages within their education.

2.5.2.4.2 General Impact of Cochlear Implants on deaf children from deaf parents

Some of the more militant Deaf activists of today, who traditionally sees the advent of cochlear implantation as a threat to their slowly dwindling Deaf community worldwide, fearing the loss of their language and culture (Christiansen and Leigh, 2002, cited in Mitchiner, 2015) would have been horrified at the gradual acceptance of the Deaf community towards the purpose of cochlear implants, even going as far as giving their deaf children cochlear implants.

Harris and Paludneviene (2011) looked at this recent phenomenon and note that some culturally Deaf parents are now deciding to develop a bimodal (i.e. by using a manual language and an oral/aural language) bilingualism in their deaf children through insertion of cochlear implants.

Hassanzadeh in 2012 researched on a small group of deaf children and found that:

- Deaf children with deaf parents out-perform deaf children with hearing parents in cochlear implantation (CI) performance
- Deaf children should be encouraged to use sign language from a very early age (pre-CI)
- This improves their post-CI ability to learn spoken language (Hassanzadeh, 2012, p.993)

Bettger (1997) stated that the second-generation deaf children are also exposed in early childhood to visual language, thus enhancing aspects of visual processing.

It is imperative to consider the relationship between a deaf child and his parent.

Although there appear to be no significant differences between the deaf and hearing in the quality of attachment and mother–toddler interaction (Lederberg & Mobley, 1990 cited in Woolfe et al, 2002), deaf children of hearing parents receive much less communication than do deaf children of deaf parents.

Woolfe et al (2002) stated that the typical hearing mothers of deaf 2- and 3-year-olds direct more visual communication to their children than do hearing mothers of hearing children but they still communicate primarily through speech.

He then researched via previous sources that:

‘ . . . most hearing parents do not have sufficient proficiency in manual communication to optimize social interactions with their deaf children and to converse freely about imaginary or unobservable topics such as others’ beliefs. Moreover, they will often use the oral mode to converse with other hearing family members, innocently limiting a deaf child’s access to informal conversations’ (Woolfe et al, p.775)

In contrast, through proficiency in visual communication, deaf mothers of deaf children can match the responsiveness of hearing mothers of hearing children (Spencer & Meadow-Orlans, 1996).

This would probably be because of deaf children of hearing parents having delayed access to communication, in comparison with second-generation deaf children. Hassanzadeh (2012) remarked that early linguistic experience can lead to successful second language learning, even when the first language is sign language and the subsequent second language is a spoken one.

Rinaldi and Caselli (2014) supported this theory by finding that for a group of deaf children in Italy they evaluated language development and the relationship between the two languages, i.e. spoken and signed, where they found that the number of words/signs produced by the child consistently increased with age, and the vocabulary growth rate in spoken Italian was equivalent to that of hearing peers. Before the cochlear implantation, the child relied almost exclusively on sign language, but then post-operation, he then shifted to spoken Italian gradually, yet still used sign language when unable to retrieve words in spoken Italian.

They thus felt that the bimodal bilingualism is the answer to the development of spoken language in the deaf children with Cochlear Implants.

There was an earlier study by Jiménez, Pino & Herruzo (2009) looking at language development for 18 deaf children in Spain between 4 and 8 years of age before and after cochlear implantation. Similarly to Hassanzadeh of 2012, they split the children into two groups, i.e. bilingual (spoken Spanish and Spanish Sign Language) and monolingual (spoken Spanish only), where they then found that the monolingual children showed better skills in terms of pronunciation, oral comprehension and use of grammatical rules, whereas the bimodal bilingual children showed better skills in terms of verbal fluency in a task using picture stimuli, as they were able to evoke a greater number of words.

Mitchiner (2015) looking at 17 Deaf families with cochlear-implanted deaf children in the USA, stated that while the majority of the Deaf families exhibited positive beliefs toward bimodal bilingualism in setting high expectations for their children to become equally fluent in both languages, they have their

own perspectives about the purpose for each language differed such that they saw English as a “survival language” and American Sign Language (ASL) as a “cultural language” but supported the use of both languages at home as part of their children’s lives.

2.6 Highest level of qualification a Deaf person might achieve and whether it is typical

One key point of consideration is to refer to a set of academic results in the early 2000s which showed that: 32.9% of deaf children achieved five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C, compared to the national average of 57.1% (NDCS as cited in CRIDE, 2008). It demonstrates that deaf children are struggling to attain the same standards as their hearing peers.

As recently as in 2021, National Deaf Children Society which publishes the annual CRIDE reports, announced that the 2020’s GCSE results showed that the average score for deaf pupils was a grade 4, compared to a grade 5 for hearing children. Additionally, it found a significant gap in achievement for key subjects English and Maths. Just 35.1% of deaf children gained a grade 5 in both subjects, compared to 55.8% of hearing children.

It critically reflects on the importance of the parental choice in their children’s schooling, and where they have received advice from.

How one can define or rather measure the success of the Deaf school leaver is defined differently in some of the recent journal articles. Rohde & Thompson (2007) measured success as linked to the grade point average when analysing the academic achievement of 71 non-Deaf young adults [at least 18-year-old] studying psychology at a private Midwestern University. It measured academic achievement by examining how well specific cognitive abilities [i.e. working memory, processing speed and spatial ability] can predict academic achievement.

Regarding the Deaf students, we would need to consider their specific cognitive abilities, and on whether these might have been not fully developed during their formative educational period. Marschark (2003) noted that a former president of the Gallaudet University [the only university in the world for the deaf students, based in the USA] once told the graduating students that deaf people could do anything except to hear. However, Marschark (2003) argued from his studies that while the statement might be true, it is still the case that ‘differences in the environments and experiences of deaf children and hearing children might lead to different approaches to learning, to knowledge organised in different ways, and to different levels of skill in various domains’ (p.464). It was linked to being a deaf child in a hearing environment in which the experts and teachers might not fully understand the subtle

differences in approaches to learning as applied by a deaf child that can potentially lead to poor academic and vocational opportunities at the end of schooling (Marschark, Lang & Albertini, 2002).

In contrast, Adelman (2006) chose to define degree completion as success. It should be considered in relation to the number of Deaf people successfully completing their degree studies – it has been anecdotally claimed to be proportionately much less than the national average. Further to this there have been other studies such as those by Cuculink & Kelly, (2003); Toscano, McKee & Lepoutre, (2002) looking for predictors of success via reading skill acquisition.

While Cuculink & Kelly (2003) primarily looked at whether the deaf students reading and language abilities at entry to college influence the types of degrees they complete, they also considered the difficulty of deaf students in the USA in achieving the degrees at 'postsecondary programs that are designed primarily to serve typical hearing students' also citing Allen (1994) estimating that of all the deaf students enrolled in college, only 8% read at the eighth-grade level or higher. It is interesting to note that the American Grade 8 is the equivalent of Year 9 in the UK, i.e. reading age of 13 to 14. This is reminiscent to the seminal 1979 Conrad Report stating that the reading age of a typical Deaf school-leaver was $8\frac{3}{4}$

It is also important to note that Cuculink & Kelly discovered amongst other things in their research that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of students' hearing loss across degree types earned; thus, hearing level did not appear to be a relevant factor in their graduation patterns. It is indicative of the fact that hearing loss is not a factor in educational attainment, but the successful and accessible education would be the key to a young Deaf student achieving their qualification in the subject(s) of their choice.

The study by Toscano, McKee & Lepoutre, (2002) pondered upon the level of parental involvement in early education and educational decisions with considering different modes of communication as part of family interactive relationships. They discovered that in their study that most of the parents were highly educated, so this influenced in rubbing off their aspirations for their deaf children to better themselves in terms of reading and writing attainments.

Toscano et al (2002) confirmed that in common with other research the early language acquisition via intensive reading and writing is the key to ongoing language development.

This brings up the need for consideration of socio-economic factors, as for instance Marschak (1993) noted that the deaf children who appear most likely to be the most competent in all domains of

childhood learning activities are typically those who actively participate in linguistic interactions with their parents from an early age – because of these interactions, the deaf children are able not only to gain facts, but also to gain cognitive and social strategies, knowledge of self and others, thus achieving a sense of being part of the world.

2.7 Interrelationship between Deaf Identity and mental wellbeing

The self-esteem of a young deaf adult is partially influenced by their own upbringing and the parental influence, where each parent would naturally react upon learning their own child is deaf and/or hearing impaired.

2.7.1 Development of self-esteem during upbringing

Looking at self-esteem and how one develops it, Leary and Baumeister (2000) sees it as a form of sociometer, which measured how one feel valued or devalued in terms of interrelationship with others in society. Thus, it refers to a person's appraisal of his or her value. Global self-esteem denotes a global value judgment about the self, whereas domain-specific self-esteem involves appraisals of one's value in a particular area.

This reflects the everyday life of a typical person within society and how one copes with dealing with different challenges being thrown at them daily as well as how to interact with different people in all walks of life, regardless of status and power.

De Waal-Andrews and van Beest (2018) commented that for instance to be successful at work, one needs to co-operate with colleagues effectively sometimes resulting in leapfrogging them in career prospects with own self-esteem often further enhanced as a result.

It can perhaps be argued that it is probably inevitable that we would see the workplaces being deemed to be competitive environments, such that the employers would find themselves having the need to co-operate with their competitors in the guise as colleagues and vice versa (Milkman, Huang & Schweitzer, 2012)

Yet a Deaf employee working within a team of hearing peers would find himself on a non-level playing field, that while all employers would play by the same set of rules, having deafness being seen as disability can be a disadvantage, leading to frustration with one's lot at work, creating a potentially vicious cycle of slowly declining self-motivation courtesy of a lower glass ceiling.

Sir Keith Joseph, a Minister for the Conservative Governments for 2 decades in the latter half of the last century, once said when he was a rising politician, he had to “fire on all six cylinders because he was a Jew” (Denham & Garnett, 2014) and on the other hand, the singer Ian Dury contributed to his song, Spasticus Autisticus, containing such lines as "I dribble when I nibble". It was written during the Year of the Disabled in 1981, but it was considered to be in such bad taste that, despite Dury's own disability [he was disabled by polio as a child], it was banned for a time (Denselow, 2000).

These two examples are of two public figures, who obviously had to have sufficiently abundant self-belief which correlated to his own self-esteem in dealing with barriers and challenges in life, from either having a form of disability or simply being different in terms of race or religion.

This brings up a question of deaf people succeeding in life accomplishments – a few deaf people do come in mind in terms of high profile within the general public, i.e. Jack Ashley and Evelyn Glennie are amongst a very few deaf people that are perhaps easily recognised. The former was a Labour MP and the latter a world-famous and successful percussionist.

It needed to be made clear that both Ashley and Glennie are not the typical signing Deaf people – both spoke and has reasonably clear speech – Ashley was deafened in his middle age, whereas Glennie though born deaf herself, was always reliant on speech and lip-reading. The most recent exception might be the deaf actress, Rose Ayling-Ellis, who won BBC's Strictly Come Dancing in 2021, as although she can use speech, she is a prolific sign language user.

However, Calderon and Greenberg (2003) reminded that Deaf children who are typically born to hearing parents would face dilemmas due to intergenerational discontinuity in deafness. While there is expected to be no one else in the family who is Deaf, thus showing them the culture and language, the Deaf person would need to learn to live at least to some extent in both deaf and hearing worlds, i.e. to become more adaptable with two different cultures, and this can lead to becoming a successful member of society. Fellingner et al (2009) found in his research that Deaf children tended to have experiences of emotional difficulties and challenges leading to likely mental health incidences, with one key reason being that they would struggle to be understood by the hearing people in addition to having lack of confidence in taking part in everyday conversation.

Bat-Chava (2000) considered Social Identity theory as developed by Tajfel in her study investigating self-esteem in deaf populations. Before looking further regarding her study, it is worth looking at Social Identity Theory and how this might be applicable to Deaf people.

Tajfel (1981) considered that members of minority groups can achieve positive social identity by either attempting to gain access to the mainstream through individual mobility or by working with other group members to bring about social change. This is derived from the individualistic [first option] and group theories of social psychology and social processes.

This is applicable to deaf people in general, where they are said to be split into roughly two groups -the first group would seek to gain access to mainstream by using speech and perhaps denying the option of either learning or simply using the sign language in order to be seen as one of the majority members of general society, i.e. hearing community. The second group in contrast would remain with the smaller group of the signing deaf community, such that they take pride in being deaf and thus stick together to fight 'small battles' such as recognition of sign language, improved access for deaf people in public or leisure services, for instance.

Bat-Chava (2000) set up a sample of 267 adults roughly dividing into 3 different groups, i.e. culturally hearing identity, culturally deaf identity, and bicultural identity, and then applied own investigations on theories of identity formations and self-esteem in deaf populations. She found that those culturally deaf and those who enjoys bicultural identity would have higher self-esteem, thus more likely to reap professional and academic success on the one hand whilst advocating with confidence for social change in the majority perception of the minority Deaf culture. In contrast, those with culturally hearing identity with comparatively lower self-esteem may accept the lower expectations leading to limitation of own personal goals, developing negative self-concepts and inferiority complexes.

2.7.2 Incidence of mental health issues in a deaf child

There is a 1989 study by Leigh et al indicating that the 'deaf college students were significantly more depressed, as a group, than hearing peers' (Ridgeway, 1998, p.19). It is essential to consider why there is incidence of deaf schoolchildren and young adults do have depression, leading to mental health issues. It is a wide area which also looked at whether parental inter-relationships or the lack of, does contribute to their children's mental health issues

Luterman (1987) noted that this is due to the parents' failure to accept their child's deafness and so not being able to meet their emotional and development needs – thus confirming the statistics where as much as 45% of deaf children can develop issues with regards to their behaviour and mental health as compared to the national average of 25%. This statistic is three decades old, and there are many different reasons for now-increasing mental health incidence amongst the general youth, mainly linked to social media – however young deaf people are still more likely to develop these said issues than the hearing.

Berry (2017) pointed out in his research that many deaf students are underachieving thus making it an issue for psychologist in that the consequence of underachievement is higher likelihood of unemployment and thus higher rate of mental health problems as an adult. Strong (2007) stated that the incidence of mental health issues amongst deaf people who are born into deaf family is lower than that for those who are born into hearing family, arguing that communication is a crucial factor. Starting from childhood, it is important to be able to establish healthy social-emotional development as a critical foundation for life success (Calderon & Greenberg, 2003) i.e. helping all individuals to realise their academic and vocational potential.

Each person develops own skills to a greater or lesser degree depending on their own temperament and personality, family values, education background, peer relationships societal and cultural norms, and so on (Calderon & Greenberg, 2003, p.178)

This shows the complexity of accurately measuring the self-esteem of a Deaf person due to the combination of several factors during his formative years.

2.7.3 Seeking employment and impact on one's self-confidence

Now looking at young deaf adults in the 21st century, there is a general statistic claiming that those with disabilities are twice more likely than the non-disabled to be unemployed in general and rising to three times much worse in terms of economic recession in the western world. The general difficulty in securing employment and/or further training in further or higher education will have a natural impact on anyone's self-confidence.

Sheikh et al (2021) noted that there has been limited research on general experiences of deaf job seekers and employees. They similarly encountered a dearth of research looking at mitigating the complex challenges of workplace environments, remarking that to date there has been not much of a look at deaf employees', especially the signing ones, own experiences from a sociological and psychological perspective.

Scheiber (2015) in the New York Times noted that employers in general tended to discriminate against well-qualified disabled job candidates [including those who are deaf] revealing for instance within the accounting profession, 34% of working-age people with disabilities were employed as of 2013, versus 74 percent of those without disabilities.

OECD (2010) provided data showing people with disabilities have low employment rates both in the USA and internationally, adding that it is a major contributor to their low-income levels and higher poverty

rates relative to people without disabilities. Walter & Dirmyer (2013) commented on the disparity of level of earnings between deaf and hearing employees in general, with the deaf employees facing challenges in seeking and then maintaining employment with comparatively low income.

There is correlation between poverty and lower self-esteem. For instance, home ownership of those of lower income (Rohe & Stegman, 1994) did lead to a significant effect on the life satisfaction but not to influence self-esteem. Gecas (1982) found that these factors such as income, occupation, education, and age can be positively associated with self-esteem.

Thus, it can be argued that deaf people might have life satisfaction from for instance having a home of their own, or simply visiting Deaf clubs and interacting with Deaf friends using sign language, but the issue of self-esteem or self-worth in terms of their employability and ability to make a success of their career would be a different matter.

Callis (2016) argued that while employers claim to value diversity, hiring discrimination persists currently, noting that the employers do not understand how to accommodate people with different abilities fearing (understandably but still incorrectly) that it would be costly and/or complicated. Deaf people should be employed regardless of their deafness as they are adaptable from having much of their lives finding ways to adapt within a hearing culture, thus becoming talented at bridging communication and cultural gaps in everyday situations. Because of difficulties in gaining employment in the first place, the deaf employees tended to work harder in securing their position and wherever possible seek career advancement opportunities (Callis, 2016)

2.8 Research Question Formulation

Previous studies are varied and offered different reasons for the achievement of young deaf adults in their life – in terms of their employability, communications, family relationships, social skills, and mental well-being. This is an area where a lot has been written about the reasons for people having mental health issues, with quite a significant amount of literature looking at those with hearing impairment and the reasons for the low self-esteem and self-confidence leading to development of mental health issues which is disproportionate higher than their hearing peers.

It is always considered whether the formative years of every adult does play a part – significant or otherwise – in their wellbeing in the everyday life – i.e. coping with everyday challenges in all walks of life. There seems to be some indications that the deaf people are comparatively more susceptible to the lack of ability to cope with the overload.

I aim, through research, to be able to indicate whether the upbringing of each deaf child provides clues on whether a person might develop mental health issues perhaps needing remedial assistance during their adulthood due to the challenges of dealing with employment in a predominantly hearing environment, giving due consideration of the cultural implications of a deaf person who might be missing the opportunity to develop own unique Deaf identity.

Therefore, the three research questions are:

- 1) How Deaf Identity as is linked to one's self-esteem relevant in attaining successful employment in the hearing environment?
- 2) How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?
- 3) What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research thesis has the main aim of exploring the impact or otherwise of Identity in the wellbeing of a typical Deaf adult when seeking and maintaining meaningful employment in the exclusive hearing settings, i.e. where there are no other deaf people at the same place of employment as oneself.

This research is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods in which 146 deaf people aged between 25 and 65 who are either working or have worked in an exclusive hearing environment participated in the questionnaires and then from this large sample, just 10 of them agreed to be interviewed.

This chapter describes the methodological approach and how it was designed, and also the pilot study of 4 deaf participants doing the questionnaires.

3.1.1 Linking the Research Questions to Methodology

Just to reiterate the research questions are:

- How Deaf Identity as is linked to one's self-esteem relevant in attaining successful employment in the hearing environment?
- How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?
- What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

Following on from the above, the main hypothesis would be on whether Deaf identity is critical to a deaf person's wellbeing at work. Alternately would this be the case that the people who experience deafness might feel better in the workplace than in the everyday life in general. Another point of consideration as linked to the above research questions is on which factors, if any, do contribute to deaf people's self-esteem at work and why? Finally, how relevant are their formative experiences at school or further education as being critical to their wellbeing and self-confidence in the workplace, where they would work for most of their adult lives.

From the Literature Review, it is noted that in recent years there has been a rise in the number of young adults suffering from mental health issues, and the proportion of those with hearing loss suffering mental health issues is significantly higher than those from the general population in the UK.

It addresses the need for all relevant professionals to acknowledge this situation by understanding the underlying mental health issues; understanding deaf culture and identity; gaining knowledge on how to prevent these issues from arising and to become more aware on better support for those who have mental health issues either at employment or when seeking employment, which will include effective signposting for support.

The relevant professionals would likely be educationalists, doctors, speech therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, and social workers, because they would likely to have been seen by young Deaf people in their young lives.

However this is a vast area of different professionals where it is natural not to expect them to all liaise with each other in the so-called 'fast and ever-evolving' world of 21st century in which perhaps as a consequence, it would become easy, yet perhaps inevitable, for several young Deaf people to 'slip through the net' and develop mental health issues, of which amongst other factors, is likely to pertain as linking to issues of confidence and self-esteem.

This thesis intends to explore how relevant one's Deaf identity is in enabling one to be a much more rounded person with positive outlook in life, thus ready to face everyday challenges in a non-deaf environment such as employment where one would typically spend 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for decades.

And from this, would the answer being on how these information can be introduced during the school years to enable the young Deaf school-leavers to better prepare themselves for the outside 'real' world – this would include effective utilisation of technology to support speaking and listening such as cochlear implants in conjunction with the use of sign language which should enable better access to information within classrooms; the fact that over 90% of deaf children do attend mainstream schools, where there is typically a few deaf pupils (sometimes the only one) within the main school setting of perhaps a thousand hearing pupils, should have prepared them better for the real world, but something seemed to be lacking, thus the purpose of this thesis.

It also has been argued over time that in terms of education, perhaps the deaf children are inherently different to hearing children during their educational years – perhaps leading to potential difficulties in securing appropriate employment as young adults. This is part of the thesis looking at whether this is a critical factor in impacting on success of young deaf adults securing and retaining their jobs.

3.1.2 Development of Mixed Methods Design

This chapter will then look at the overall aim of this thesis which is to explore the interrelationship between the Deaf Identity and mental wellbeing of any Deaf person who is employed at an exclusively non-deaf environmental setting. Thus, it will attempt to detail the research processes behind the exploration of the research questions and the justification for why these methods are the most appropriate. Bateson (1972) argues that all qualitative researchers are philosophers in a universal sense, in which all people are guided by highly abstract principles.

As a researcher myself, my initial concern was to maximise as much as possible the participation of every person, such that by the creation of four different questionnaires in this research design, it allowed for participants to 'drop out' at any stage – whilst still including their contributions in the data analysis of the questionnaires. By 'dropping out' at any stage, it is meant by the fact that a participant might choose not to do one questionnaire for whatever reason, but still completing the other questionnaires.

The reason for applying mixed methods approach is that by interviewing the selected participant [chosen from his completed questionnaires], I would be able to maintain the initial aim of exploring one's personal experiences and bringing out the individuality of that experience during the interview.

3.1.3 Brief Outline of this Chapter

These principles combine beliefs about ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). Referring to section 3.1.1 above, it becomes clear that I would be applying an interpretative outlook of epistemology, i.e. I become an ethnographic researcher as I would be focusing on the individuals and their own experiences [i.e. life history approach]

This research will consider this paradigm as linked to my research. As the paradigm is akin to a belief system (or theory), guiding the way we do things, it also looks at how/what we think to what we actually do, I am anxious to be looking carefully at wherefores of the deaf people succumbing to mental health issues; considering the impact of different reasons and seeking a way and means for reduction the potential occurrences and re-occurrences of such 'problem' as it might be seen from the general society.

The following sections will analyse the data gathering tools I have utilised and how the data has been analysed; with the final section looking at the ethical considerations that have been made and how the quality of this study should be judged.

3.2 Research Design

This section reminds what the research questions and the reasons for the choice of methodology for research.

The main aim of doing general research is to develop understanding any developments that take place and to use relevant information to facilitate change or to improve existing services in the real world (Robson, 2002). It is for this reason that it is decided to consider whether the workplace environment can be made to be more accessible and 'deaf-friendly' for any deaf person to be happy and motivated in working there regardless of own preferred mode of communication.

Thus I wanted to collect deaf participants' views and to make them a central part of the research. As the literature review has demonstrated the realm of deaf education is a controversial matter. As mentioned in the Literature Review, there are a variety of stories of how deaf people have suffered from inappropriate education (Marschark, 1993; Kitson and Hindley, 2000). It is imperative that the questions asked of the participants included their childhood experiences of school, which might help or hinder the development of own confidence when working in the real world after education.

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

As indicated in the Literature Review, there have been studies offering a variety of reasons for different levels of achievement of young deaf adults in their life – in terms of their employability, communications, family relationships, social skills, and mental well-being. This is an area where a lot has been written about the reasons for people having mental health issues, with quite a significant amount of literature looking at those with hearing impairment and the reasons for the low self-esteem and self-confidence leading to development of mental health issues which is disproportionate higher than their hearing peers.

So with the underpinning consideration of the need to measure on the links between the upbringing of each deaf child and the probability of developing mental health issues during adulthood, coupled with a bridging consideration of the cultural implications of a deaf person who might be missing the opportunity to develop own unique Deaf identity, I have started considering the research paradigm and the links to my decision for the mixed methodology.

As explained above, applying the research paradigm is a way of guiding us the way we do research and looking and how we think about we are doing in general – thus the development of this paradigm is interrelated to the reasons, if any, of why the deaf people have been succumbing to issues of low self-esteem, low confidence, and/or high stress levels.

As a reminder for my research, it does not include any deaf people working in an employment setting where there are several deaf employees [they might be in a majority, for instance in a deaf-owned business or a deaf-related charity]. Ditto likewise for the deaf people who are self-employed. The main reason for selecting deaf people in a predominantly hearing working environment is that a deaf person would potentially become isolated and because they cannot hear, it would present challenges for them to achieve parity within their workforce. A retired deaf man [with a strong Deaf identity from a Deaf family background] who was a draughtsman for 25 years before becoming a social worker for another 15 years both in a predominantly hearing environment stated that Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm is when he would enter a hearing world in work settings and that he would always look forward to 5pm, where he can 'switch mode' and revert back to a typical signing deaf person, stressing an importance of preserving his own sanity!

So consequently, the philosophy from my research would decide the final type of methodology as part of my thesis. Guba (1990) stated that it is imperative that any researcher need to understand the ontology and epistemology of their research purpose before choosing a methodology.

One could combine both ontology and epistemology as they look at realism and interpretivism in main. Ontology, which is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of human existence, views the world through an objective lens and posits that beliefs are based on the reality that exists outside of human perceptions; thus, ontological research tends to employ quantitative methodologies. By contrast, epistemology – another branch of philosophy studying the acquisition of knowledge, asserts that realities are created by human's subjective perceptions; so epistemological research tends to employ qualitative methodologies (Ryan, 2018).

In addition, this mixed methodology approach is pragmatic such that it becomes ideal for effectively answering one's research questions because mixed-methods research pays relatively close attention to these questions (Morgan, 2013). Doyle, Brady, and Byrne (2009) commented that applying the mixed methods approaches would simply cancel out or at least minimise any limitations of using quantitative and qualitative methods separately and alone.

Despite the attractiveness of utilising this approach, there is a drawback in doing the mixed-methods research as it is more time consuming as well as more complex application of data interpretation and evaluation than if doing the single method approach. This is a common pitfall according to Ivankova et al. (2006) as she stated that researchers require considerable time to design and perform a study appropriately when using a mixed methods approach and often require considerable resources for data collection and analysis compared with single method research. She then added that it is very much the

case if the researcher is working alone as is the case with myself and that it is argued on the importance for any researcher or interviewer to be confident in already acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills of the topic in question to perform both quantitative and qualitative research, which can be exhausting.

3.2.2 Deciding on the choice of Research Methods

Despite the preceding sub-section looking at research paradigm, it could be seen that at first sight, the qualitative research method can be the most appropriate method for answering all three research questions as these questions seek to unearth a deaf adult's views on own self-esteem when dealing with either seeking employment or working at an exclusive hearing environment and personal experiences of schooldays (Ashley, 2017). However, if one sticks to an exclusively qualitative thesis, the shape of the methodology chapter is less clear-cut:

“... the straightforward character of a quantitative methods chapter unfortunately does not spill over into qualitative research reports. At first sight, this simply is a matter of different language. So, in reporting qualitative studies, we do not talk about ‘statistical analysis’ or ‘research instruments.’ But these linguistic differences also reflect broader practical and theoretical differences between qualitative and quantitative research. More particularly, in writing up qualitative research, we need to recognise:

1. *the (contested) theoretical underpinnings of methodologies*
2. *the (often) contingent nature of the data chosen*
3. *the (likely) non-random character of cases studied”*

(Silverman 2013, p.234)

Bearing this in mind, reflecting on the first two research questions, a mixed method approach would be utilised as both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods can be implemented through the questionnaire (in addition to the semi-structured interview) (Thomas, 2013)

In parallel, the qualitative data recorded from the interviews was coded so that numerical values could be obtained, and statistical data created (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003) which should result in the data to be analysed thoroughly and interpreted more easily while different trends were found and comparisons were made across the data (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2011)

However, Cohen et al (2011) warned that any quantitative data, whilst enabling data to be easily categorised and analysed, can restrict a study, limiting the insight accessed into a deaf person's opinions. Therefore, the mixed methodology is justified as the parallel qualitative data collected from a sample of each individual interview as opinions were expressed and justified (Ashley, 2017)

3.2.3 Interpretivist - Considerations

Before looking at the interpretivist approach, one needs to consider about ontology and whether it is of some useful relevance to my research. As ontology looks at what exists in the current world, or rather what can be known, this can be split into two strands, i.e. objectivism and constructionism, under the umbrella of epistemology (Crotty, 1998)

Looking further at these two strands, objectivism looks at how reality can be seen as a set of given data or physical facts (Berger & Luckman, 1966), whereas constructionism is when 'reality' is socially constructed and not a set of given data or physical facts. Thus the 'facts' we glean would depend to some extent on how we would look, which in turn is shaped by our experience and socio-historical situation.

Basically, as linked to my research looking at how I know or rather how I can confirm the validity or accuracy of my hypotheses, I am applying an epistemology route.

To indicate the understanding of what an interpretative approach is, a bullet-point listing amply explains (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) that

- Insights are gained by understanding individual experiences and meanings
- Recognises that experiences and meanings can differ across people, time, and space
- Interested in the richness, depth, and complexity of a phenomena
- Concerned with the subjective

Being a deaf researcher myself, I must be careful not to fall into the trap of becoming too subjective leading to potential accusations of bias. Thinking about this interpretivist strategy, I am concerned about how the world is interpreted through the mind of the interviewee and consequently the social world cannot be described without in-depth investigation of how people use language and symbols to construct what social practice they apply, i.e. I would need to understand and perhaps empathise with their experience.

So their social world becomes the creation of the purposeful actions of conscious agents. One would need to realise that the actions are not governed by discrete patterns of course and effect (as per positivism) but by the rules that social actors [i.e. my interviewees] use to interpret the world. It goes without saying that interpretivism is a broad church covering symbolic interactionism; ethnography, ethnomethodology; phenomenology, etc. Scott and Caslin (2013) has the Five-Question Method for framing qualitative research – and one of the questions matched my research, i.e. 'If I could

experience a different culture by living or observing it, I would choose to experience it' and Scott et al (2013) answered that this is linked to ethnography [more on this in the next sub-section 3.2.4]

3.2.3.1 Approach to Qualitative Research

This part of research is qualitative, because I am interested in subjective meanings that interviewees do attach to their action, which might be influenced by Deaf identity or not. I would then focus on a smaller but focused samples of deaf people working in a predominantly hearing environment and by focus, I would be looking at language, signs and meanings of their actions, thoughts, and philosophy. This approach can be useful for creating new theory in contrast to making generalisations (Becker, 1998; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011)

There are evident pros and cons to using this approach, which partly influenced my decision to opt for the mixed methodology; some useful pros for doing the semi-structured interviews are noted:

- I want to understand something through their eyes of those how experience it
- I want to be able to describe context in detail
- I want to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, motivations, culture, value systems, concerns, aspirations, and lifestyles.

It is basically all about getting the insider's perspective known as 'verstehen', thus I need to make sense of as well as to interpret phenomena via the meaning that the others apply.

3.2.3.2 Pros and cons of Semi-Structured Interview techniques

The advantage of using the semi-structured interview method is that most of the questions that I have prepared are 'standardised', i.e. these can give numbers or data such that these can be replicable due to the fact that the data can be reasonably reliable. Additionally, I would have an added advantage of adding on the spur questions.

However, it needs to be considered that the inclusion of occasional spontaneous questions can make these answers difficult to convert into data or comparison purposes. But it is still very common for social science researchers to conduct this type of interview because of the attractiveness of the flexibility of where the questions are pre-planned prior to the interview but the interviewer gives the interviewee the chance to elaborate and explain any specific issues using open-ended questions (Alsaawi, 2014). Alsaawi (2014) argued that this technique of applying semi-structured questions would be appropriate to researchers such as myself who having such prior in-depth knowledge of this research project due to having similar disability (deafness), an overview of their topic so that they can ask questions.

Perhaps the disadvantage of using the fully structured interviews would be due to the hindrance of the depth and richness of the responses (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, when planning the semi-structured interviews, it was strongly recommended that these open-ended questions be piloted in advance (Dörnyei, 2007) to give the interviewer some leverage in steering the direction of the interview while inviting the interviewee the option of adding further information from additional questions.

When doing this, one must always bear in mind the cons of semi-structured questions and its apparent freedom to ask any additional questions outside the list of key questions.

Historically it was known as the ethnographic interview as devised by the cultural anthropologists while the sociologists would refer to these as deep interviewing (Adams, 2015) and it should be a mix of closed and open-ended questions often accompanied by the 'why' and/or 'how' questions. The danger of this approach is that the dialogue could then meander off the point, and possibly diverge into totally unforeseen issues which might not be relevant to the research in question.

Adams (2015) remarked on a few disadvantages such as that it can be time-consuming, labour intensive, not only in the interview duration itself but the preparation beforehand [e.g. arranging a time to meet an interviewee] and then afterwards such as transcribing the interview into text, etc.

Concluding, it is interesting to note that Alsaawi (2014) argued that while acknowledging its limitations, these can be minimised by applying a combination of two methods in collecting data, which thereby overcomes the interview's limitations by reinforcement data collection using another method via questionnaires or observations.

This justified my decision to apply semi-structured interviews as part of mixed methods approach as the findings would complement the findings from the quantitative data analysis.

3.2.4 Ethnographic Researcher

Moving on, the reasoning behind this ethnography approach is linked to the qualitative research side of the whole project, because I want to look at phenomenology because I am also interested in discovering the shared living experience of one quality or phenomenon in others (Caslin & Scott, 2013) – the phenomenon in question is 'Deaf Identity'

Caution is needed here as a researcher I am aware of the differences between ethnography and phenomenology. The main difference between ethnography and phenomenology is that ethnography

focuses on the collective experiences within a certain culture whereas phenomenology focuses on the individual experiences.

Each individual interview would go the way of the interviewer becoming a phenomenological researcher because the individual experiences of different deaf individuals have some events in their lifetimes which might seem to be unique, however when looking at the bundles of information from all ten interviews there are themes that emerged such that it is more practical for myself as the interviewer to adopt the 'ethnographic researcher' mode.

However due to the overlapping between these two approaches led Maso (2001) to indicate that after due examination of such ethnographic approaches there is an element of a phenomenological character. Maso (2001) argued that these led to the development of a phenomenological ethnography! Maggs-Rapport (2008) concurred with this commenting that both ethnography and interpretive phenomenology do have aspects in common because these are exploratory by nature. However, she cautioned against the possibility of the researcher searching for meaning within the data that does not exist.

But in order to understand the separate concept of ethnography, Gray (2018) stated that phenomenology is focused on individuals and their experiences; therefore we can be more focused on their culture(s), and how these culture(s) can influence their behaviour. Fuller (2018) added that this approach can be utilised to focus on a 'case' that is bounded to a particular time and place and that the researcher remains present in the field and lives the experience.

Thus, when doing ethnography, it is imperative to bear in mind that we can apply different methods, but direct observation is the key. This leads to the development of relationships between the researcher and interviewees thus enabling the 'rules of behaviour' exhibited by the interviewees to be fully understood as part of relationship development as linked to mutual trust on both sides. Fuller (2018) explains that the above would fit in well with interactionist paradigm.

The advantage of being an ethnographic researcher is that I can allow complex issues to be raised and explored in detail. The consequent description of my findings can lead to potential policy changes – as this can pertain from the 'culture' to be able to speak for itself – i.e. a voice that can otherwise get lost within the prevailing dominant culture.

Nevertheless, there are pitfalls to consider, such as the research findings could be difficult to replicate which explained my preferences for applying semi-structured interviews for a select group of

interviewees and doing a separate questionnaire for a larger sample of the similar peoples. The other pitfall has been mentioned above in sub-section 3.2.3, my deafness with own Deaf Identity can lead to possible accusations of bias, so I would have to be extremely cautious not to subconsciously impose my own understanding on the interpretations gleaned from the collected data.

The findings would be seen as not ethnocentric, which can create difficulties in challenging current policies. This is because having the same disability as the participants, I as the researcher will be seen as coming from either the same culture or from having the similar personal experiences. This should not be a problem due to natural empathy of the interviewer on one hand but as stated in the preceding paragraph this could lead to questions about the impartiality and fairness of the researcher when analysing the data.

3.2.5 Life History model of research

For the ten interviewees, the following points are a matter of consideration:

- How they negotiate their self-identities including their identities as a D/deaf employee
- How they experience, create, and make sense of their career development and the significant moments which enable or hinder their career progression or development
- How they build their agency as experts [i.e. positive role models] and inform their career paths as a result of developing their multi-layered and complex identities

When constructing their life histories, I deliberately got them to start by looking at their childhood with links to their family support and school experiences before going onto the world of work as it is an important part of research to consider whether their childhood play a part on their own wellbeing and confidence in the everyday life of the working world.

It should be noted these interviews took place during 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic which became prevalent from March 2020, such that the concept of working from home was not yet incepted within these interviews.

Thus, within the life history research, the researchers are interested in studying different people's experiences, their lives, and the various social contexts they inhabit. This concept came from the so-called classic Chicago school life history research (Berger 2008a) which has its linked to anthropology. Goodson (2001) remarked that after languishing for several decades, it saw a resurgence in recent years and was now adapted for other social sciences, such as education, sociology, ethnography, and cultural studies (Germeten 2013)

It is necessary for the researcher to bear in mind that whatever is captured in the stories is a mediation between personal voice and wider cultural imperatives (Goodson and Sikes 2001). However, it has been said that somehow life history and narrative are often interchangeably used as terms and approaches partly because both depict the storied nature of lives. Riessman (2008) saw the narrative approach as a form of distinct methodology, where it places particular focus on the sequential order of happenings in an interviewee's life.

Upon reflection, I consider my methodological approach to these interviews as applying the life history perspective as it is imperative to look at interviewee's subjective/personal experiences set within specific social work relations and historical contexts. The use of participants' stories allows a focus on both the personal and the social. Stories prioritise individual experience of being a sole deaf person at work environment, but also demonstrating and revealing underlying social or cultural context and influence. This coincides with the thinking of Plummer (1983) who stated that it would be important to extract the continuous lived experience of a typical participant who would have some elements of uniqueness in his story.

Seal (2015) considered that this methodological approach is essential for basing the subjective definitions of situations held by one person, one group or one institution and, importantly, how they interpret such experiences. Seal (2015, p84) then added 'that an empathetic and trusting relationship needs to be developed between the researcher and the participant within which hopes, fears, values and vulnerabilities can be discussed. In this kind of relationship, silenced stories can be voiced and taken seriously'

This provides an opportunity to deepen the general understanding of a deaf person's work and personal experiences, hereby with the aim of addressing the under-representation of this group in current literature.

Furthermore, this approach has more than one name – yet I have decided on using the term 'life history' as this refers to an individual's descriptive, first-person account of his/her life, in whole or part. Other terms that might have been used are the 'biographical method', 'document analysis', 'life story', 'life history method' and 'self-stories' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The whole life history spans the entire life of the participants and attempts to cover all aspects of their experiences. But for my research, my form of life history research collects data linking to a general description of all life events, mainly linked to one's experiences at work. This partly influenced my

choice to have a good number of participants, i.e. ten when three or four might have sufficed, as the focus is on a specific issue, i.e. the working career of the individual.

I use the edited topical life history approach because it looks at a specific area of interest; this obviously would offer perhaps a rather fragmented picture of the interviewee's life. This supports Plummer (1983)'s argument that documentation of the full flow of life is not necessary thus allowing researchers to consider the topical approach in seeking how the interviewees over time in their lives would come to understand and negotiate their participation in everyday life in work settings as informed by their experiences across a wide range of social contexts. Seal (2015) emphasised the concept of applying the preliminary research tool, which is the 'edited topical life history' as providing a guide through the process of gathering and analysing the data.

However, the use of the term 'edited' must be considered carefully when I as the researcher would begin to analyse and explore data from each of the participant as Ward (1999) suggests the editing of the accounts can range from minimum interpretation by the researcher to extensive cutting and arrangement.

Carefully using each of the topical life histories for probing beyond their stories charting the challenges of their working lives would be an asset in term of showcasing their unique lived experiences. These in-depth accounts have brought up into the open on whether there exist the D/deaf identities as applied within and outside their working environments at any one moment in their lifetimes across different points in time. The information gleaned from the participants would have the benefit of perhaps relating with us in a unique matter.

When analysing data afterwards, Seal (2015) remarked that every researcher needs to bear in mind that when the participants are asked questions about their lives, there is an intersection between the 'life' as the storyteller remembers it and the recreation of these past moments. This cautions on how the participants recall their own experiences and how they might want to recount to the interviewer in a very revealing way which could lead to discomfort for themselves.

That is partly why Germeten (2013) saw the need to remind that it would be naturally the case that our reflections are influenced by the critical incidents, which have been most significant in their lifetimes. Riessman (2003) confirmed that by terming these occasions turning points and they are short, long, or key incidents that have meaning in our lives both in the past and present. Focusing on these points across the participants' historical experiences generated insights into the social relations and cultural contexts that shaped and had pertinence in their interactional encounters.

Life history as applied in this research is basically just one of the methodological and analytical approach to exploring the deaf people's work experiences. This approach is crucial to my understanding of the realities of the participants and exploring how interpretations of their social environments influence the negotiation of identities across time and context.

Seal (2015) believed that the theoretical tenets of symbolic interactionism intertwined with the tenets of a life history perspective. She added about the advantages of being an outside in her research project. This is not quite the case for myself as being deaf person who has worked in a fully hearing environment on and off over the years so I would describe myself as a 'part-time insider' so I would need to exercise caution in making sure that the understanding gained through this research would remain as neutral as possible. I will address the relationship between researcher and 'researched' later in this chapter.

3.2.6 Final Research Design Structure

Therefore, it was decided to apply the mixed methods approach which was implemented to include the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to fulfil the research questions (Newby, 2014). The purpose of utilising the mixed methods allows both the statistical and illustrative data to explain, generate and verify theory, therefore increasing validity across sources (Gorad & Taylor, 2007).

Data triangulation was expended through both qualitative and quantitative primary data collection methods, alongside using secondary data (Smith, 2008), to validate the research and provide an astute perception of the results (Creswell, 2014; Thomas, 2013).

Qualitative methods ensured a deeper, descriptive understanding of the quantitative data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) to decipher the ten interviewees' perceptions and understanding of one's surroundings within the predominantly hearing work environment.

Due to not prioritising either qualitative or quantitative sources of data collection (Newby, 2014), a mixed method design is considered more time consuming (Creswell, 2014; Newby, 2014). Hence, it was essential to ensure a balance between data collection and allowing time for the analysis of results in accordance with the research questions (Newby, 2014).

Having said all that, by combining both would still strength the validity of the results and discussions which would be covered in the latter chapters, regardless of being in a time-consuming way data would be collected, dissected, and analysed.

3.3 Sample

One hundred and forty-six participants were recruited for this study, from all walks of life with the youngest just 30 and the oldest approaching 70. They all have differing levels of hearing loss ranging from the profoundly upwards to moderately deaf.

Participant recruitment was conducted within the designated community through social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and personal emails) and done over a one-year period. The link for questionnaire was closed afterwards.

A key consideration is how can one find such a willing participant to undertake in the research which could take up to an hour for completion of several questionnaires. I began by contacting a few of my close contacts in the hope of gaining a positive response from at least a few of them in participating in my research project. From those who responded in the affirmative and eventually took part, I also asked them to cascade outwards to their contacts my requests for participation.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the number who responded overall was rather low, which necessitated my seeking permission to visit different deaf centres to give questionnaires to those who happened to turn up. The centres which gave me permission were Gloucester Deaf Association [I got 15 to do the questionnaires], one sports section of the Reading Deaf Centre [8 more participants] and English Deaf Chess Association holding an event in Sheffield [10 more]

These visits plus email requests made the total completed nearing 50 at that time, which might be ample as Borg and Gall (1979) simply present the following criteria in determining sample size in relation to the research method (cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 93), where if conducting such a survey research, 100 samples should be identified for each major sub-group in the population and between 20 to 50 samples for each minor sub-group.

I considered this because it was already my intention to have at least 100 deaf people which could be construed as forming a major sub-group within the general population and from there, it would subdivide into three minor sub-groups, which are the signing deaf [from deaf parentage]; signing deaf [from non-deaf parentage] and non-signing deaf.

However as cited in Cohen et al., (2000), these are not the exact and definite requirements, just applicable as a useful indicator of the sampling size. But with an eye of targeting a minimum of 20 participants per a minor sub-group, the target would be a minimum of 60 participants, which is where the 'snowball' effect would come in for seeking additional participants.

The 'snowball' effect is just one method of purposeful sampling as for instance those with hearing loss acquired later in their lives, say aged 40 or 50 would not be accepted for my research, as their experiences would be wholly different.

Seal (2015) explained that it is method of recruiting participants in this way due to the limited population of potential participants and the difficulties associated with accessing them – predominantly on a geographical level. This is particularly true in my case as I reside in Reading, yet I visited 2 deaf centres in Gloucester and Sheffield.

Because my research focused on a restricted group, Heckathorne (1997) and Noy (2008) highlighted that this is a particularly effective tool when recruiting from marginalised or 'hidden' groups. Snowball sampling is arguably the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research across the social sciences (Noy 2008).

However, it was noted that this snowball sampling tended to be used as a last resort to seek and gain access to new participants and social groups when other contact avenues have dried up, as had been in my case, but Noy (2008) argues that the snowball method is a particularly effective procedure, which deserves to be employed on its own merit, i.e. not to be applied as a default option.

Beauchemin and Gonzalez-Ferrer (2011) in their study argued that the advantage of 'snowballing' over the random sampling is that contacting any participant through a person he/she knows (and probably trusts) will reduce the difficulty of locating the person and the overall non-response, which in turn will substantially lower the survey cost. An example would be my 3 contacts from different centres of whom I know very well over several years, and those attending the centres were happy to liaise with me via my contact.

At that time, while making successful contact with 3 deaf centres [other centres were unable to assist for a variety of reasons] but yet to agree on a date for my visit and while they were uncertain on how many from each centre would be willing to participate, I decided not to waste further time and turned to social media, Facebook, and Twitter.

There are other social media outlets, but I am not either a member or subscriber. But being reliant on Facebook [I uploaded my requests on my Facebook page as well as selected group pages] and then on Twitter [uploading requests using certain hashtags], I managed to gain some 80-odd more participants over several months.

Nowadays it is acknowledged for any mid-21st century research, social media platforms are a valuable tool for accessing hard-to-reach and hard-to-involve populations (Baltar and Brunet 2012; Calvi and Cassella 2013). These platforms also allow for more ‘targeted’ information to be seen by potential participants (Baltar and Brunet 2012). This is very true in my case as I was able to select 10 suitable participants from three minor sub-groups with diversity in age, cultural background, level of hearing impairment and work attainment.

Seal (2015, p88) warned that ‘it must be acknowledged that it was impossible to cover every possible permutation of cultural background, sporting type, impairment, race, etc within the scope of the study. Furthermore, the focus on individual stories and the unique lived experience of each participant opposes the ‘requirement’ to have a sample from which generalisations can be made.’

Thereby there has been some recent critiques of snowball sampling as there would be a danger of resultant biased samples of participants who are well connected and alike (Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson 2011; Westwood 2013). Additionally, another possible bias could be from what the researcher might unwittingly bring to the research from own background and identity; that is something whose influence needs to be eliminated from the design, rather than a valuable component of it (Christensen and James, 2000). That forms the challenge for every researcher including myself in ensuring the fairness and validity of each interview he conducts.

And then there is a different consequence is that one minor sub-group accounts for over half the total sample, but having at least 20 participants in each of the other two sub-groups (there were 35 and 28 respectively for each), but the final number of 146 participants far exceeded the suggested minimum by Borg and Gall (1979) as cited in Cohen et al (2000)

3.4 Data Collection Method

Questionnaires have been designed with the research questions in mind to glean how the self-esteem and confidence impacts on their lifestyle in the years after having left their final place of education. The questions have been designed so that the sub-textual underpinning notes as well as the actual responses can be analysed using NVivo [see 3.5].

3.4.1 Pilot Survey

At the start there was a pilot survey using all 4 questionnaires, and four deaf participants were selected as at least one fall in each of the 3 minor sub-groups [which would refer to as Categories A, B & C in the latter chapters]. I have invited 2 signing deaf people from deaf family to participate – one is my wife, and the other is my brother-in-law [not related to my wife]; then the third person is a deaf friend from Norwich who holds a Masters’ degree. The fourth and final person is a female colleague who comes

from a hearing family; she belongs to the category of a signing deaf person from a hearing family, but she admits to not using sign language when communicating with her other deaf friends so to save time, I decided she represented both sub-groups.

The feedback of the pilot survey was positive resulting in merely cosmetic changes. First one was that there was one demographical question #12 [Current job title] that was repeated later in the same questionnaire, so it was removed.

Then there was the question #5 from the same General Questions paper which was vague in that it asked whether the participant lives with other people who are also deaf, as noticed by two participants. For clarification, I added these words [*'not including yourself'*] at the end of that question.

There was a general query regarding the question #25 asking about what kind of support does one have in life as linked to own well-being and would it be from family members or non-family members? A couple of them thought that that question was rather vague, and one wondered whether it was linked to self-esteem and the other thought whether it was family member or friend 'taking over the life of a deaf person'. After careful reflection, I thought it would be interesting and insightful to leave that question as deliberately vague to assuage what the responses would be.

Finally, a deaf participant from a deaf family thought the term 'Hearing Impairment' as part of one the scale questionnaires would be offensive to the signing deaf people as she thought it has negative connotation as linked to the medical model of disability. I checked with the other person from deaf family, who explained he noticed it but dismissed it as something which would be typical of the attitude of the general society. Another female participant who sometimes use oral methods of communication similarly stated that this term is part of the normal everyday parlance of general society, and she thought that this term encompasses all the deaf people with varying levels of hearing losses under one umbrella.

The pilot survey elicited positive feedback in general and so with very minor cosmetic changes, these questionnaires were then sent out to the general participant. Additionally, because of no real changes to the original questionnaires, the 4 participants from the pilot study became part of the final tally of 146 participants.

3.4.2 Main Survey

The questionnaire was given to a convenience sample of three minor sub-groups of deaf people ensuring a range of data was collected. Since the questionnaire was given out in advance of the semi-

structured interview that followed, the researcher can deliberately find oneself perhaps in a different part of the room or even outside, so allowing respondents to be more honest when filling in their answers to this questionnaire (Ashley, 2017; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

As it is 'convenient' sampling, there is a danger of a possible inability to generalize the results of the survey to the whole population. As a researcher, I would be acutely aware of such a possibility of under- or over-representation of the population, thus explaining my determination of having a minimum of 20 participants per group and with a deliberate target of about 100 participants. Subsequently, the challenge is to avoid bias as much as is possible based upon the fact some of the desired potential participants will have chosen not to take part for own reasons.

Despite the confidential nature of this approach, it can be said to be advantageous that the researcher can be contacted immediately within seconds so that can answer any queries the respondent may have had. While it was vital that the questionnaire was clearly presented (Thomas, 2013), Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) warned that if the questionnaire is long, or the questions are difficult to understand, the respondent is less likely to complete the survey and is more likely to interpret the question incorrectly, leading to inaccurate results. Thus, with the researcher being nearby, should not be the case, yet the onus remains that vitally the questionnaire needed to be very clearly presented regardless. The questionnaire contained some highly structured closed questions (Thomas, 2013). Scaled questions and multi-choice questions were used so that quantitative data could be obtained and analysed (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Information about their school/study experiences and work-relationships with their peers and superiors was also yielded through multiple choice questions. The discrete categories provided by multiple-choice questions allow all areas to be covered and offer prompts to the respondent who may have been unable to remember what was covered (Cohen et al., 2011; Thomas, 2013).

Several questions from the two different scales questionnaires applied the approach akin to the Rosenberg self-esteem scale so that the participants would feel comfortable with the straightforward matter of ticking which boxes for most of the questions in a good time.

Likert-Rosenberg scales list a set of attitudes ranging from positive to negative which the respondent can place themselves on (Bryman, 2008; Thomas, 2013). Whilst, scaled scores are subjective, the respondents were given flexibility when answering, as five-point scale was utilised (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). The usefulness of offering an odd number of answers is that it permits a possibility of a neutral answer, so that those whose opinion is neither one side nor the other can express their view clearly (Tymms, 2017). Moreover, a variety of diverse answers allowed the researcher to assess the

impact of their education, family support, etc., more accurately in dealing with their working lives with differing level of self-esteem at work. These answers were coded so that numerical data could be formed and compared when represented in graphical forms.

Then there is a separate questionnaire formed as part of the semi-structured interviews with open questions. Open questions 'invite an honest, personal comment' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.392), allowing respondents to express in their own words their views and experiences (Thomas, 2013). Whilst this type of question is more difficult to analyse, it was important to understand the experiences and views of the participants.

3.4.3 Data Analysis of the Questionnaires using SPSS

The analysis of the questionnaires was done using the 27th version of SPSS, as part of the quantitative method. In common with many other researchers, the data analysis is done by using the SPSS [Statistical Package for the Social Sciences], which has been over the years utilised by various kinds of researchers for complex statistical data analysis. In 1968, the SPSS software package was created for the management and statistical analysis of social science data.

As the world standard for social-science data analysis, SPSS is widely coveted due to its straightforward and English-like command language and impressively thorough user manual. Today it is used by the likes of doctoral research students, market researchers, survey companies, government bodies and many others for the purposes of processing and analysing data, which will be covered in the following sub-sections.

The following sub-sections would be looking at the applications of scales used in this research. The following were used:

- i) Rosenberg Scale [10 statements]
- ii) Hearing Impairment Scale [10 statements]
- iii) Self-Esteem at Work Scale [25 statements]

Other questionnaires used for data analysis are:

- iv) Demographical Questions [12 questions]
- v) General Questions [25 questions]

It is with interest that of the 146 participants, a small number might deliberately not answer some of the questions or not wish to tick in a statement. Additionally, a few of them might do the scales and then

overlook some of the questions from a given page or vice versa and so were reminded at a later stage to complete which sometimes fell on deaf ears [no pun intended]

3.4.3.1 Number of participants and the breakdown:

Over the 12-month period, a total sum of 146 deaf and hard of hearing participants completed the questionnaires and scales – and for the data analysis I have broken these down into any of the three categories as below:

- a) Category A: Deaf from non-deaf parents, who would use BSL as preferred communication mode.
- b) Category B: Deaf from Deaf parents, who would use BSL as preferred communication mode.
- c) Category C: Deaf who would use speech [i.e., spoken English] as preferred communication mode.

Separately, with regard to gender, the participants were given the option to indicate whether they are male or female – they were also informed that they could indicate if they would prefer not to say which gender they belong, but from the complete data, everyone indicated their own gender and as a result there are 67 females and 79 males, which roughly translates into almost 46-54 ratio making it almost into two equal halves in terms of gender

Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of the respondents by preferred communication mode and family communication background and gender:

Category	Male	% of Males	Female	% of Females	Total	% of each Category Total
A	46	58%	37	55%	83	57%
B	18	23%	17	25%	35	24%
C	15	19%	13	20%	28	19%
Total	79	100%	67	100%	146	100%

TABLE 3.1 LEGEND:

CATEGORY A: DEAF FROM NON-DEAF PARENTS, WHO WOULD USE BSL AS PREFERRED COMMUNICATION MODE.

CATEGORY B DEAF FROM DEAF PARENTS, WHO WOULD USE BSL AS PREFERRED COMMUNICATION MODE.

CATEGORY C DEAF WHO WOULD USE SPEECH [I.E., SPOKEN ENGLISH] AS PREFERRED COMMUNICATION MODE.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of participants according to gender and categories

It can be seen from the above table that the category breakdown is evenly split between the gender lines regardless of the percentages for each category. Just over half of these participants, they be male or female, are from category A, with the remainder evenly split between the other 2 categories, B and C. The smallest sub-group – female participants belonging to Category C – numbering 13 participants represent just under 10% of the total number of participants so caution might be needed if analysing this group only.

However, as part of data analysis, the above data will be explored along the lines of gender [Category D] as well as 3 other categories for comparison.

3.4.4 Scales

For this research, three scales are used, which are:

- Rosenberg Scale
- Hearing Impairment Scale
- Self Esteem at Work Scale

These are briefly looked at in detail in this section before the data analysis findings in the next section.

3.4.4.1 Rosenberg Scale

Rosenberg Scale [Appendix 5] is used to measure a 10-item scale. The aim of this is to analyse the global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self (Rosenberg, 1965). All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

First, the aim of measuring self-esteem is essential in confirming one's perception of self in everyday life regardless of the differing levels of hearing loss and the challenges it would inevitably bring in terms of communication, interpersonal relationships, career aspirations and so on.

However, it is needed bearing in mind that while it has been stated over time that high self-esteem will lead to many positive outcomes and benefits, there are counterarguments on the merit of measuring self-esteem, thus:

‘Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors. Because many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their successes and good traits, we emphasize objective measures of outcomes. High self-esteem is also a heterogeneous category, encompassing people who frankly accept their good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive, and conceited individuals.’ (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003, p3)

By implication, caution is needed when analysing the set of results using the Rosenberg Scale as seen in the next sub-sections.

On the other hand, there was different research which indicated the merits of applying Rosenberg Scale where it stated that following an experiment utilising two different models where the first model which constrained the 10 items to equal discrimination was contrasted with the second model allowing the discriminations to be estimated freely (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997).

(Gray-Little et al, 1997) demonstrated that the outcome of this experiment was such that the test of significance indicated that the unconstrained model better fit the data, i.e. the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are not equally discriminating and are differentially related to self-esteem. It seemed to be backed up by a different set of results showing that amongst other findings the importance of positive thinking for building resilience (Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Fiona 2007) – this confirmed in a small measure the relevancy of Rosenberg Scale in terms of consideration of resilience of deaf people in the working environment where they most often would be the only employee with hearing loss.

3.4.4.2 Measuring the Rosenberg Scale

Rosenberg (1965) devised this scale with a random set of point-scoring using 4-point Likert Scale, using the range as below:

Strongly Agree = 4 points

Agree = 3 points

Disagree = 2 points

Strongly Disagree = 1 point

However as seen in Appendix 5, five of the statements are in reverse – so caution is needed for scoring as explained by Rosenberg (1965) where he explained that the items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored.

Thus, a data researcher must give “Strongly Disagree” 4 points, “Disagree” 3 points, “Agree” 2 points, and “Strongly Agree” 1 point, in order to match the other 5 items in the scale. He then suggested this

approach, i.e. adding up the scores for all ten items, whereas he explained the higher scores would indicate higher self-esteem

3.4.4.3 Self-Esteem at Work Scale

Unlike the Rosenberg Scale and Hearing Impairment Scale [covered in section 4.2.3], the Self-Esteem at Work Scale [see Appendix 7] is used to measure a 25-item scale. This much larger scale aims to explore on how one feels being usually the only deaf or hearing impaired person working in the company environment where everyone else within the whole work hierarchy is non-deaf bringing up the challenges of how the deaf person might be able to hold onto his job successfully, seeking promotion, gaining seniority within the company and maintaining it, dealing with different challenges not only within communication, such as meetings within the company but also with internal pressures one might associate with a typical business or company.

This scale is loosely derived from the Rosenberg Scale but focused on one's dealings within the work environment which a deaf person in a predominantly hearing work environment would either see this as an interesting and motivating challenge of trying to fit in and prove own worth within the company or instead reflect upon this as a daunting and thus consequently demotivating experience thereby impacting on one's own potential for career development which could lead to a vicious cycle of being stuck in a rut within the firm.

The findings from this questionnaire have been utilised to confirm different facts from which the deaf participants conveyed when doing the questionnaires, giving own experiences of dealing with non-deaf colleagues at work, seeking work, frequency of being unemployed, etc. and like the other two scales again applying the breaking down into categories as per the Table 4.1

It is important to note the difference between this scale and the Rosenberg Scale in which all the 25 items in the scale are answered using a 5-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, unlike the Rosenberg Scale which used only 4 points in the Likert scale. The additional point is 'Do not know' – it might be linked to either one might not be fully aware of whether this is an occurrence as far as one's work is concerned.

If one has never experienced a given occurrence as per the scale, such as attending and communicating in meetings [referring to items #14-16 and #23-25], then instead of ticking 'Do not know' they would deliberately leave blank, in which case the number 999 is inserted instead for purpose of SPSS analysis. Just to illustrate briefly regarding these 6 items, I have discovered that quite a few participants have explained that either that they were told not to bother attending and that they would get a summary

after the meeting from colleagues or that they thought that they are not in a sufficiently senior position to warrant attending such meetings as relevantly applicable to his work role or even that upon enquiring the possibility of communication support at meetings, such as notetakers or interpreters, the company did not often follow up on these requests, so the deaf staff might decide unilaterally not to bother attending meetings, etc.

3.4.4.4 Measuring the Self-Esteem at Work Scale

Following on from the Leonard et al (1991) scale, this Hearing-Impairment scale has been devised with a random set of point-scoring using 5-point Likert Scale, using the range as below:

Strongly Agree = 4 points

Agree = 3 points

Do Not Know = 2.5 points

Disagree = 2 points

Strongly Disagree = 1 point

However the last 9 of the statements are in reverse – so caution is needed for scoring in common with the Rosenberg Scale, where Rosenberg (1965) explained that such items can be reverse scored. Thus, for this Scale the items 17 to 25 are reverse scored.

Thus, a data researcher must give “Strongly Disagree” 4 points, “Disagree” 3 points, “Agree” 2 points, and “Strongly Agree” 1 point with “Do Not Know” staying the same at 2.5 points as it is in the middle point, to match the other 16 items in the scale. Thus, consequently after adding up the scores for all the twenty-five items, the higher scores would indicate higher self-esteem of oneself at work environment only.

3.4.4.5 Hearing Impairment Scale

Hearing Impairment Scale [Appendix 6] is used to measure a 10-item scale. The aim of this is to analyse the personal self-esteem by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self as a person with hearing impairment.

Unlike the Rosenberg Scale, all items are answered using a 5-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The additional point is ‘Do not know’ – it is partly due to the fact that some of the statements might not be applicably relevant to a participant in that he might not have ever experienced that particular occurrence in question.

The key difference from the Rosenberg Scale, is that the measurement of one's self-esteem is linked to own levels of hearing loss with the evident challenges arising mainly through communication, but additionally in terms of interpersonal relationships, career aspirations and so on within their everyday life mode.

The creation of this scale is from the concept of a similarly structured yet different scale looking at nail-biting in adolescents with use of medication as part of intervention (Leonard, Lenane, Swedo, Rettew & Rapoport, 1991). Williams (2010) explained that this study made use of the Nail-Biting Impairment Scale, a single 11-point rating scale of impairment caused by nail biting.

After careful thought and analysis of the original Scale, the Hearing-Impairment Scale was developed as it has a loosely-similar purpose in that the nail-biting is co-related to the lifestyle of a person in terms of attainment, motivation, and satisfaction in life – which can be converted to the consideration of how the hearing impairment of a person is co-related to the person's life aims.

3.4.4.6 Measuring the Hearing-Impairment Scale

Following on from the Leonard et al (1991) scale, this Hearing-Impairment scale has been devised with a random set of point-scoring using 5-point Likert Scale, using the range as below:

Strongly Agree = 4 points

Agree = 3 points

Do Not Know = 2.5 points

Disagree = 2 points

Strongly Disagree = 1 point

Three of the statements are in reverse – so caution is needed for scoring in common with the Rosenberg Scale, where Rosenberg (1965) explained that such items can be reverse scored. Thus, for this Scale the items 3, 4, 10 are reverse scored.

Thus, a data researcher must give “Strongly Disagree” 4 points, “Disagree” 3 points, “Agree” 2 points, and “Strongly Agree” 1 point, to match the other 7 items in the scale. Thus, consequently after adding up the scores for all ten items, the higher scores would indicate higher self-esteem accordingly.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected to allow straightforward analysis (Cohen et al., 2011) and comparison to secondary data (Smith, 2008) where applicable. A variety of graphs were developed to visually analyse

and compare quantitative data and were used to confirm different facts gleaned from these participants.

Qualitative interview data was scripted and used to validate quantitative results (McLeod, 2014). These qualitative data responses are coded to allow direct comparison within each theme which emerged from the research questions. Application of thematic analysis is detailed in the next sub-section.

It should be noted that these interviews are recorded on camera and stored. The majority of participants used their preferred mode of communication, i.e. BSL thereby necessitating the task of producing written transcripts of each interview – naturally, it was a challenge to ensure as accurate as possible these transcripts, in order to minimise any misinterpretations [see sub-section 3.7.4.1] The remaining three participants used mainly oral mode of communication, which meant the literal translation was put into print.

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis

From these interviews, several themes emerged leading to in-depth analysis of each theme. Thematic analysis is an approach popularly applied for qualitative data analysis in recent years (Javadi & Zarea, 2016, Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Kiger and Vipio (2020) confirmed the recent popularity of thematic analysis explaining that it is one method of data analysis for which the researcher sought to understand experiences and thoughts from the complete data set, which could consist of several interviews.

It is argued by several researchers that this method is much more straightforward in its application in comparison with other qualitative research methods, partly due to flexibility and comparative simplicity of analysis phase. That makes itself attractive for the less experienced researchers in qualitative studies (Javadi & Zarea, 2016), and suitably efficient in analysing data collected from the traditional face-to-face interviews

3.5.1.1 What is a theme?

There have been several definitions of the word 'theme', but perhaps it is best summed up as meaning as the describing of the fact that the data is grouped around a main issue (Brink & Wood, 1997) with Polit and Hungler (1999) emphasising that a typical theme would emerge through a recurrent and systematic occurrence of a commonality within qualitative analysis. However, more recent definition of 'theme' is a 'constructed pattern derived from a data set that answer a research question, as opposed to mere summaries or categorizations of codes' (Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p847)

Thus, a theme would indicate some important pieces of information from the research data which would show a pattern or meaning so that it is expressed in a more concise, accurate, simple and shorter text (Javadi & Zarea, 2016) – in a form of a single word, such as ‘Motivation’ or a phrase such as ‘Family upbringing and influence’. Saldana (2015) explained that theme is the outcome from the labelling of specific part of the data with own common thread within the complete set.

A theme is not a code per se, as Boyatzis (1998) defined a code as ‘the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon’ (p. 63). A code should be sufficiently well-defined and demarcated such that it does not overlap with other codes and should fit logically within a larger *coding framework* or *coding template* (sometimes also called *coding manuals*) that guides the coding process by outlining and defining the codes to be applied (Crabtree and Miller 1999 as cited in Kiger & Varpio, 2020)

This is a factor in my choice of thematic analysis using NVivo software in that it would enable me to highlight repeated words or phrases insofar as linked to the original research questions. There is a helpful analogy stating that if an entire analysis is seen as a house with the individual codes being the bricks and tiles then the themes are said to be the walls and the roof (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Via this analogy, I was able to identify different themes using a combination and comparison of certain data.

3.5.1.2 Appropriate sample size for thematic analysis

According to Fugard and Potts (2015), the size of the sample does not matter for a thematic analysis, which influenced my decision to go for a bigger sample of 10 interviewees, as such sampling can be continued until no further codes [from which themes would emerge] are found, i.e. data saturation (Fugard & Potts, 2015).

However, regarding sample size, Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, and Braun (2017) felt coming to an agreement on this can be fraught with differing perspectives on the appropriate size leading to a debate in qualitative research which tended to be contentious.

By applying the mixed methodology and combining or comparing the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses, I was able to successfully recruit a sufficiently high number of participants completing the questionnaires and scales which afforded myself a luxury in selecting the appropriately-categorised interviewees, leading to an arguably credible outcome as a result.

3.5.1.3 Advantages and Disadvantages

Furthermore, the advantage of applying thematic analysis is there seemed to be two basic approaches (Terry et al, 2015), which are either 'an approach defined by an emphasis on coding reliability or a more qualitative approach that advocates for a flexible approach to coding and theme development' (p.19).

From using the semi-structured interviews, I have already accounted for flexibility and potentially a wider variability in the responses allowing for the possibility of obscure themes emerging through coding, and this led to my opting for an inductive approach to theme identification (Braun & Clarke, 2012) for the reason in that the interviewees would be likely to veer off topic or offer additional information which might not be part of the original list of interview questions. This is in contrast to the deductive approach to theme identification which would use a pre-developed framework which would typically comprise of a research-driven focus to identify key themes of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

While Kiger & Varpio (2020) explained that either the inductive or deductive approach as part of thematic analysis would work in practice, it remains essential that a researcher must specify which approach had been used, for the reader's benefit. In this case, I was able to develop and identify themes using the data set, so consequently the final themes would be matching the original data set and not all as linked to the original research questions as the emergence of a few additional themes as mentioned in the latter chapters would show. It is a research approach which generates knowledge as grounded in human experiences (Sandelowski, 2004) as long as these tools are sophisticated and correctly applied in conducting trustworthy qualitative research (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017)

Terry et al (2015) mentioned through their research studies over a period of time, that thematic analysis is much more 'flexible' than other approaches such as discourse analysis or grounded theory. Kiger & Varpio (2020) warned that flexibility can affect the accuracy and reliability of the findings and interpretations. It was advised that the researchers needed to clearly indicate their assumptions as to eliminate any bias, perceived or otherwise.

This would go some way in explaining why it had been discounted as unsophisticated and inferior to other qualitative methods (Braun & Clark, 2006), even though this term 'thematic analysis' has been around for decades and was perhaps first defined in early research studies, for instance that of Merton (1975). The consequence of this seemingly negative perception of thematic analysis was that there had been several studies which employed thematic analysis have not explicitly labelled it as such in their manuscripts (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Nowell et al, 2017; Braun & Clark, 2006), often merely stating that such qualitative data were examined for recurring themes, without offering further explanation.

Overall, based on an inductive approach and rigorous analysis of the 10 interviews via coding and emergence of different key themes, I became confident in the trustworthiness and credibility of this research from achieving clear interpretations of data with selected extracts of quotations to illustrate how I develop themes in a transparent manner.

3.6 Validity, Reliability and Credibility

The amount of time allocated for my research study leading to comparative constraints in collecting appropriate and relevantly selected deaf people, who would be proportionately low in numbers and scattered geographically within the UK, meant that the sample can be considered to be relatively small. It is for this reason, the results of the study only apply to a specific group of deaf population and thus should not be generalised (Hedges, 2017; Thomas, 2013).

Questionnaires were chosen as they can lead to more accurate, and therefore more reliable, findings because the respondent's details remained confidential and anonymous, giving them more confidence with giving honest answers (Hammersley, 2017) as per the University of Reading regulations in storing data in secret for a period of 5 years before these can be destroyed, after the publication of this research.

Moreover, scaled score questions increased the reliability of data since the five-point Likert scale score provided enabled respondents to be more specific in their answers (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). To increase the reliability of the data drawn from the focus group, the conversations were recorded, i.e. filmed as the Deaf respondents can have a choice of answering the questions in either BSL or in spoken English [*it does not matter which language is applied as I can communicate using BSL in addition to being a quite good at lip-reading the spoken English*] (Thomas, 2013), thus enabling via the interview clips, a definite focus on observing the interactions of each the group and their non-verbal communication, rather than relying on their memory to recall quotes or the opinions raised (Hedges, 2017; Thomas, 2013).

It is important to note that Robson (2002) queried on the issue of trustworthiness and reliability of applying the flexible qualitative research, expressing concern that it might not be possible to achieve the same sort of standard which might have been achieved from a rigorous design. This by implication stated that the semi-structured questions in the interviews eliciting the life histories are by nature flexible. My solution to this assertion is that the combination of the life histories with data statistics improves the robustness of the findings making it more credible and reliable.

Maxwell (1992) stressed that it was perhaps the sole responsibility of the interviewer to gather information and report it as accurately as possible as the 'truth' from these interviews. Sutherland (2008) followed this by reminding that to be given access to sometimes very private and deeply personal pieces of information made the researcher having to realise that it was a privilege to become trusted by the interviewees in general.

Further on, Sutherland (2008) argued that it would greatly help for the interviewer to be neutral during the process. This is an important argument as it would have been easy for me as a researcher who might have had similar experiences to the participants to find oneself disagreeing the interviewee, not openly but via innermost thoughts, hence the need for neutrality and impartiality to strengthen the credibility of these findings.

Finally, one must ask oneself on which instrument can accurately measure the concept of the research (Heale & Twycross, 2015), so apart from the above considerations, the one important thing the researcher must do before proceeding is to ask for a second opinion. What I did was that these questionnaires and the semi structured interviews were sent to my PhD supervisor for review. Modifications were then made based on the supervisor's feedback. In addition, the pilot study improved the validity of the instruments.

3.7 Ethics

To ensure that research adhered to ethical guidelines, the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) documents were consulted. This document highlights the need to gain the consent of the participants and for them to be given information about the research they are involved in.

Because it is factual that using focus groups would create difficulties in ensuring that individual opinions are to be anonymised, I have decided to interview each participant separately if they were made aware of the purpose of the study and of the research process, they would be involved in. Simultaneously, all participants were all given the right to withdraw from the research and understood that any data they may give would be confidential and anonymised (Ashley, 2017; BERA, 2011; Gibbs 2017).

It was imperative to ensure all participants understood that the findings would be stored confidentially and anonymously to adhere to ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011) and ensure participants were providing honest responses.

3.7.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct research was received from the Institute of Education at the University of Reading after the submission of an ethics form (Appendix 1). I made sure to obtain signed consent form from each participant (Appendix 3) and further consent was gained for the interviews to be filmed. I gave each participant an information sheet for safekeeping (Appendix 3), which included a detailed overview of the research project and the ethical considerations that had been made. I have adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the University of Reading and BERA (2011) during the design and implementation of the research.

Yet Sutherland (2008) pointed out that the deaf community being small, there is always a chance that a deaf researcher, i.e. myself, might be known to the participants for a variety of reasons, as it might be as a family member, friend, acquaintance or even from my other role as an erstwhile stage and TV actor of which the participant might recognise from the yesteryear. Thus, it is for this reason that it became necessary and naturally important for the researcher to explain his role for this research to each participant.

Sutherland (2008) argued that regardless of whether a researcher might not have had any previous contact with any participant, it remained possible that he might have been aware of the researcher. It is for this reason, I readily acknowledged any possibility that any research findings might be skewed if the participant knew the researcher well, so gave answers, they thought I was looking for.

3.7.2 Informed consent

The following sub-section explains the procedures involved in gaining consent from participants for doing the questionnaires, and then if selected for the interviews which would have been organised at a mutually convenient date.

3.7.2.1 Participants' confidentiality and rights in this research

The voluntary nature of participation and the individual's right to withdraw at any time were communicated to each participant in person and in the documentation provided. I kept copies of all the signed off consent forms. The consent form included all the information that the participants had agreed to (Denzin, 2011).

To encourage deaf participants to take part in the project, it was vital that they fully understood what involvement would entail. They also needed to understand that there was no pressure on them to do so and they could withdraw at any time for any reason. The careful explanations of the first stages of

the project and constant checking on their competency ensured that there was no pressure to take part (Sutherland, 2008).

There should be no exceptions to the above rule, so I either used spoken English or BSL for them and then gave them ample opportunity to ask questions about the project. Thus, after full explanation in either language, each participant would sign the consent form agreeing to participate, or even decline by not signing. The consent forms clearly indicated they could change their minds at any time and withdraw.

From then on, the participants would become assured of the confidentiality of their information either via interviews or questionnaires such that they remained anonymous so that any reader of this thesis, who might be from the deaf community, would never be able to ascertain who the person might be from reading the comments.

According to Cohen, Mannion & Morrison (2011) and Dane (1990), a participant can be said to be anonymous when the researcher or another person cannot identify the participants or subject from the information provided. Additionally, participants' confidentiality would be evident only if and if the researcher himself is aware of their identities, but as per the signed consent forms, will have already vowed not to reveal those identities to anyone else for whatever reason (Dane, 1990)

3.7.3 Research Relationships

As I am deaf person myself, it can be seen as somewhat of an advantage as it will mean cultural empathy and being conversant in both languages, i.e. English and BSL, I can with confidence liaise with both groups of deaf people who use different languages.

As Sutherland (2008) explained that the deaf community is comparatively small, I realised that there is a chance that some of the participants might be related to the researcher, friends or acquaintances from a variety of social circles and even not knowing each other but at least recognise my name from my other work in the field of theatre and TV, where I used to work on a regular basis about 2 decades earlier – I still act but very infrequently nowadays.

Although Sutherland did her research with deaf children not adults, her thoughts on being a deaf researcher very much resonated with my initial thoughts, and she commented:

'To achieve the 'deaf-friendly' approach, the researcher made sure she was fully conversant with the children's culture and language so that she would be accepted as part of their 'community'. It is very likely that the children would be less comfortable expressing their innermost thoughts

and feelings on the more sensitive issues to a hearing researcher, less familiar with their cultural differences, if one was to be employed on this project.

Even though the researcher was deaf, this did not necessarily mean a more empathetic relationship with the deaf children was established. There might have been implications of a power relationship. It has been known for children to say what they think is expected or what they think the researcher wants.

(Sutherland, 2008, p83)

The above citation confirmed that having a deaf researcher would be advantageous in that there would be natural empathy between the interviewer and participant as well as cultural understanding in their storytelling as well as comments they would be adding within their questionnaires as some are wont to do.

The second paragraph above is critical in terms of how I would ensure that the power relationship can be re-balanced so that the participant can feel to be in control of their storytelling – I would have my questions already in my hand but will merely guide the storyteller in ensuring that they recount their experiences in a relevant way – a bit akin to the driving instructor telling a learner to turn left or right or even stop where necessary.

It is necessary to have confidence in dealing with interviewees in a gentle but firm way so that the aims of the interviews can be met. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that interviewees do determine the level of cooperation, the progression and the success or failure of the interview (Aynan, 2013).

Understanding the dynamics of power relationship is important as noted by Aynan (2013) who looked at the impact of the accuracy of information gleaned from such interviews. It is clear I have a set of rules and informal structure so that it becomes natural to be seen as in control of these interviews despite the fact both the interviewer and interviewee have one thing in common: deafness.

But Aynan (2013) remarked from his studies that it is evident the interview assumes ascendancy in dialogue between uneven partners in a specific hierarchical form of conversation where the interviewer sets the rules of the game, as often he is the one to initiate the interview.

Kvale (2006) clarified on how the interviewer would typically start the interview by using his scientific competence to define the interview situation by starting the interview, deciding, and posing the questions, and following up on the answers and finally closing the conversation. However, it is known that there are interviewees who might use perplexing behaviours and may also shift the focus of the

interview and even decide to terminate the interview. Both the interviewer's scientific competence and the interviewee's behaviour are examples of power manifestations in the qualitative interview research (Kvale, 2006).

As these interviewees were recalling their experiences, a couple of them momentarily stopped for a few moments to regather their thoughts as they were becoming emotional from their bad experiences in the past. I offered to pause or even terminate but they were happy to continue, and these interviews ended well with all the key questions covered. Upon reflection, they did not very much shift the focus of interview or even consider ending the session completely. Naturally, I wonder whether this is because they felt it important to offload information which they thought would help me in my research to support the future younger generations of deaf people.

For any interview it is important to develop good rapport before and after the interview to ensure that the interviewee is happy to participate and support the research. Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) asserted that to gain access to the interviewee's intimate and private experiences, the interviewer must court the interviewee, enhance the sense of rapport between them and build a sympathetic relationship and a sense of mutual trust in the research interview.

Having considered all that, these ten interviews went quite smoothly overall. Upon reflection of how these interviews proceeded, it was useful to learn that Smith (2005) concluded that the interview research approach is not an erroneous tool as far as the power relationships, usually asymmetrical, within these interviews are concerned. Even to be able to acknowledge the goal of a perfect and equal relationship in the prospects of the qualitative research interview remains unrealistic according to Oakley (1981). That would be something which every interviewer, myself included, must always bear in mind when doing the analysis and interpretation of interview data.

3.7.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

To start with, this paper will look at the qualitative analysis of the data gleaned from the interviews, before moving onto the quantitative analysis of the data gleaned from the questionnaires.

3.7.4.1 Qualitative Data – Analysis and Interpretation

First point of consideration about interviewing the participants is that they must feel able to simply answer the interviewer's questions, thus the onus is on the interviewer to try and shift the balance of power towards the participant so that they can take some control and give their information more freely.

Sutherland (2008) claimed that this is a form of emancipatory research enabling these participants such freedom to feel more assertive and to reveal what was important to them. It is a form of emancipation as it could be argued that these participants due to own hearing loss might have already been marginalized in their working life if as is usually the case, they might be the only person with hearing loss in their employment.

It might seem ironic for the interviewer to subtly cede power to these participants so that they can directly or indirectly [subconsciously perhaps] take control of these interviews with the researcher doing the steering where necessary. Robson (2002) suggested using this approach, and it was applied in my research which looked at these asymmetric power dynamics at their workplace environment.

Aynan (2013) asserted that the data analysis stage is where power eventually returns to the interviewer. This seemed to justify the need for the interviewer to use the approach of ceding some form of control during the actual interview, which would lead to successful interpretation of data afterwards.

Thus, it might be said that this research interview is a tool or an instrument, providing the researcher with descriptions, narratives, and texts of the life world of the interviewee which the researcher interprets and reports according to his or her research interests (Kvale, 2006).

Being the interviewer myself, I have been willing to share the interview transcript with each participant, so that they would have a copy of the record as well as to check for any errors from the transcription. And equally as important is that each interviewee has the option to decide on whether to remove sections of the interviews which they might have felt too uncomfortable having it on record as an afterthought. Additionally at this late stage, each interviewee was given the option to change their mind and refuse the opportunity for the interviewer to analyse the transcript. A few of the interviewees have amended some bits of their interviews which were mostly transcription errors, but none of them have asked either for sections to be deleted or to withdraw the whole interview transcription.

Karnieli-Miller et al (2009) mentioned the need for the interviewer to show willingness to share the data analysis process at any stage with the interviewee. And then also inviting them to join the final stages of writing is in the hands of the interviewer.

Kvale (2006) noted that the interviewer has the choice based on his own prior knowledge in how to interpret and report what the interviewee really meant, considering the interviewee options for counter control such as not answering some of the questions. But he also reminded that by inviting the

interviewee to the analysis of own interview is in some ways tantamount to ceding some power for the interviewee.

This was a dilemma in which I as the interviewer wrestled with and come to the decision in inviting them to participate in which they all responded indicating that they would be happy to read the final thesis. This contrasts with Kvale (2006)'s claim that this approach of liaising with the interviewees might be problematic due to emotional barriers for the interviewee to accept critical interpretations of what they have told the interviewer.

However, my agreement with the interviewees to read my final thesis is perhaps in contradiction to Aynan (2013) who mentioned that rather a few interviewers afford their interviewees the opportunity to have the final say on what to report and what interpretations to present in their studies.

My reason for this approach of taking some form of control concurred with Nunkoosing (2005) who reminded that it is often typical that the interviewers need to ensure that his or her intellectual pursuits meet the requirements of the research community rather than meeting the expectations and agreements of the interviewee.

When doing the final analysis, I as the interviewer must be acutely aware of the possibility that the interviewee might be selective in his responses and possibly subconsciously bias oneself to delivering the answers which he thought might be what the interviewer was looking for in his research.

For example, there have been several research studies confirming instances of where the interviewees have added to their stories with some form of embellishments or trying to explain what they thought were the reasons for the circumstances of the story of which they were affected (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, De Garay, 1999) This led to the assertion that the interview in general could be a reflection of the interviewee's "vision of the world formed within the hegemony of his or her culture or in opposition to his or her culture" (De Garay, 1999, p.4)

Based on these studies, it is evident that I as the interviewer need to be circumspect when recording, analysing, and finally reporting his final report (Aynan, 2013). So, although the interviewer and interviewee have one thing in common, deafness, the interviewer must be so careful when probing the information emanating from the interviewees who might have different life world experiences which could be unrelated to their hearing loss and/or personal experiences as linked to the interviewer's research aims.

Moving on from the preceding paragraphs, I need to consider the transcription of these interviews as 7 of these interviewees use BSL exclusively, so it had to be translated into written English. The other 3 are from non-signing interviewees, however 2 of them from time to time would add some signs either for clarification or to give examples of own answers.

Sutherland (2008) went on to remind of the potential pitfalls of doing the interviews in a different language, which is a visual language rather than spoken:

The important thing to bear in mind is that Sign Language is a visual language not easily recorded in writing. It has to be translated and great care taken to ensure proper representation of the views of the deaf children, avoiding any misinterpretation. This placed the researcher under a greater responsibility as her report was not written in the same language as her questioning.

All these considerations made this research unique, including the manner in which it was carried out. Progress of data collection was reviewed and monitored throughout the duration of the research to make sure that deaf children's 'voices' were accurately recorded as far as possible. The design had to be flexible enough to allow the deaf children to be 'heard' and also to allow the readers to see things from the deaf children's perspectives.

(Sutherland, 2008, p83)

In my case, it is imperative that the interviewees' voices were translated as accurately as possible – for instance there is a need to ensure that the facial expressions are not 'lost in translation' in conjunction with the signing hands, which can show different levels of the language's phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure.

Anyway, it is always important to be fully aware of any pitfalls of translating from one language to the other. Kyle (1989) started by reminding that BSL is remarkably different from English, and thus there is a danger of mistranslating because of what Kyle (1989) saw as the signs being identified as useful translation of English words but not meaning. It is still relevant and an area of research as Wakeland (2020) clearly demonstrated such as reminding that there are expressions in BSL that may not translate simply into English, i.e. not following the rules of English word order. And vice versa too for certain English words which do not have straightforward translations into BSL.

Translating into written English was time-consuming and I enlisted the help of a qualified interpreter for English and BSL to check on the accuracy and to assist with the transcribing. It supported the old saying that 'two heads are better than one' as the qualified interpreter is obviously not deaf herself and would be more fluent in the written English than BSL whereas I would be the opposite yet we both have strong

command of both languages where we would bounce off our thoughts with each other. Anyhow as it later transpired, most of the time we are very much in agreement with the translated transcripts, and we even sent each to the interviewee for final checks. Most were returned as needing no further action, with just a couple having minor corrections and amendments done.

3.7.4.2 Quantitative Data – Analysis and Interpretation

Looking at the sample of 146 participants, of which the majority did all four sets of questionnaires as well as adding comments where they thought appropriate, it was by application of SPSS where the information was analysed and explored giving out the findings which would either agree or disprove the hypothesis and research questions.

These methods would yield a range of statistical data which would enable any researcher to be able to ask specific questions and analyse data through an impartial and objective lens (Creswell, 2014). The analysis of certain data would either confirm or dispel any research hypothesis.

The application of such questionnaires either sent by emails or online and its design has become the norm in recent years and very much employed in a variety of research fields to investigate behaviours, opinions, and attitudes and analyse data statistically (Creswell, 2014).

That explained my decision to email out these questionnaires as the majority of the deaf participants live all over the UK with quite a few living abroad such as Hungary, Germany, and Australia [they were accepted as they were born in the UK with hearing loss, and they have worked in the UK for several years].

An important pro of utilising these questionnaires, which while relatively cheap to use, is that these would often yield accurate data with less bias because online questionnaires are often anonymised and completed without the presence of researchers, which could cause bias due to pressure (Atieno, 2009).

These participants were given the 'luxury' of doing these questionnaires in their own time and then usually email these back to me for analysis. Inevitably there would be several who might have made a start but not finished in one go, and then they would need reminding to get these completed, in which most of them would go onto complete but unsurprisingly some of them would disappear into the hinterland never to be heard of again. Patience is the key to the success of this quantitative method approach!

Next point of consideration is the Likert scale and according to Sachdev and Verma (2004), it would be best to apply the 5-point Likert scale as it would tend to yield a higher response rate and higher response quality than does a 7- or 9-point Likert scale, mainly because a 5-point Likert scale reduces the degree of frustration among the respondents and enables them to complete the questionnaire within a shorter period.

Inevitably there would be some cons of this approach such that it might be a challenge to confirm the credibility amongst some answers offered from certain participants according to Steber (2016). That made sense as three or four participants approached me afterwards explaining that they found some of the questions rather difficult and a bit intrusive that they found it difficult to be as open as possible in their answers, which gave rise to the possibility of some inauthentic answers, where they might not want to reveal too much.

Rodgers (2020) remarked that some participants are known to have been reluctant to give honest responses if they were unwilling to reveal certain items of information for fear of shame or so-called loss of face.

With this in consideration from this and preceding sub-section, it merely confirmed the justification of combining both the quantitative and qualitative methods leading to the mixed methods approach while wearing the hat of an ethnographic researcher.

Chapter 4: Results – SPSS findings:

4.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the analysis of the data from the questionnaire, as linked to three Research Questions from the end of Chapter 2. This chapter is structured so that in some cases the simple analyses will be followed by more complex ones as an attempt to answer each of the research question.

4.1 SPSS Data Analysis

This section details different findings using SPSS. There have been a variety of methods applied to seek any significant outcomes within certain fields as linked to any of the three scales and just a few results emerged with significant outcomes.

Within the SPSS database, I made use of the following:

- Bivariate Correlations
- Compare Means
- Descriptive Statistics
- General Linear Model – Univariate and Multivariate

Initially, I looked at the correlation between these scales and these results below confirmed that there are highly significant correlations between three scales, see the next three tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3:

Table 4.1 shows the correlation between the Rosenberg Scale and Hearing Impairment Scales:

Correlations between Rosenberg and Hearing Impairment Scales

		Rtotal	HItotal
Rtotal	Pearson Correlation	1	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	88
HItotal	Pearson Correlation	.390**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	88	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.1 showing the Correlation to be just under 0.001, thus very significant

Table 4.2 shows the correlation between the Rosenberg Scale and Self Esteem at Work Scales:

Correlations Rosenberg and Self Esteem at Work Scales

		Rtotal	SEWtotal
Rtotal	Pearson Correlation	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	94
SEWtotal	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	94	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2 showing the Correlation to be just under 0.001, thus very significant

Table 4.3 shows the correlation between the Hearing Impairment and Self Esteem at Work Scales:

Correlations between Hearing Impairment and Self Esteem at Work Scales

		SEWtotal	HItotal
SEWtotal	Pearson Correlation	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	73
HItotal	Pearson Correlation	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	73	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 showing the Correlation to be just under 0.001, thus very significant

Looking at the three tables, it is highly significant that increasing levels of hearing seems to correlate positively with increasing self-esteem at work, as well as own general self-esteem as linked to everyday life [as per the Rosenberg Scale].

Thus, with the confirmation of the significant connections between these three scales, the next step is to have a breakdown into specific factors such gender, hearing loss, age and so on, because these initial findings above are indicative of which it would seem that there is an increasing likelihood that some factors may affect the self-esteem of a typical deaf person at a predominantly hearing work environment.

To achieve this with confidence, it would need to apply multivariate analysis as an appropriate way of breaking down into specific factors as related to different scales and as a starting point the first two factors, gender, and categories [i.e. A, B & C – upbringing linked to deaf or hearing family background and preferred mode of communication] are checked for any significant links.

Table 4.4 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score between Gender and Upbringing Category:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	1017.398 ^a	5	203.480	9.436	.000
	SEWtotal	4118.941 ^b	5	823.788	3.172	.013
	Rtotal	127.120 ^c	5	25.424	1.096	.372
Intercept	HItotal	36205.319	1	36205.319	1678.950	.000
	SEWtotal	271641.490	1	271641.490	1045.912	.000
	Rtotal	57951.319	1	57951.319	2497.152	.000
Gender	HItotal	.672	1	.672	.031	.860
	SEWtotal	2.828	1	2.828	.011	.917
	Rtotal	.833	1	.833	.036	.850
Category	HItotal	829.769	2	414.885	19.239	.000
	SEWtotal	3733.222	2	1866.611	7.187	.002
	Rtotal	115.446	2	57.723	2.487	.091
Gender * Category	HItotal	47.142	2	23.571	1.093	.342
	SEWtotal	103.557	2	51.779	.199	.820
	Rtotal	20.488	2	10.244	.441	.645
Error	HItotal	1336.984	62	21.564		
	SEWtotal	16102.482	62	259.717		
	Rtotal	1438.832	62	23.207		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .432 (Adjusted R Squared = .386)

b. R Squared = .204 (Adjusted R Squared = .139)

c. R Squared = .081 (Adjusted R Squared = .007)

Table 4.4 showing that the belonging to at least one of the Categories has an effect on two of the Scales – Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work

The above Table 4.4 shows that the gender has no effect on the three different self-esteem scales but upbringing covering different communication modes and family background has an impact on different self-esteem scales as per the significant figures as highlighted in the table.

Rosenberg Scale is the only exception where the Upbringing has no effect, so the next step is to look at the Means Table to ascertain which of the three categories might have higher self-esteem in general.

Table 4.5 looks at the means and ranges for each category for the three scales for comparison purposes.

Estimates of Means and Range

Dependent Variable	Category	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HItotal	A	23.246	.806	21.635	24.856
	B	22.583	1.104	20.376	24.791
	C	32.138	1.324	29.492	34.783
SEWtotal	A	62.053	2.796	56.464	67.642
	B	69.158	3.832	61.497	76.818
	C	82.350	4.594	73.167	91.533
Rtotal	A	31.196	.836	29.525	32.866
	B	32.732	1.146	30.442	35.022
	C	34.713	1.373	31.968	37.457

Table 4.5 confirming the findings from Table 4.5 where Upbringing impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales

Table 4.5 confirmed that as found from the previous table that Rosenberg Scale showed no significant difference as the means for each of the categories are quite close such they fall within the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence intervals.

Yet the Upbringing has an effect on the other two scales and Table 4.5 clearly indicated that those from Category C has a much higher self-esteem as linked to own hearing impairment scale and self-esteem at work scale. They are deaf people who are reliant on spoken communication [usually do not know sign language at all] and were brought up by the hearing family. The other two categories, A and B covers two groups of deaf people who use sign language regardless of their family either being hearing or deaf.

Deaf people with a good command of speech to a sufficient level and ability are more confident in work environment generally, thereby more likely to be understood most of the times by their work colleagues and managers.

Table 4.6 compares two from each category for the two scales to check the significance.

Pairwise Comparisons							
Dependent Variable	(I) Category	(J) Category	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HItotal	A	B	.662	1.367	.630	-2.070	3.395
		C	-8.892*	1.550	.000	-11.989	-5.794
	B	A	-.662	1.367	.630	-3.395	2.070
		C	-9.554*	1.724	.000	-13.000	-6.108
	C	A	8.892*	1.550	.000	5.794	11.989
		B	9.554*	1.724	.000	6.108	13.000
SEWtotal	A	B	-7.105	4.744	.139	-16.588	2.378
		C	-20.297*	5.378	.000	-31.047	-9.547
	B	A	7.105	4.744	.139	-2.378	16.588
		C	-13.192*	5.982	.031	-25.151	-1.234
	C	A	20.297*	5.378	.000	9.547	31.047
		B	13.192*	5.982	.031	1.234	25.151

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Table 4.6 showing Category C being significantly higher in self-esteem in contrast to categories A & B

From the Table 4.6, Upbringing is a factor in a deaf person's self-esteem when dealing with a typically exclusively hearing work environment, thereby confirming the results from Tables 4.4 and 4.5

Then looking at different factors, via applying the multivariate analysis, gave out different results with some, but not all factors showing significant results, which are now detailed below.

I looked at the results as linked to type of aids the deaf people might use – the following statistics excluded those who do not wear or use aids. I refer to the traditional hearing aids or the more modern cochlear implants. Looking at their links to these scales, Table 4.7 showed no effect on the scales from those deaf people wearing the hearing aids.

Table 4.7 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score for the Hearing Aids wearers:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	169.064 ^a	2	84.532	2.514	.089
	SEWtotal	566.393 ^b	2	283.197	.937	.397
	Rtotal	38.416 ^c	2	19.208	.817	.446
Intercept	HItotal	4815.918	1	4815.918	143.244	.000
	SEWtotal	36975.761	1	36975.761	122.280	.000
	Rtotal	8137.960	1	8137.960	346.288	.000
WearHearingAids	HItotal	169.064	2	84.532	2.514	.089
	SEWtotal	566.393	2	283.197	.937	.397
	Rtotal	38.416	2	19.208	.817	.446
Error	HItotal	2185.318	65	33.620		
	SEWtotal	19655.030	65	302.385		
	Rtotal	1527.536	65	23.501		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .072 (Adjusted R Squared = .043)

b. R Squared = .028 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)

c. R Squared = .025 (Adjusted R Squared = -.005)

Table 4.7 showing the three green highlighted figures to be over 0.05, thus not significant

So it can be argued that wearing or not wearing hearing aids made no difference to the self-esteem so the next step is to look at cochlear implants as shown in Table 4.8

Table 4.8 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score for the Cochlear Implants wearers:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	493.562 ^a	1	493.562	17.506	.000
	SEWtotal	2917.807 ^b	1	2917.807	11.129	.001
	Rtotal	35.936 ^c	1	35.936	1.550	.218
Intercept	HItotal	36100.915	1	36100.915	1280.436	.000
	SEWtotal	269543.513	1	269543.513	1028.101	.000
	Rtotal	56622.936	1	56622.936	2442.532	.000
CochlearImplants	HItotal	493.562	1	493.562	17.506	.000
	SEWtotal	2917.807	1	2917.807	11.129	.001
	Rtotal	35.936	1	35.936	1.550	.218
Error	HItotal	1860.820	66	28.194		
	SEWtotal	17303.616	66	262.176		
	Rtotal	1530.016	66	23.182		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .210 (Adjusted R Squared = .198)

b. R Squared = .144 (Adjusted R Squared = .131)

c. R Squared = .023 (Adjusted R Squared = .008)

Table 4.8 showing that having Cochlear Implants impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales

This once again shows that Rosenberg Scale is deemed irrelevant for those having cochlear implants unlike the other two scales, and to confirm this further Table 4.9 looks at the means and ranges between those having cochlear implants and those who declines to have these.

Table 4.9 looks at the means and ranges for Cochlear Implants wearers and non-wearers for the three scales for comparison purposes.

Estimates of Means and Ranges

Dependent Variable	CochlearImplants	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HItotal	No to CI	23.060	.751	21.561	24.559
	YES to CI	29.167	1.252	26.668	31.665
SEWtotal	No to CI	63.930	2.290	59.358	68.502
	YES to CI	78.778	3.816	71.158	86.398
Rtotal	No to CI	31.880	.681	30.521	33.239
	YES to CI	33.528	1.135	31.262	35.794

Table 4.9 confirming the findings from Table 4.8 where Cochlear Implants Users impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales

Table 4.9 confirmed that as found from the previous table that Rosenberg Scale showed no significant difference as the means for both groups within the Cochlear Implants field are quite close such they fall within the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence intervals.

Moving onto the other two scales, it is evident that Cochlear Implants users have a much higher self-esteem. It is now arguable that deaf people having cochlear implants inserted inside their heads tend to have more confidence in general when at work, perhaps via some enhanced ability to maintain interaction with work colleagues and managers, via use of some of their residual hearing aided by cochlear implants.

Linked to the usage of technical aids for deaf people to enable them to perhaps hear a bit more, I looked at different levels of hearing loss to see if there are any significant factors emanating. I also took the opportunity to check against the type of school attended as well as the language they use today, and Table 4.10 showed no significant connections between these three factors and the self-esteem scales.

Table 4.10 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score between levels of hearing loss, type of school attended and language they use today as adults (It could be BSL, English or a combination of both):

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	1224.986 ^a	18	68.055	2.953	.001
	SEWtotal	6679.515 ^b	18	371.084	1.343	.204
	Rtotal	486.862 ^c	18	27.048	1.228	.277
Intercept	HItotal	10139.669	1	10139.669	439.920	.000
	SEWtotal	75123.936	1	75123.936	271.828	.000
	Rtotal	13872.829	1	13872.829	629.946	.000
LevelHearingLoss	HItotal	140.211	2	70.105	3.042	.057
	SEWtotal	1374.252	2	687.126	2.486	.094
	Rtotal	55.549	2	27.775	1.261	.292
RegLangToday	HItotal	175.354	3	58.451	2.536	.067
	SEWtotal	530.915	3	176.972	.640	.593
	Rtotal	59.925	3	19.975	.907	.445
SchoolType	HItotal	138.775	4	34.694	1.505	.215
	SEWtotal	311.165	4	77.791	.281	.889
	Rtotal	92.752	4	23.188	1.053	.390
Error	HItotal	1129.396	49	23.049		
	SEWtotal	13541.908	49	276.365		
	Rtotal	1079.090	49	22.022		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .520 (Adjusted R Squared = .344)

b. R Squared = .330 (Adjusted R Squared = .084)

c. R Squared = .311 (Adjusted R Squared = .058)

Table 4.10 showing all nine results (highlighted in green) to be over 0.05, thus not significant

The initial observation from the above table is that the school types attended or the today use of language or even levels of hearing loss have no impact on self-esteem.

However, when probing this further by looking at pairwise comparisons for some clues from the three factors as whether any specific field may have some impact on self-esteem, there are some findings, but because of the outcomes from Table 4.10, these may not be sufficiently robust, i.e. an area for potential research in future.

I then looked at the different levels of hearing loss – there are only 2 who have moderate loss, and it is not enough so focused on the relationship between severe hearing loss and profoundly hearing loss, it did not make any difference to one's self-esteem. I also looked at the type of schools attended, but then again, a huge majority of these schools rely on oral mode of communication and the other schools using either BSL or bilingualism are too small in number to provide reliable analysis.

Then the next table 4.11 compares two from 'regular language use today' for the scales to find out the existence of any significance comparison.

Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^d	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^d	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Hltotal	BSL	BSL+E	-.711 ^{a,b}	2.423	.770	-5.581	4.158
		E	-8.858 ^{a,b,*}	2.138	.000	-13.154	-4.562
		SSE	-2.211 ^{a,b}	3.033	.469	-8.307	3.884
	BSL+E	BSL	.711 ^{a,b}	2.423	.770	-4.158	5.581
		E	-8.147 ^{a,b,*}	2.721	.004	-13.616	-2.678
		SSE	-1.500 ^{a,b}	3.469	.667	-8.472	5.472
	E	BSL	8.858 ^{a,b,*}	2.138	.000	4.562	13.154
		BSL+E	8.147 ^{a,b,*}	2.721	.004	2.678	13.616
		SSE	6.647 ^{a,b,*}	3.277	.048	.062	13.231
	SSE	BSL	2.211 ^{a,b}	3.033	.469	-3.884	8.307
		BSL+E	1.500 ^{a,b}	3.469	.667	-5.472	8.472
		E	-6.647 ^{a,b,*}	3.277	.048	-13.231	-.062
SEWtotal	BSL	BSL+E	-10.902 ^{a,b}	8.391	.200	-27.764	5.959
		E	-16.833 ^{a,b,*}	7.403	.027	-31.710	-1.957
		SSE	-5.869 ^{a,b}	10.503	.579	-26.976	15.238
	BSL+E	BSL	10.902 ^{a,b}	8.391	.200	-5.959	27.764
		E	-5.931 ^{a,b}	9.424	.532	-24.869	13.006
		SSE	5.033 ^{a,b}	12.014	.677	-19.109	29.175
	E	BSL	16.833 ^{a,b,*}	7.403	.027	1.957	31.710
		BSL+E	5.931 ^{a,b}	9.424	.532	-13.006	24.869
		SSE	10.964 ^{a,b}	11.346	.339	-11.836	33.764
	SSE	BSL	5.869 ^{a,b}	10.503	.579	-15.238	26.976
		BSL+E	-5.033 ^{a,b}	12.014	.677	-29.175	19.109
		E	-10.964 ^{a,b}	11.346	.339	-33.764	11.836
Rtotal	BSL	BSL+E	1.701 ^{a,b}	2.369	.476	-3.059	6.460
		E	-2.717 ^{a,b}	2.090	.200	-6.917	1.482

	SSE	2.301 ^{a,b}	2.965	.442	-3.658	8.259
BSL+E	BSL	-1.701 ^{a,b}	2.369	.476	-6.460	3.059
	E	-4.418 ^{a,b}	2.660	.103	-9.764	.928
	SSE	.600 ^{a,b}	3.391	.860	-6.215	7.415
E	BSL	2.717 ^{a,b}	2.090	.200	-1.482	6.917
	BSL+E	4.418 ^{a,b}	2.660	.103	-.928	9.764
	SSE	5.018 ^{a,b}	3.203	.124	-1.418	11.454
SSE	BSL	-2.301 ^{a,b}	2.965	.442	-8.259	3.658
	BSL+E	-.600 ^{a,b}	3.391	.860	-7.415	6.215
	E	-5.018 ^{a,b}	3.203	.124	-11.454	1.418

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).

b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

d. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Table 4.11 showing deaf people who uses spoken English having significantly higher self-esteem in contrast to other deaf people who uses BSL in everyday life

Looking in particular on the relationship between those using BSL and those using English [*some using a combination of both, or Signed Supported English are disregarded as the numbers are too low*], it became clear that those who use English in their current everyday life has a higher self-esteem than those who use BSL. This very much links to the above tables which showed that the deaf people who are reliant on spoken communication and also likely to have cochlear implants also have better self-confidence in dealing with everyday challenges thrown at them from the work environment.

However, caution is needed in not to read too much into this Table 4.11 as while it is an interesting and useful outcome, it is an area which needs further exploration using a much larger sample data to confirm the significance of these results via multivariate analysis.

I also looked at the next factor which has no bearing on one's self-esteem and that is the 'highest qualification achieved'

Table 4.12 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score for the Highest Level of Qualification:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	428.641 ^a	9	47.627	1.434	.195
	SEWtotal	4347.808 ^b	9	483.090	1.765	.095
	Rtotal	328.833 ^c	9	36.537	1.713	.107
Intercept	HItotal	16876.443	1	16876.443	508.289	.000
	SEWtotal	121461.000	1	121461.000	443.802	.000
	Rtotal	28659.675	1	28659.675	1343.655	.000
HighestLevelQual	HItotal	428.641	9	47.627	1.434	.195
	SEWtotal	4347.808	9	483.090	1.765	.095
	Rtotal	328.833	9	36.537	1.713	.107
Error	HItotal	1925.741	58	33.202		
	SEWtotal	15873.615	58	273.683		
	Rtotal	1237.119	58	21.330		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .182 (Adjusted R Squared = .055)

b. R Squared = .215 (Adjusted R Squared = .093)

c. R Squared = .210 (Adjusted R Squared = .087)

Table 4.12 showing the three green highlighted figures to be over 0.05, thus not significant

This is perhaps rather surprising, but the above table clearly illustrated the finding that the different levels of qualifications (ranging from nil all the way up to postgraduate level) made no difference to all the self-esteem scales so the next step is to consider the Annual Income brackets as it is anecdotally acknowledged that people who earn more money would have higher self-esteem than those who earn less.

Table 4.13 shows the table of correlation between Annual Income and three scales using Multivariate Analysis:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	515.110 ^a	5	103.022	3.473	.008
	SEWtotal	7368.289 ^b	5	1473.658	7.109	.000
	Rtotal	239.661 ^c	5	47.932	2.241	.061
Intercept	HItotal	30785.411	1	30785.411	1037.745	.000
	SEWtotal	233888.266	1	233888.266	1128.213	.000
	Rtotal	52855.013	1	52855.013	2470.808	.000
Annual Income	HItotal	515.110	5	103.022	3.473	.008
	SEWtotal	7368.289	5	1473.658	7.109	.000
	Rtotal	239.661	5	47.932	2.241	.061
Error	HItotal	1839.272	62	29.666		
	SEWtotal	12853.133	62	207.309		
	Rtotal	1326.291	62	21.392		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			

a. R Squared = .219 (Adjusted R Squared = .156)

b. R Squared = .364 (Adjusted R Squared = .313)

c. R Squared = .153 (Adjusted R Squared = .085)

Table 4.13 showing that Annual Income impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales, but not the Rosenberg Scale

An important point to note that by using Multivariate Analysis, once again Rosenberg Scale is not significant as linked to Annual Income. While disregarding Rosenberg Scale, the next step is to probe whether the higher one earns, the better self-esteem one would have; so the next thing to do is to find the means and ranges of each income bracket for confirmation.

Table 4.14 looks at the means and ranges for the Annual Income brackets with focus on Hearing Impairment and Self Esteem at Work scales for comparison purposes.

Estimates of Means and Ranges

Dependent Variable	AnnualIncome	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HItotal		24.167	3.145	17.881	30.453
	<15k	23.733	1.406	20.922	26.545
	>50k	31.150	1.722	27.707	34.593
	15-25k	22.500	1.406	19.689	25.311
	25-35k	24.083	1.572	20.940	27.226
	35-50k	23.962	1.511	20.942	26.981
	SEWtotal		66.500	8.313	49.883
	<15k	60.233	3.718	52.802	67.665
	>50k	87.700	4.553	78.598	96.802
	15-25k	60.900	3.718	53.469	68.331
	25-35k	60.000	4.156	51.691	68.309
	35-50k	77.000	3.993	69.017	84.983

Table 4.14 showing that the highest income bracket impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales

Table 4.15 looks at the relationship between annual income brackets for the two scales

Pairwise Comparisons							
Dependent Variable	(I) AnnualIncome	(J) AnnualIncome	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Hltotal		<15k	.433	3.445	.900	-6.453	7.319
		>50k	-6.983	3.585	.056	-14.150	.184
		15-25k	1.667	3.445	.630	-5.219	8.553
		25-35k	.083	3.516	.981	-6.945	7.111
		35-50k	.205	3.489	.953	-6.769	7.179
	<15k		-.433	3.445	.900	-7.319	6.453
	<15k	>50k	-7.417*	2.224	.001	-11.862	-2.972
	<15k	15-25k	1.233	1.989	.537	-2.742	5.209
	<15k	25-35k	-.350	2.109	.869	-4.567	3.867
	<15k	35-50k	-.228	2.064	.912	-4.354	3.897
	>50k		6.983	3.585	.056	-.184	14.150
	>50k	<15k	7.417*	2.224	.001	2.972	11.862
	>50k	15-25k	8.650*	2.224	.000	4.205	13.095
	>50k	25-35k	7.067*	2.332	.004	2.405	11.728
	>50k	35-50k	7.188*	2.291	.003	2.609	11.768
	15-25k		-1.667	3.445	.630	-8.553	5.219
	15-25k	<15k	-1.233	1.989	.537	-5.209	2.742
	15-25k	>50k	-8.650*	2.224	.000	-13.095	-4.205
	15-25k	25-35k	-1.583	2.109	.456	-5.800	2.633
	15-25k	35-50k	-1.462	2.064	.482	-5.587	2.664
	25-35k		-.083	3.516	.981	-7.111	6.945
	25-35k	<15k	.350	2.109	.869	-3.867	4.567
	25-35k	>50k	-7.067*	2.332	.004	-11.728	-2.405
	25-35k	15-25k	1.583	2.109	.456	-2.633	5.800
	25-35k	35-50k	.122	2.180	.956	-4.237	4.480
	35-50k		-.205	3.489	.953	-7.179	6.769
	35-50k	<15k	.228	2.064	.912	-3.897	4.354

	>50k	-7.188*	2.291	.003	-11.768	-2.609
	15-25k	1.462	2.064	.482	-2.664	5.587
	25-35k	-.122	2.180	.956	-4.480	4.237
SEWtotal	<15k	6.267	9.106	.494	-11.936	24.470
	>50k	-21.200*	9.478	.029	-40.146	-2.254
	15-25k	5.600	9.106	.541	-12.603	23.803
	25-35k	6.500	9.294	.487	-12.078	25.078
	35-50k	-10.500	9.222	.259	-28.935	7.935
<15k		-6.267	9.106	.494	-24.470	11.936
	>50k	-27.467*	5.878	.000	-39.217	-15.717
	15-25k	-.667	5.257	.900	-11.176	9.843
	25-35k	.233	5.576	.967	-10.914	11.380
	35-50k	-16.767*	5.456	.003	-27.673	-5.860
>50k		21.200*	9.478	.029	2.254	40.146
	<15k	27.467*	5.878	.000	15.717	39.217
	15-25k	26.800*	5.878	.000	15.050	38.550
	25-35k	27.700*	6.165	.000	15.376	40.024
	35-50k	10.700	6.056	.082	-1.406	22.806
15-25k		-5.600	9.106	.541	-23.803	12.603
	<15k	.667	5.257	.900	-9.843	11.176
	>50k	-26.800*	5.878	.000	-38.550	-15.050
	25-35k	.900	5.576	.872	-10.247	12.047
	35-50k	-16.100*	5.456	.004	-27.006	-5.194
25-35k		-6.500	9.294	.487	-25.078	12.078
	<15k	-.233	5.576	.967	-11.380	10.914
	>50k	-27.700*	6.165	.000	-40.024	-15.376
	15-25k	-.900	5.576	.872	-12.047	10.247
	35-50k	-17.000*	5.764	.004	-28.522	-5.478
35-50k		10.500	9.222	.259	-7.935	28.935
	<15k	16.767*	5.456	.003	5.860	27.673
	>50k	-10.700	6.056	.082	-22.806	1.406
	15-25k	16.100*	5.456	.004	5.194	27.006
	25-35k	17.000*	5.764	.004	5.478	28.522
	35-50k	-2.314	1.852	.216	-6.015	1.387

35-50k	.064	2.962	.983	-5.858	5.986
<15k	4.031*	1.753	.025	.527	7.534
>50k	-1.669	1.945	.394	-5.558	2.220
15-25k	1.631	1.753	.356	-1.873	5.134
25-35k	2.314	1.852	.216	-1.387	6.015

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Table 4.15 confirming the findings from Table 4.14 as showing that the highest income bracket impacts on Hearing Impairment and Self-Esteem at Work Scales

Clearly this is no surprise from tables 4.14 and 4.15 which demonstrates that this is true for the deaf population just as it is for hearing people, thus the higher one earns, the higher self-esteem one would typically have. Those earning over £50k per year have higher levels of self-esteem in general and also at work than those earning less.

Lastly, looking at the age factor and the statistics from Table 4.16 shows that age has no effect on one's self-esteem in general.

Table 4.16 shows the results of a multivariate analysis of variance of Hearing impairment score, self-esteem at work score and Rosenberg self-esteem score for the Age ranges:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	HItotal	119.339 ^a	3	39.780	1.139	.340
	Rtotal	36.968 ^b	3	12.323	.516	.673
	SEWtotal	900.454 ^c	3	300.151	.994	.401
Intercept	HItotal	37425.941	1	37425.941	1071.684	.000
	Rtotal	62362.511	1	62362.511	2610.361	.000
	SEWtotal	275800.834	1	275800.834	913.580	.000
Age	HItotal	119.339	3	39.780	1.139	.340
	Rtotal	36.968	3	12.323	.516	.673
	SEWtotal	900.454	3	300.151	.994	.401
Error	HItotal	2235.043	64	34.923		
	Rtotal	1528.984	64	23.890		
	SEWtotal	19320.968	64	301.890		
Total	HItotal	43761.500	68			
	Rtotal	72580.750	68			
	SEWtotal	333362.750	68			
Corrected Total	HItotal	2354.382	67			
	Rtotal	1565.952	67			
	SEWtotal	20221.423	67			

a. R Squared = .051 (Adjusted R Squared = .006)

b. R Squared = .024 (Adjusted R Squared = -.022)

c. R Squared = .045 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

Table 4.16 showing the three green highlighted figures to be over 0.05, thus not significant

4.2 Summary of the findings

Of the three scales, Rosenberg Scale is the only one which does not have a significant link to the deaf people's self-esteem via a different set of factors, so could perhaps be safely disregarded when the results are discussed within Chapter 8, whereas for some of the factors as listed below the Hearing Impairment Scale and Self Esteem at Work Scale are significant i.e. certain deaf people would have

different levels of self-esteem as linked to own hearing loss and ditto as linked to own work environment. Summarising thus, this data analysis would demonstrate thus:

- General self-esteem and self-esteem at work are highly correlated with each other and with hearing impairment
- Upbringing category impacts on self-esteem at work
- Wearing cochlear implants affects positively on self-esteem generally and at work
- Income at a high level improves self-esteem generally and self-esteem at work
- Using spoken English has a seemingly positive effect on self-esteem at work

The following list of factors having shown no significant effect on self-esteem are:

- Gender
- Levels of using Hearing Aids
- Levels of hearing loss
- Type of school attended with its communication modes
- Highest Qualification achieved
- Age

It will be discussed in detail within Chapter 8, but just to summarise this: it seems a deaf person who was brought up in a fully hearing family and not having exposure to or learnt sign language would have higher self-esteem and thus confidence in the hearing work environment. He would then continue to be speaking in English. This would be in addition to a likelihood that the said deaf person would already have implanted the cochlear implants and be earning a good income.

Chapter 5: Results - NVivo findings → First Research Question:

5.0 Introduction

The analysis of the data overall for this and the following two more chapters is linked to the three Research Questions which are:

- 1) How Deaf Identity as is linked to one's self-esteem relevant in attaining successful employment in the hearing environment?
- 2) How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?
- 3) What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

This previous chapter already looked at the results based on the analysis of the questionnaires using SPSS which was as per the quantitative method. This chapter specifically looks at the results from the analysis of the interview transcripts using NVivo, i.e., applying the qualitative method.

However, this Chapter looks at the data as linked to the first Research Question only as linked to the themes which will be explored and analysed in depth based on the comments gleaned from the interviews of 10 selected participants.

The other two Research Questions will be commented upon within Chapters 6 and 7.

5.1 Definition of the categorisation of each interviewee

From the data of 146 deaf and hard of hearing participants, just ten were selected in which at least any three of them need to fit in any one of the four categories as below:

- d) Category A: Deaf from non-deaf parents, who would use BSL as preferred communication mode.
- e) Category B: Deaf from Deaf parents, who would use BSL as preferred communication mode.
- f) Category C: Deaf who would use speech [i.e., spoken English] as preferred communication mode.
- g) Category D: Gender split [there were 3 females and 7 males]

The table below shows how each interviewee is allocated the code number and it has also been decided to use the gender as part of the equation partly because the main focus of this research is whether deafness has an impact on their career prospects – plenty will already have been written on the impact of gender on maintaining their jobs – brief explanation on this will be looked at within a section in the next chapter.

Table 5.1 Code number allocation for each interviewee according to gender and category

Interviewee	Gender	Age range	Mode of communication	Family deaf or hearing	Category	Code number
1	Male	30s	BSL	Hearing	A	1MA
2	Female	60s	BSL	Deaf	B	2FB
3	Male	50s	Oral	Hearing	C	3MC
4	Female	40s	BSL	Deaf	B	4FB
5	Male	40s	Oral	Hearing	C	5MC
6	Male	50s	BSL	Hearing	A	6MA
7	Male	40s	Oral	Hearing	C	7MC
8	Male	50s	BSL	Hearing	A	8MA
9	Male	40s	BSL	Deaf	B	9MB
10	Female	30s	BSL	Hearing	A	10FA

For instance, an interviewee with code 1MA would be the first interviewee who is Male and fits into category A – i.e. signing Deaf person from a hearing family background. The second one on the list with the code 2FB would be a female fitting into category B – i.e. a signing Deaf female from a deaf family background, and etc.

5.1.1 Details of each interviewee

Interviewee #1MA is a male from the East Midlands in his late 30s and uses BSL regularly and comes from a hearing family but has a younger Deaf sister. He went to a school for the deaf which allows the use of sign language. Recently widowed, his wife was also Deaf, and he has worked in a skilled manual job for about 2 decades. Despite his preference for signing, he wears hearing aids as he explained it can be useful for when trying to communicate with hearing colleagues [as well as his hearing son, who though can also communicate via signing] and for taking note of some background noise if loud.

Interviewee #2FB is a female from Berkshire in her mid-60s and uses BSL all her life as her parents were Deaf. She went to a school for the deaf which did not allow the use of sign language and had worked in a variety of jobs over the 4 decades stopping for a few years to have children. She is now working part-time and on a freelance basis. She has never worn hearing aids claiming to be quite profoundly deaf. She also has mild visual impairment which was noted when she was a young lady.

Interviewee #3MC is a male in his mid-50s from the London area and uses speech all his life, having come from hearing parentage as well as having attended the first two schools which were hearing schools. For the last 4 years or so of his education he attended a school for the deaf, which advocated

oral methods of communication. For some 30-odd years he worked in a variety of jobs mainly in the Civil Service. While he does not sign, he is aware of sign language and knows some basic fingerspelling and an odd sign or two. He uses hearing aids to communicate and admits to being not very good in lip-reading.

Interviewee #4FB is a female in her early 40s originally from the West Midlands but recently moved down south [due to job changes and children's schooling]. She comes from a Deaf family and thus has been using BSL all her life and her husband is deaf, and two of her 3 children are deaf. She went to schools for the deaf which did not allow for the use of sign language. She has been working mainly in social work and welfare jobs of different levels over the past 2 decades with usual maternity breaks in between. She does not wear hearing aids 'if she can help it' [her words].

Interviewee #5MC is a male in his mid-40s from Surrey and uses speech. He has hearing parents and siblings and attended hearing schools only which included the local prestigious grammar school. He has worked within the Civil Service for about 20 years gaining a few promotions before 'hitting the glass ceiling due to deafness' [his words]. He has recently changed to a part-time support as education support – but plans to return to a similar job within or similar to the Civil Service. He is married to a hearing woman and has children. He wears hearing aids and adds he learnt sign language up to Level 3 just for interest but rarely meets deaf people.

Interviewee #6MA is a male in his late 50s from London who is profoundly deaf who uses BSL but is a good lip-reader – which he says is a legacy from having hearing parents as well as having attended schools for the deaf which banned the use of sign language. His family is a comparatively high profile such that a couple of them went on to become Conservative MPs, and he also tried and succeeded in becoming a LibDem councillor for two non-consecutive terms and even stood for Parliament in 2019 but to no avail. He has had a few jobs as CEO – the latest being for a small charity in London. He is married to a deaf woman and has a deaf child.

Interviewee #7MC is a male in his early 40s and uses speech. From the West London area, he has hearing parents and siblings and attended hearing schools before going onto Cambridge University. He has worked for a magazine publishing company for almost 2 decades. He has a long-term relationship with a hearing woman who incidentally knows some sign language while he himself cannot sign. He wears hearing aids and sometimes uses lip-reading to assist in communication.

Interviewee #8MA is a male in his late 50s from Kent, who indicated in the interview that he would turn 60 in a matter of months and retire without hesitation and moving to a European country with his deaf

wife who came from there. He is severely deaf and always wears hearing aids as he felt it is important to try communicating with hearing people. He is a BSL user and comes from a hearing family which he admits to not seeing so much of them these days. He attended schools for the deaf which also banned the use of sign language. He has worked in variety of accounting posts within NHS for almost 25 years having worked in previous and un-related jobs in the past.

Interviewee #9MB is a male in his early 40s who is severely deaf, wears hearing aids but is a BSL user all his life as he comes from a deaf family [including a deaf sibling]. From Surrey himself, he is married to a deaf woman and has hearing children. He attended various schools for the deaf which uses oralist methods of communication. He has worked in the Government-related jobs doing IT jobs ever since he left school. He has had a few promotions in his career.

Interviewee #10FA is a deaf female from Berkshire in her mid-30s with a deaf husband and two young children. She comes from a hearing family and has attended mainstream school and then a boarding school for the deaf which uses oral communication. She is the first in her family to have university education and has had several high-pressure jobs in the past decade in between having two maternity leave periods. While successful herself, she reminded that she had 'to fire on all cylinders to prove herself to hearing colleagues to justify promotion for herself'

5.2 Data Analysis of the 10 interviews using NVivo

5.2.0 Introduction:

As explained in the methodology chapter, these interviews were filmed and then transcribed. These were then sent to each interviewee to ensure that the transcription was as accurate as possible, and to give them the option to delete any part which they might no longer wish to share with the researcher as well as to change their mind entirely about their participation in the interviews. As it transpired, all were satisfied with the transcripts with just a few minor corrections in general.

The data was carefully analysed as per the research questions and several themes emerged:

- a) General communication
- b) Employment → several sub-themes
- c) Family background and support
- d) Wellbeing and mental health issues
- e) School Experiences
- f) Further/High Education Experiences
- g) Deaf Identity – relevancy or otherwise

From the seven key themes, it can be seen that there are overlaps as linked to the three main Research Questions, for instance themes (a), (b), & (g) could inform the findings linked to the first Research Question. Then for the second Research Question, one might look at the relationships between these themes (b), (e) & (f); and then for the third one, these themes (c), (d) & (g) likely apply.

Regarding the theme (b) Employment, there are several sub-themes which emerged, and there are 6 as gleaned from these interviews, thus:

- Attitudes
- Gaining jobs
- Job interviews
- Motivation
- Promotion
- Training opportunities

Before exploring in depth these themes, for this section I feel necessary to incorporate their quotations to acquire in-depth understanding behind each deaf participant involved.

Additionally for this chapter looking at the first research question, it became apparent from the interviews that three of the above sub-themes are prevalent and these are:

- Attitudes
- Motivation
- Promotion

These will be explored in depth in the sub-sections after the section 5.2.1.2 within this chapter. However, Weiner-Levy and Popper-Giveon (2013) have used the term 'dark matter' (p.2177) to describe those aspects of qualitative research that are suppressed during the data analysis and writing phase.

From the abundance of material researchers collect, analyse, and write about, only a small percentage does reach the 'final' audience (Weiner-Levy and Popper-Giveon 2013).

Despite that, I have decided not to include the full ten narratives into the Appendices, because the deaf community being small as it is, there is a possibility, though minor, a reader either from deaf community or working with the deaf, might recognise the interviewee. By using the relevant parts of the full interview transcriptions, I could still provide a fuller insight into their life experiences, be these positive and negative. The narrative selections are aimed at covering different aspects of the deaf persons' lives and are amongst the most emotive reflections.

These interviews will somewhat and somehow endeavour to show their inner thoughts which would come out when talking to people about their lives and the moments that have defined their stories. I have tried to ensure that this procedure is strictly adhered to and thus rigorous in the semi-interview structure style so that it allows a deep immersion in the participants' interviews and transcripts, before (re)constructing their narratives to highlight the most pertinent aspects of their accounts.

It is essential as the aim is to try and create an image of how the interviewees see and understand their own identities whether it be linked to Deaf identity or not plus showing to some extent on how they would see themselves in a typical hearing work environment, with indication of how they deal with incidental circumstances as these might occur at workplace.

I have broken down this discussion chapter thematically in relation to the research questions.

In this chapter I focus on how the interviewees' identities can be conceptualised and the complexity of their negotiations around their 'deafness' and their everyday work experiences. Therefore, the sections represent different 'identity themes' that have emerged from the narratives. The themes are general and cut across all the participants' narratives.

On a broader level, these are linked back to their own deafness and by implication disability (or rather the perceived inability to do the tasks in the work environment that a hearing person would be expected to be able to undertake) in the eyes of the general society has shaped such experiences (or not).

The following sub-sections will aim to demonstrate the processual nature of identities, viewed through an interactionist lens, and the multiplicity of these identities. I have separated the themes in this way to emphasise the significance of the women's stories and highlight how they relate to various theoretical concepts. These chapters will highlight the contested nature of identities and the complexity of disability.

It goes without saying that perhaps due to vastly different upbringing of each as well as the preferred communication mode in their everyday life, that these interview transcripts are consequently quite different for all of them. Thus, I felt that it is necessary to become aware of the need not to simplistically labelling them altogether as one big grouping, as each of their experiences is unique. However, this grouping is a heuristic tool to develop the discussion around such themes.

That is the reason for my original intention of grouping these ten interviewees into 4 separate categories to highlight the mix of any similarities and differences in their stories, to help draw out the nuances and the complexities of their unique experiences.

5.2.1 First Research Question

As stated in 5.2.0, in-depth analysis and consideration will be applied to (a) General Communication (b) Employment and (g) Deaf Identity.

5.2.1.1 General Communication

This section looks at how deaf employees communicate with others at work and demonstrates what challenges were to be had by themselves either with their peers or superiors.

Interviewee #1MA stated:

'I also realised that sometimes I needed to be proactive to make someone understand me if I thought they were struggling. I would make the first move to do that.'

It seemed that to communicate with someone is an everyday challenge especially in making himself understood. He felt that if he did not do anything about this, he would be virtually ignored in that no one would make an effort in communicating with him often due to lack of knowledge on how best to communicate with a deaf person in general.

Interviewee #10FA remarked in her experience it was always challenging to try understanding her colleagues and she felt she would understand about 70% of the time in the same firm that she has already been working there for almost 10 years now:

'Most of the time I communicated orally through lipreading. Sometimes I would ask them to repeat it first but if after several times, I still didn't get it, we found it was quicker to just write it down. Almost as a last resort.'

She acknowledged that even after working several years in the same firm, there would always be colleagues who would still not understand her even if she might have repeated or paraphrased what she was trying to say. She then added that in lieu of verbal communication, she was more comfortable using other means of communication, such as emailing:

'I am reliant on email to communicate with colleagues. I email and then must wait for a response. If I was hearing, I could just pick up the phone and get an answer in 5 minutes.'

She made it sound rather rueful that even though she was successful in her career gaining promotion at times, she made it clear we live in a 'fast world' such that we all want things 'yesterday' so it was frustrating for her to have to wait for a response when making a simple phone call would do the trick. She then added the following:

'When I go into the office, I can see all the hearing people having their own conversations. I cannot hear everything. When they arrive in the morning, they can have discussions. All I can do is say a brief hello.'

While not exactly saying she was isolated at her work, she wanted to indicate the feeling of being left out of the general office conversation.

On the other hand, Interviewee #6MA argued that it would depend on the prior knowledge of deaf awareness on the colleague's part as the key to the ease or otherwise of communication:

'It depends on the individual. If I know they have Deaf Awareness, if they are flexible and we have a good rapport I can often communicate through speech. Some of my colleagues can communicate with me easily. At other times I rely on an interpreter.'

Yet he acknowledged that just like for Interviewee #10FA, there would be some colleagues who would not understand him, so he solved the problem by using an interpreter to facilitate the dialogue especially that he holds senior positions.

Intriguingly he felt that it would help to have a good communication skill for himself in order to progress in his career and to have good inner satisfaction within himself in spite of everyday challenges of working in the hearing environment, especially that as he is the CEO, he notes being at the top is quite lonely, but even more so when he is deaf and all other employees are hearing, thus his comment:

'Communication skills are important for job satisfaction. For the smooth operation of things, particularly in management then definitely, you need to bring in an interpreter. If you don't do that, how can you build a rapport with colleagues?'

Looking at the non-signing deaf people and their views on communication, Interviewee 3MC for instance mentioned that it is important to maintain relatively 'low profile' in a busy working environment and things would be fine communication-wise:

'I pretended I was at boarding school. The trick is you don't raise your head above the parapet because once you do that and you have communication issues, they are not going to help you. They freeze you out. That's how I managed it for years and years.'

It was an interesting analogy linking to boarding school experiences, making it sound as if working in a firm is a natural extension of the boarding school – thereby placing himself quite low in the hierarchical structure. He acknowledged he gradually became less and less ambitious over the years and cited communication challenges as partly the reason for not seeking to enhance his career prospects.

'We all have to face limits because communication is difficult. We are not hearing.'

Interviewee #5MC has had similar experiences as that for #10FA regarding feeling a bit left out:

'I didn't feel comfortable with communication. I was okay with the staff who sat either side of me but in terms of conversations happening in another part of the office, I had no idea what was going on so I couldn't interact. I felt left out.'

On top of that, while having good qualification in having attended a prestigious secondary school as well as gaining a university degree, he argued that he did not find easy gaining promotion due to his communication skill which was not quite at the level of his hearing contemporaries even though he has reasonably good speech and wears hearing aids:

'I think skill links to communication. Managers want good communication skills. I have suffered as a result of that. My experience shows the importance of communication skills. I have knowledge and a good attitude, but I still hit the glass ceiling. I couldn't be promoted beyond it. If I had the necessary skill, I would have been promoted. The skills I lacked were communication.'

This preceding paragraph was remarkable in the fact he repeatedly used the word 'communication' – 4 times in total – in a very short space of time. He sees it as a drawback to his career aspirations, regardless of his good qualifications.

However, it is a different story for Interviewee #7MC as he added his thoughts about the challenges of using telephone as he claimed that most of the deaf people normally cannot hear on the phone. He could hear a bit with the support of hearing aids but is frustrated by the lack of understanding on the part of colleagues on his occasional reluctance to speak on the phone, explaining:

'One thing that can cause stress sometimes is using the telephone. I can use the telephone but only if it is very quiet and there is no noise, and only if there is no noise at the end of the person I am speaking to, and they don't have a strong accent. So, it can be difficult.'

He then recounted an anecdote about someone calling him on the phone after having received an initial email from him:

'This happened once or twice. They receive the email and instead of emailing back, they phone me. I would get phone calls about twice a year and I would think, who is that? I would answer it and the receptionist would tell me there is someone calling for you. Because it happened so rarely, I would find myself talking to the photographer and I would struggle to understand what they are saying. I would tend to try my best and then normally I would email them back after the call to say please email.'

He added that it could be because he could speak clear enough and had been rather discreet about his hearing loss such that he is expected to take calls just like his colleagues. Apart from that he does not have to communicate so much with colleagues and on top of this he could lip-read to assist with communication.

It is perhaps a universal issue as seen by some of the comments from those who have deaf family background. An example is from an interviewee #2FB, who recounted her experience of being the only deaf person in a firm:

'That office had about 40 hearing staff in one open plan room. It was difficult for me to build relationships because it was hard to communicate. At break times everyone would be together, talking to each other and I would feel left out because I couldn't follow the conversation. Sometimes someone would come over and tell me what the conversation was about, but they would normally give me just one word, the topic, and that was it.'

She emphasised that a colleague who came to her and told her one word which was the topic of the whole conversation – arguing that it was still pointless. Things were slightly better at a second job as she stated thus:

'As I was walking around the office, if there was anyone who couldn't sign, they would still communicate through clear lip pattern and gesture such as 'thumbs up' so we could briefly converse and greet each other. I accepted that because I had other colleagues who I could have a proper conversation with. Compared to my previous job it was such an improvement because in the past I couldn't communicate at all, which led to frustration.'

She stated that communication issue is an age-old problem as she checked with her parents about this, and they confirmed that it is like history repeating itself and one must 'grin and bear' it.

'When I went home and discussed that with my parents, they told me they had the same problems, so I just had to accept it as a part of life.'

It is just as the interviewee #9MB reflected upon on the effective tactics of communication and why he applied this approach:

'Growing up, I saw how my parents and grandparents communicated with the hearing world, using written English when necessary. That impacted me and I realised that I could apply similar strategies in the workplace. I also realised that some hearing people were indifferent to me, but that is just normal, that is what happens in life. Work is most important not what others think of me.'

Overall, it is a common thread throughout that communication is a challenge within the work environment such that each must almost always have a back-up plan in case of inevitable communication breakdown or misunderstandings. Some would find it tiring and retreat into a shell whereas the others usually in a more responsible position would persevere and try all ways to get oneself heard or at least understood by the others.

5.2.1.2 Employment

In relation to employment, as linked to the first research question, sub-themes emerged which are as follows:

- Attitude
- Motivation
- Promotion

The following is from the comments gleaned during the interviews.

5.2.1.2.1 Employment → Attitude

Before looking at the comments, it might be argued that each one's understanding of attitude might slightly vary.

Attitude is defined as the way that you think and feel about somebody or something. Attitude also means the way that you behave towards somebody or something that shows how you think and feel (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2020)

Eagly and Chaikin (1993) applied psychological insight on the word 'attitude' stating that attitude is a form of psychological tendency which became apparent from a person holding a particular attitude which might be expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some level of like or dislike. It needs not be a rational reason for liking or disliking. Eagly and Chaikin (2007) considered two forms of attitude – implicit and explicit – and from further research, they came to the same conclusion, that their 1993 insight on the word 'attitude' remained valid.

Looking at explicit and implicit attitudes, it seems that from some of the interviewees' comments below it is sometimes the case that the employer or colleague might not realise that his attitude(s) would come across as negative and this impact on the interviewee's confidence and/or motivation within the workplace.

According to Greenwald and Banaji (1995) it is probably not the fault of the person who would not recognise their own attitudes (not necessarily negative) could impact on other people. They stated that implicit attitudes are therefore unconscious and could come from inner values developed over the years as this person would subconsciously acquire.

Furthermore, people do change their attitudes over time for better or worse. Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler (2000) explained that each person might have dual attitudes, by which people may have an implicit attitude and an explicit attitude toward the same attitude object.

Wilson et al (2000) believed that by acquiring new information a person often, but not always would change an existing attitude, creating a new explicit attitude. Yet, the prior attitude may continue to be present, but often in implicit form. This approach would therefore indicate that the attitudinal expressions are often unstable, which would explain the change of attitude of an employer or colleague over time perhaps via a deaf person proving his worth in employment justifying the original decision to offer employment to the deaf person in lieu of a typical hearing job applicant, for instance.

Thus, attitude is an ever-changing behavioural mode displayed by each person in any given situation. It does not just apply to hearing staff but also the deaf staff as illustrated below in the first instance.

Interviewee #1MA explained with regard to attitude in workplace:

'Knowledge and skill are useful, but attitude is very important in a team to ensure that everyone feels equally valued.'

Interviewee #2FB commented on the importance of attitude to own wellbeing, claiming that:

'Some people have fantastic knowledge and great skills but a terrible attitude. You cannot do anything about that. If someone has average skills but a wonderful attitude, you can work with them.'

Interviewee #7MC who is reliant on speech rather than sign language acknowledged that attitude is a key factor in doing well in his job, though he has not changed jobs in almost two decades, did not gain a meaningful promotion during his time there. He added:

'If you don't have the right attitude, it makes everything else difficult.'

Interviewee #10FA argued that she thought a hearing person still needs to have a good attitude, such that they would need to be accepting of deaf people and believe that deaf people can do the same as them, adding:

'They believe that being deaf limits your promotion opportunities. They say, "Wow, you are Deaf, but that hasn't stopped you from doing your job". That is what they would say to my face but without being too direct about their underlying thought.'

She also commented that occasionally, in her workplace there are some people who did not want to talk to her due to her deafness and so approached her colleague instead, which she said did happen often.

Interviewee #5MC commented this:

'Their attitudes toward me varied. Many of them did not know how to deal with a deaf person, usually because it was the first time, they had met one [. . .] Some of them had worked there for a long time. It was difficult to build a rapport with them.'

Interviewee #6MA who of all interviewees is of the highest-ranking profession in being the CEO of a charity commented that:

'Resilience to me means how I, as a Deaf person overcome the challenges I face, such as discrimination, negative attitudes and knowing how to adjust your behaviour accordingly.'

It seemed that while acknowledging the negative attitudes from the hearing peers in workplace, he argued that Deaf people must be resilient. This is an argument from a comparatively successful career person – this would bring up the critical question in whether resilience is perhaps lacking in most deaf people within the non-deaf work environment.

Resilience is a characteristic trait, but to define this might be a challenge as Wiig et al (2020) explained citing that there are many different theories leading to vastly different definitions of resilience. Wiig and Fahlbruch (2019) did a review of the existing literature and found that such definitions have been challenged and debated over the years.

However, it is generally accepted that resilience is primarily a guiding concept used for understanding of individual human response to stress amongst other purposes (Wiig et al, 2020)

Interestingly, Interviewee #9MB commented that bad attitude of the hearing staff is possibly linked to the fear of the unknown, offering this opinion:

'I don't know if he felt threatened by me. I wonder if that was just his attitude to disability. He couldn't deal with it.'

He felt it would be a matter of time before the attitudes would improve, and felt that as he worked in a large company of 2,500 staff, it would be inevitable:

'My colleagues got to know me over time and realised I was deaf, so they knew what I needed, so after a while it improved. The first few months, the first year was tough. Sometimes their attitude towards me was poor but as things improved, their attitude improved. Colleagues started to respect me as a peer.'

Returning to Interviewee #6MA, he then bemusedly queried on why the job was given to a deaf person in the first place and that the appointee should have the right attitude to the deaf staff he initially appointed.

'You shouldn't be given a job just because you are deaf but because you have the skill: the skill to engage with people, to network, to fundraise, to deal with finances. The person is given the job based on those skills not their deafness. Thus, in that respect being deaf is irrelevant.'

Interviewee #8MA claimed to be perplexed by the negative attitudes of colleagues and managers at his workplace, commenting:

'I think the most important is attitude. I respect the identity of other people. What I would like from others is for them to have empathy for me.'

He gave a few examples of challenges arising from 'poor attitude' from management which reduced him to a 'wreck' of his former self, illuminating:

'I was up and down. There were a lot of times when I cried at my desk because I could not understand why my colleagues would not wake up and change their attitude. I could see them being empathetic towards other staff, but they did not care at all about what it was like for me as a deaf person. Yes. I felt invisible.'

He explained his decision to grab early retirement claiming that the attitude of his latest manager was the straw that broke his back:

'I couldn't understand his attitude. In the end I made a complaint to the Union and the Equality team. We discussed the problem at length. We must have had six or seven meetings about it. [. . .] It is linked to making appropriate communication support arrangements. We tried again and again to make him understand without success. It reached the point that I have had enough. I decided to retire a few months later.'

That brings up the question regarding resilience or otherwise as commented by the Interviewee #6MA as an answer to persevere in one's workplace even though it perhaps was not in a conducive atmosphere. The point to consider is what is the limit to perseverance without adverse effect on one's mental wellbeing.

From several of the comments above, it would perhaps not be surprising that generally good attitudes from all employers within the hierarchy in the workplace is essential to feeling appreciated.

Poor attitudes from the management as well as colleagues would have detrimental effect on work motivation. The next sub-section would look at motivation and whether deafness is a factor.

5.2.1.2.2 Employment → Motivation

Motivation is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences" (Saari and Judge, 2004, p396). To understand the key aim of motivation, David and Anderzej (2010) considered it as a form of cognitive decision making in which the intention is to make the behaviour that is aimed at achieving a certain goal through initiation and monitoring.

Thus, a key method of motivating workers is via praise and encouragement, which can be done periodically such as reviews. Appraisals of one's performance at work which would follow predetermined standards would lead to certain outcomes that would cause an emotional reaction in the employee, and this reaction will determine how satisfied or dissatisfied an employee is (Badubi, 2017). The importance of motivation in any workplace cannot be stressed enough as Badubi (2017) explained that job satisfaction is vital for the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. He added what is perhaps rather obvious about the lack of motivation and its consequences on the staff as "The consequences of organizations operating without any purpose of motivation towards its employees are far catastrophic, such as depression, turnover, burnout which can derail the success of organizations. For organizations to make employees their biggest asset and retention purposes, motivation should be a priority." (Badubi, 2017, p 44)

The interviewees would then comment on the challenges of staying motivated within the work environment as indicated below.

Interviewee #10FA [female] argued that one's deafness can impact on the other person's attitude towards her which can lead to frustration at work which would become demotivating. She noted this in her jobs, stating:

'If you have a hearing person who has a negative perception of deaf people, even if the deaf person has a positive can-do attitude, they will still face barriers.'

Interviewee #5MC argued that being deaf in a non-deaf work environment could be challenging, illustrating the 'glass ceiling' being lower for themselves in comparison with other groupings, remarking that despite his knowledge and having good attitude, he felt he hit the glass ceiling due to his relatively weak communication skills. He became frustrated over time with his difficulty in persuading his managers of being promotion-worthy which led to gradually losing motivation and eventually grabbing the voluntary redundancy option when it was offered to him after some cutbacks in his workplace.

Interviewee #8MA explained one of the key factors of losing motivation.

'Some managers were a bit shit. They would just talk to people without including me. I could see that. It was difficult. If someone had a bad attitude toward me, I struggled to build rapport with them and as a result I lost motivation.'

He argued that it must come from the senior management claiming that good attitude from the above would inspire him to try harder in his job. He wonders upon the fact that sometimes he is seen as a 'tea-boy' despite holding a middle-ranking job leading the colleagues and senior management to dismiss him as one of those deaf people and perhaps incapable of such complex jobs so not conveying information which might be relevant to one aspect of his job role:

'I feel like I must chase up everyone to get them to act and it isn't my job. It's so frustrating. I am deaf, I should have boundaries. But, if I don't get involved, no one else does anything. Another issue is that sometimes my manager asks me to do menial tasks. If he did it himself it would take 30 seconds, but he gives it to me. That kind of thing shocks me, and I can't understand why he does that. I despair! It makes me so despondent, and I lose motivation. What does he think I am? A lackey?'

In contrast, interviewee #1MA who works in a blue-collar job explained his reason for losing motivation:

'Unless there is a new model, the work is very repetitive. You feel like you are doing the same thing every day. The same applies if you get a new piece of machinery. Your motivation increases because it's a new challenge. If you are working on the same old equipment, it's mundane. I know what I am doing so I don't need to think. It's just the same thing again and again. That's why my motivation declined because I reached the peak of my knowledge.'

This might imply that he has limited qualifications and so he is limited with a choice of jobs he would be able to do. Is this linked to his own education? He seemed an intelligent man and naturally one wonders whether he was not stretched enough when in further and higher education about 2 decades earlier.

Then upon reflection, he added this:

'I wish I had looked for a different job, yes, working for a different company. I had lost motivation as there was nothing new to learn. Particularly in the past 2 years, I lost motivation and the paperwork was repetitive.'

What stopped him from seeking alternate employment is the fact it is not easy for any person to gain employment, more so if a jobseeker is disabled, i.e. in his case deaf. While he was in his current job for

18 years until recently when he left to care for his dying wife, he mentioned he used to get previous employment through connections or word of mouth, thereby avoiding the traditional route of seeking employment through job adverts and interviews.

Interviewee #2FB being in her 60s now had worked in variety of employment with some jobs being more motivating than the others, such as:

'I lacked motivation. I felt as though I was just going through the motions. I worked with numbers. Sometimes there would be other information to process, like an address on an order form, but mostly it was just numbers.'

That was for one firm she worked for, and then at a different firm, it was a different story:

'I had to learn how to structure and format my reports. I also had to work with people and develop materials. I was meeting different people all the time, so I was very motivated. Every day was different.'

It was a new challenge for her, and she loved the challenge of that job which lasted three years and then she was transferred to a different job but still in a similar role. But then she said it comes in a cycle, with the latest job being quite de-motivating partly due to personality clash with her senior manager which she claimed felt threatened by her developing reputation for good work within the same firm.

'My motivation went up and down. One day, the CEO approached me and asked if I would be interested in a Research Project. Thank God for that! I found myself back with my old colleague researching again. Unfortunately, though the CEO left to company, and my manager decided I had to go back to my normal job. My motivation disappeared just like that. My manager gave me some of her work to cover but I didn't really know what to do with it because it was her work not mine. She got me to do her dirty work for her. I did that for one year. I never left work. I became ill with depression through workplace harassment'.

She explained that demotivation leads to a decline in personal wellbeing – she eventually left and did a different and part-time job which suited her as she was becoming a grandmother at around the same time and wanted to be well for the grandchildren.

Interviewee #3MC has a completely different take on motivation simply stating this:

'My motivation was like this. I don't like the stress that sometimes comes with being deaf.'

He meant that it would be easy to get stressed up due to own deafness so preferred to keep quiet and get on with his job, reflecting how lucky he was to gain employment in the first place and not to worry too much about getting motivated in his job.

Interviewee #9MB explained that motivation is linked to what one is doing within his job and how it is linked to his own knowledge and expertise prior to starting work there:

'When I first started the job, my motivation was high, and it increased steeply. Some of the projects I worked on had very tight deadlines and I would be brought into a project very quickly and must work at pace to get the job done and overcome any difficulties. It was a lot of pressure, but I considered it to be positive pressure because I got an instant reward for my hard work.

But then when I worked on the publication of training instructions my motivation took a dip because the task was a bit repetitive, and my mind wandered. I clearly remember one occasion where I was typing up some instructions and my mind went a bit blank and did nothing for 20 minutes! I was mortified because I was not typing anything for ages.

I learned a valuable lesson from that experience; that kind of work did not suit me because my motivation was low. My concentration waned and my mind wandered. I would say that 98% of my work had instant feedback. It was not a case of working on a project and then waiting 2 or 3 years to see the results. You could see the results immediately and that really motivated me. Also, the company was very good at providing recognition on merit. That also increased motivation. I was also given more and more responsibility.'

He stressed he was and is still lucky to be in the right job matching his expertise and skills. It might be useful to note that he works in a private sector. Contrast this with the comments from Interviewee #4FB who works in a public sector and explained about the need to have fiscal incentives to prevent her motivation from steeping down:

'My motivation for the job was fine but the hours were too long. I would start at 8.30am and finish at 10 or 11 at night every day. You couldn't claim hours back and you couldn't claim money for extra hours. The workload was too much. Everyone was the same, I wasn't the only one. Having the interpreter with me all the time became very expensive. At the end it was a juggling act, trying to balance my work with seeing my family. I hardly saw my family. I was happy at work, but I didn't see my own husband or my own children. I was worn out. I would have the weekend off. Monday to Friday was too much and I worked so hard and for so long for no financial reward. Everyone was the same, we all had the same frustration and my motivation started to decline. I was burnt out. In the end I decided to change to a different LAC, different hours, more routine.

When I first started the job, it was new, so I was highly motivated. To begin with yes my motivation remained the same, but then my manager kept giving me more responsibility because she saw my skill. I would have Business Development work along with my Social Work which significantly increased my workload. I was happy to take it on, but I found myself thinking, "Hello? Where is my pay rise?" I was managing staff, managing volunteers but still on the same wage. I asked about increasing it, but nothing happened. I was also covering Solihull, South of Birmingham and I was based in the North of Birmingham, so I had a long commute.'

She eventually left her job and moved south and is now working in a similar but much less stressful job – albeit with less pay and less responsibility.

Overall, it seems that the motivation at the job is dependent on several factors, i.e. attitudes of peers, type of challenges, monetary rewards, etc. not so much as linked to one deafness though it is in play.

5.2.1.2.3 Employment → Promotion [at workplace]

Gaining promotion at work brings enhanced self-esteem, respect from peers, additional earnings, confirming the necessity of certain qualifications earned at college or university and perhaps justification for own hard work at the workplace ['going beyond']

Naturally, there is always a limit on how much a person can 'go beyond' in the job before either applying for promotion or being tapped on the shoulder for promotion. This section looks at the challenges of deaf people seeking promotion in their workplace and the associated barriers.

Starting with Interviewee #6MA who is a CEO, here is his take on how one achieves promotion at work. This is an anecdote oft told by quite several deaf people, but clearly shows frustration and consequently developing lack of trust in the management above oneself:

'At that time, I worked in a small architectural firm and the manager left. I was expected to train a new young employee, who did not have computer skills or an architectural background. I trained them because I had the relevant skills. Unfortunately, once I had trained them, they were then promoted above me to management! I challenged that decision citing my qualifications, my skills and the fact that I had trained the person, but they ignored my arguments basing their decision on communication.'

This seems to bring it back to the issue of communication as a key factor in gaining promotion which was mentioned by Interviewee #5MC who claimed that he found it hard to gain further promotion within civil service due to communication issues even though unlike the signing #6MA, he is a non-signer and reliant on speech as his preferred mode of communication!

Another high-flyer, the interviewee #9MB has had quite a few promotions in his long career explaining that:

'I have had a lot of promotions. Once I approached a manager to express my disappointment that I hadn't been approached for promotion whilst others around me had. They realised that was true and I was promoted.'

However, he added that he believed that if he was able to hear he would have been in a much more senior position than he is at the moment:

'I think possibly if I had been able to hear I would have been promoted earlier, perhaps got one or two levels higher. I found that on some projects, I had the same competence as many of my colleagues, but they seemed to progress in their career quicker than me. I couldn't understand why because I managed to communicate easily with my manager. I wonder if it was because all my communication was through email, which seemed more formal. I couldn't have informal discussions with my colleagues like my peers did. I realised that I always approached tasks in a formal way, working through procedure. I didn't get opportunities to network, whereas my colleagues did. Maybe that was a factor. I think I am always two steps behind because I am deaf.'

As per the last sentence in his comment, he seemed to echo the comment of Interviewee #10FA when he reminded of the need to fire on all cylinders to keep ahead and gaining promotion.

Interviewee #10FA, also a high-flying employee have had quite a few promotions and is sometimes amused at the surprise on the face of colleagues when realising upon the comparative seniority of her position within the firm:

'Sometimes people would express amazement that I was deaf and had been able to achieve so much. That makes me think that they believe that being deaf limits your promotion opportunities. They say, "Wow, you are Deaf, but that hasn't stopped you from doing your job".'

Despite that, she has had to prove herself more than once to justify the need for the company to promote her to a senior and more managerial level, which she admits was rather frustrating:

'In my previous job, the one I had for 10 years, I was given promotions, but I had to do a lot of qualifications and training to prove myself. In comparison to my hearing peers, I felt that I had to do more training and work harder to prove myself because of being deaf.'

I had to really show by action that I could do what my qualifications said. Interestingly, I did a one-week project management course with a written exam at the end. The pass mark was 70%. Out of the whole class, only me and one other person passed. The others failed. I thought to myself, I might be deaf, but I passed that course! I know what I am talking about!

And on the other occasion, what happened rather irked her in terms of gaining a different promotion after having to prove herself in a project whereas it was not quite the case for her hearing colleague!

'They gave me the Brazil project to prove myself. That was what promoted me, and I was happy to accept that challenge. What frustrated me was that later I discovered that a male colleague had been promoted at the same time. He didn't have to prove himself like I did. He was just promoted. That leaves me with 2 questions: Did he not have to prove himself because he was male? Did I have to prove myself because I was deaf? It left me with a lot of questions in my mind.'

She interestingly wondered whether it is due to gender rather than her deafness or perhaps a combination of both factors.

Then moving onto the other interviewees who seemed either never having had promotion or not having had one in years – the interviewee #1MA had this to say:

'[. . .] the paperwork was repetitive, so I wouldn't have wanted to be promoted to a senior position. Management is something that does not quite appeal to me. I prefer to a hands-on practical job.'

In a slightly different way, the interviewee #3MC thought along the lines of why he would not bother seeking promotion, after gaining only once in 1992:

'I got through because I had filled in the application form and explained myself well. I know because the woman liked me. She smiled and said, "Mr. X, I'm giving you an immediate promotion to Executive Officer". Unfortunately, no more promotions after that. I did not try for more promotions as I wasn't ambitious. I don't regret that. Because there was another deaf man, I won't mention his name, but he got promoted to management and he became so stressed. He had so many problems in the office. I would die at the thought of that. I want an easy life.'

He then added this bit which perhaps indicated lack of confidence in his own ability to break through:

'I felt that I didn't want to break through that glass ceiling. I was not interested in being a role model or a pace setter, a shining example for the community.'

When pressed on what he meant by being 'a shining example for the community', he clarified that he meant the deaf community which is rather a paradox in that he is a non-signer but still acknowledges his deafness and his awareness of the deaf community in general.

Wondering if this is similar story for other non-signers, I checked with the interviewee #7MC and he freely admitted to not really trying hard to seek promotion, as he has had one or two setbacks in the past:

'One reason maybe is confidence and possibly the element of not being fully aware of the support that is available, so it is more convenient to stay where I am. Two, because it is a small company it is difficult to get any promotion or progression. I feel that even if you are in the same job, if you get promoted or extra responsibilities that can help you to feel good about your job, but that is not happening.'

He acknowledges that lack of confidence is a key factor, and he described his experience of failing to even get to the interview stage when seeking alternate employment:

'Actually, there was one time that I looked at other jobs. I applied to the Journal of Nature for the role of a Copy Editor on their Junior Edition. I sent off my CV, but I did not hear back at all, which was disappointing. In the whole of 18 years, that is the only time I have applied for another job. Maybe I should have applied for more jobs and looked around. I do regret not doing that.'

Interviewee #2FB cautioned that the term promotion is a double-edged sword in that sometimes one would have additional responsibility and perhaps a slight change to the job title but emphasises that it is not necessarily a promotion citing an example from one of her earlier jobs:

'I became a Verifier. But it was not really a promotion. It was the same money. No difference. A verifier involves more responsibility, but I was paid the same amount of money.'

She also admitted that she had not been actively seeking promotion in general. It seems that there is general apathy for several interviewees with seeking out promotion opportunities. Whereas for those who have had promotions, it was a challenge gaining it – competing against their peers who would invariably be hearing, as well as breaking through the perceived prejudices of the senior staff within the interview panel who might already have pre-conceived thoughts on the ability of the deaf to be able to take on extra responsibility and hold the job down.

5.2.1.3 Deaf Identity

It was part of my hypothesis that Deaf Identity [as explained in the Literature Review] was an important factor in a deaf person's development over the years in facing the challenges of being a minority within the society – either as a 'disabled' person or as a member of linguistic minority [assuming the regular use and fluency of BSL]. The comments below indicated the thoughts of the 10 interviewees on the relevancy of otherwise of Deaf Identity when dealing with the challenges of everyday life at work when quite often he would be the only deaf person within the full hearing environment of the employing firm. Those who use signing as part of their everyday life within and outside employment do acknowledge the importance of Deaf Identity, but the following showed their thoughts on its relevancy when at a workplace.

For instance, interviewee #4FB who comes from a Deaf family background makes a little mention of this except to say that the general public is ignorant of a deaf person in their midst arguing this:

'Re the Deaf identity – how important is that for me. Alas it's a mental health issue.'

When pressed on the above comment, she explained that the lack of Deaf Identity can lead to mental health issues stating that while she generally gets frustrated with the hearing peers, she is generally fine with her own wellbeing.

This is a similar story with Interviewee #9MB who also hails from a Deaf family who merely stated this:

'I describe myself as Deaf with a capital 'D'. That's linked to my family being Deaf and growing up in a family that had a strong Deaf identity already.'

He made it sound like a matter of fact – almost as an afterthought. Maybe it is seen as a latent gift that they take for granted having grown up fully exposed to signing within a strong Deaf family environment.

Moving onto those who have hearing parents but do choose to communicate using sign language, Interviewee #1MA hardly referred to Deaf Identity making it seemingly irrelevant to his work whereas Interviewee #6 MA opined:

'It is important that my identity is clear, I don't want to shy away or lack confidence. You must be determined to stand firm for your rights. So, yes I do think my deaf identity is important to me as an individual.'

Then he added this with an eye on Britain being a very culturally diverse nation impressing that being Deaf is another diverse linguistic group that the society should embrace regardless:

'At the end of the day, we are all people. All people have their own culture, language and identity. Within Britain, we have people of all ethnicities, but they are all British. I am British, we should all stand as one nation.'

Interviewee #8MA thought along the similar lines in that respect for each other's identity is the key to better working relationship but that was the only time within an entire interview he touched upon Deaf identity.

'I respect the identity of other people. What I would like from others is for them to have empathy for me, like we discussed earlier. I can see from the way people look at me if they respect me. If they have that good attitude, we have a good relationship, we communicate well'.

This seemed to infer that as he is a member of one minority group, he would have expected respect and recognition from the others, and he would reciprocate. When pressed upon this, he explained as he worked in London, his colleagues came from very diverse ethnic backgrounds, claiming that some of them are dismissive of deaf people so thereby wondering whether it is a cultural thing according to their backgrounds but chose not to elaborate further.

Interviewee #10FA acknowledges the politics of deafness such as the debate between 'D' vs 'd' when defining someone as deaf or Deaf but is not interested in this. However, there is one terminology that she detests: 'hearing impaired' as it is more of a medical term and she does not see herself as a person with an impairment, but a person who happens to be deaf instead!

'When a person identified me as being hearing impaired, I immediately challenged it and identified myself as 'deaf'.'

Moving onto those three who do not use sign language, they touched upon it lightly for instance interviewee #3MC commented:

'I would say that I am severely deaf. [. . .] I mean in terms of communication and identity. Really, I am deaf, but I have more of the hearing influence, a hearing cover in a way. I have developed into a high art, a kind of fake hearing cover that works well in limited doses.'

This is an intriguing statement as he later admits that he would reveal deafness to some people he feels might be more patient and sympathetic – while hiding from others who ‘would not have the time in the whole world’

Interviewee #7MC has similar comments, explaining that he is caught between whether to reveal or hide own deafness from colleagues.

‘Sometimes if I have just a brief meeting with someone, I might not say I am deaf. It might not be worth mentioning. Sometimes people will ask me but sometimes they don’t. If someone asks me, I am always happy to say, “I am deaf, I wear hearing aids” and I explain about lipreading. If they become really interested, I might explain about the differences (in deaf people). Some will ask if I know sign language. I will explain about Deaf culture with a capital D and I will explain about my education as oral deaf. Most of the time I will just say I am deaf, and I wear hearing aids. Sometimes I do have to say that I am not hard of hearing, I am not deafened to make it clear.’

He explained the reasoning behind his philosophy towards own deafness as linked to his upbringing and throughout the interview made no mention of Deaf Identity. He explained how he got some knowledge about different terminology linked to deafness in main due to his hearing partner who already know some sign language prior to meeting him. She apparently learnt it at an evening class several years previously.

‘But the way I was brought up, as oral deaf, was to try to be as hearing as possible. That can make it a bit difficult because you are living as though you are not disabled but you are. So sometimes I have to remind myself. It’s a contradiction. Trying to be ‘hearing’ but also saying I am entitled to this, this and this.’

When mentioning ‘this, this and this’, he meant that he would be entitled not to use telephone at work, to have a note-taker for meetings, etc.

Overall, while some of the signing interviewees acknowledge the presence and importance of Deaf identity, it seems to be a consensus that while perhaps useful to a degree it is not so essential to coping with everyday challenges within the hearing work environment.

5.3 Conclusion

The following sub-sections briefly summarises the findings from the interviewees’ comments for three different themes.

5.3.1 General Communication - Summary

The recurring theme from most of the interviewees is the need to be proactive in communicating with others at workplace as linked to own deafness, they felt that they are perhaps perceived to be unable to communicate in a normal manner which might imply that the deaf staff might not be able to do the tasks in the work environment that a hearing person would be expected to be able to undertake.

They all acknowledged that communicating is always a challenge and some of the hearing colleagues would still have difficulties in understanding what the deaf person would be saying, even if they may have worked with him for several years. They also agreed on the importance of communication as it is a useful skill to have for career progression.

Basically, general communication is a non-stop challenge within the work environment. Each interviewee would come up with slightly different coping mechanisms applying a variety of back-up plans in case of possible misunderstandings. Some would find it tiring and retreat into a shell whereas the others usually in a more responsible position would persevere and try all ways to get oneself heard or at least understood by the others.

5.3.2 Employment – Summary

There are three sub-themes within Employment theme and the first is Attitude

Attitudes of colleagues and superiors alike tended to be negative for many interviewees. It is argued that this behaviour and other examples of negative attitudes stemmed from the 'fear of the unknown' thereby suggesting that the hearing colleagues need to be informed on how to effectively communicate such that their attitudes will then improve.

They commented that due to negative attitudes emanating from them, the deaf staff would have to be resilient and adjust one's own behaviour accordingly just to fit in with the workplace environment.

The next sub-theme is Motivation.

They all acknowledged that it is always a challenge to keep oneself motivated regardless of own hearing loss, but they tend to agree that their own hearing loss and the attitude of others towards own disability is a key factor in becoming demotivated over time in their workplace.

Several commented that keeping oneself motivated can depend on who their boss is, such that if he employs good attitude and is willing to listen or communicate.

The third sub-theme is Promotion.

All agreed that it is a challenge seeking and then gaining promotion. Some even speculated whether poor speech is a factor in repeatedly failing to gain promotion.

Many of them said that they did not get promoted at all or not for several years mainly due to failed applications or interviews and they simply stopped bothering applying – one of them admitted to losing confidence over the years so simply gave up and stayed within his position.

It becomes evident that good attitudes from employers at the workplace is essential for the deaf staff in feeling appreciated, motivated and thus confident in seeking promotion.

On the other hand, there is general apathy in seeking out promotion opportunities. Whereas for the few who got promoted, it was a challenge gaining it – competing against their peers who would invariably be hearing, as well as breaking through the perceived prejudices of the senior staff within the interview panel who might already have pre-conceived thoughts on the ability of the deaf to be able to take on extra responsibility and hold the job down.

5.3.3 Deaf Identity – Summary

There are some mentions about Deaf Identity by the signing interviewees, as being useful as part of own wellbeing claiming if a deaf person does not have Deaf Identity, then his own wellbeing can be affected leading to mental health issues which might not be conducive to good work prospects. Yet others, signing or non-signing, made little or no mention of this.

It seems to be a consensus that Deaf Identity while perhaps useful up to a point, is not essential to coping with everyday challenges within the hearing work environment.

Chapter 6: Results -NVivo findings → Second Research Question:

6.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the analysis of the data as linked to the second Research Question which is:

How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?

This chapter specifically looks at the results from the analysis of the interview transcripts using NVivo, i.e., applying the qualitative method.

6.1 Data Analysis of the 10 interviews using NVivo for the Second Research Question

The previous chapter [section 5.2.0] explained about how several themes emerged, so for this chapter, the three themes are looked at in detail:

- Employment
- School Experiences
- Further/Higher Education Experiences

However, for the Employment theme, three different sub-themes emerged, thus:

- Gaining jobs
- Job interviews
- Training opportunities

6.1.1 Employment

The following is from the comments gleaned during the interviews, in relation to employment and its three sub-themes.

6.1.1.1 Employment → Gaining jobs

This sub-section looks at how they gain jobs and what tactics they would have used to succeed in this – perhaps that they might have external support or did it solo without any outside help. It also looks at the challenges of finding jobs successfully and whether they have changed jobs regularly or not, either within the same firm or not.

Interviewee #1MA mentioned that for his very first job repairing cars, he got an external help:

'Yes, my grandfather's friend got me that job. That's right. I enjoyed it'.

After a while he started seeking different jobs but attending interviews with someone, noting:

'After that I started applying for formal jobs. I went for a career assessment first and it was recommended that I would be suitable for a practical job, something I could do with my hands. I learn quickly when the skills are practical. Written skills are not my strong point. The Career Psychologist was based within the Job Centre. I think I was about 18 years old when I went there. She could sign a little, so we were able to converse in BSL and she assessed me and recommended a few options. I was referred to Miss Cruel, who was a Careers Trainer for the RAD. She was retired but I was put in touch with her, and she would accompany me to interviews and support me to increase my confidence and motivation.

'Also, in the RAD at Derby, there was a Job Seeker Service. I submitted a couple of applications through that and was offered a job, but it was very simple, and I wasn't sure it was for me. It was a job involving metal work. I would be given a metal plate with holes in it, and I would have to insert nuts and bolts and rivets to connect the metal together. It was the same every day so very repetitive. I got a bit fed up and lost my motivation and I told my father how I felt.

'I ended up moving to a different company which made chairs and furniture from moulded plastics. My job was to fit the pieces together with metal fixings. I enjoyed that more because I worked on different products with specific parts, so each day was varied'.

He said that since then he had not sought other jobs but would need someone to come with him for future job interviews to improve his chances of getting a job.

Interviewee #2FB has a similar story for the first job, i.e. relying on a family member, this time her mother's cousin, explaining how:

'My mother asked my cousin if she could take me to the local council at the County Hall to see if they had any suitable jobs for me. They asked me what I wanted, and I said I was interested in working as a Punch Card Operator. They explained that they had a Disabled College that I could attend to do 13 weeks of free training, funded by them. It worked out well'.

The consequence of this was that after completion of that training, she got a job with a company that has links to that college via the Job Centre. She mentioned that she stopped working afterwards to have a family and years later did some voluntary work which then led to a paid work within the same charity.

She mentioned she had someone with her for the interview after training:

'For the first job, I saw the vacancy at the Job Centre and asked the advisor to come with me to the interview, which really made it easy for me'.

Interviewee #8MA explained how he got one of his earliest jobs as a young man, perhaps as a fluke – after several failed applications to other companies, stating:

'I think I applied to about 30 different local companies in Peterborough and was unsuccessful. I then found out that Thomas Cook had a shop in Peterborough, so I went down there to talk to them. I was invited to go in for an interview. I had the interview (no interpreter unfortunately). I met the boss and he told me that his daughter was deaf.'

'Anyway, I got the job because of the deaf connection really'.

Interviewee #3MC has a different take in that he relies on his spoken skills to ensure he is understood by the interview panel when seeking jobs but adding that it was quite easy in those days to get into Civil Service irrespectively of one's disability or not.

'At that time when I left school in 1982, work in the civil service was very easy to get. There were lots of jobs at that time and I spoke well and got in'.

He has since changed jobs within Civil Service, again relying on his speech without any real problems.

Interviewees #5MC & #7MC – both reliant on spoken mode of communication has similar experiences with Interviewee #3MC above, in that they relied on speech during interviews before successfully obtaining jobs. They did not need anyone to come with them for the interviews, etc.

Interviewee #9MB, though profoundly deaf got the job without an interpreter claiming that when he gets the job, he wanted to show he is independent despite his deafness:

'I was also offered the provision of a BSL interpreter, but I didn't want that. I wanted the opportunity to show that I could communicate without relying on an interpreter'.

It is evident that he was determined not to prejudice the minds of prospective employers, feeling that if there is will there is a way.

It seemed that this decuple is split into 2 groups – one who would have someone to support – maybe a family member, social worker or an interpreter and then the other who would try managing without any form of support relying mainly on communication ensuring that they would somehow manage to get to understand each other.

6.1.1.2 Employment → Job interviews

This looks at the experiences each has when attending job interviews and how they successfully present themselves to the panel or just the sole interviewer in gaining the jobs. They also look at unsuccessful attempts and reflect on the wherefores.

Interviewee #1MA as briefly mentioned in the last sub-section relied on the careers advisor for attending job interviews:

'I was referred to Miss Cruel, who was a Careers Trainer for the RAD. She was retired but I was put in touch with her, and she would accompany me to interviews and support me to increase my confidence and motivation.'

Since then, he hadn't attended any more interviews as he stayed in the same job for almost 2 decades. Interviewee #2FB once got a job immediately 13-week free training but years later after raising a family she did some voluntary work and was encouraged to apply for a paid job, and that was what happened:

'Before I went into the job at Sense [Deaf-blind charity], I was also involved as a volunteer in a Support Panel for Ushers. I think possibly I showed what I could do through my work on the panel. They then asked whether I would be interested in the job that became mine. So really the interview was just a formality because they said, "The job is yours". I went through the motions of the interview, and I was successful in getting the role straight away. Just like that!'

That was her 2nd interview as since then she got a few other jobs through 'word of mouth'

Interviewee #3MC went for interviews in the 1980s and 1990s when there used to be a quota for a number of disabled staff within Civil Service which he claimed made it easy for himself, and he confirmed he never sought different jobs outside Civil Service:

'In terms of obtaining employment, in 1982, 1983 there were so many jobs available in the government offices. I got there because at that time they had a 10% disabled quota. That has now been dropped.'

That has finished now. It was a bit patronising, but they had an automatic 10% quota for all disabled people, not just Deaf but wheelchair users, the lot. That was the general government policy at that time.

'Moving on to 1992 and when I was transferring to the Metropolitan Police - they guaranteed an interview for all disabled people, and they probably do even now. But, earlier in 1992 it was easier because they had the quota which they must ensure is filled up.'

Interviewee #6MA attended a few interviews in his time but recalled one negative experience, describing it as shocking as it was linked to applying for senior positions within Deaf charities, albeit to no avail:

'I did have one bad experience with a large Deaf Charity. I applied for the job but didn't get it. In fact, I was never shortlisted. I was advised that when applying to a Deaf Charity, if you mention you are Deaf at the beginning you won't be shortlisted, so it is better to remove that from the application.

So yes, I went to one interview with an interpreter and there was just one interviewee he sat down and laid out his papers. He seemed a bit angry. He said, I hadn't heard anything about you being successful for the second round. He said that such an organisation should have had a positive attitude because they campaign for jobs for deaf people, to reduce unemployment. That doesn't reflect what they present. My view is that the Director thought that if he brought me (a Deaf person) into his management team the dynamic would completely change. Maybe he didn't want that. I thought it was bad. I applied to another big Deaf organisation, so two altogether and again I wasn't successful'.

It seemed that the perceived difficulties in getting the jobs with normal companies by deaf applicants also applied to seeking jobs within the deaf-led companies or charities as he found to his cost on two occasions at least!

Interviewee #9MB upon completion of his HND course sent off several applications and ended up with 5 job interviews. He also explained his strategy of not revealing his deafness until he turned up for an interview. That is unlike Interviewee #4FB who mentioned she always put down her deafness in her job applications and believed that by doing this it resulted in very few invitations to interviews. Anyway, he explained in depth:

'I didn't inform them I was deaf until the interview was confirmed. When I arrived at each of the interviews, I recognised that they were all a bit nervous and unsure of what to do, but I immediately took over, ensuring them I was fine and could communicate through speech, lip reading and writing. They felt

relief when I did that. I was also a bit crafty because by doing that I remained in control throughout the interview. That strategy obviously worked for me so why not!

Interviewee #7MC mentioned he got a job after a few applications and interviews, and then after several years working for a small company, he considered applying for a senior position via an interview and he demonstrated what happened:

'Around about 2008 I applied for Acting Head of Department because our Head of Department had set up a new department. There were two people who had applied for Acting of Head of Department. I cannot remember being interviewed but I think there was an interview; I will have to check that. But there was an application process and I sent in my application, and I did not get the position. After a trial period, they decided to ask for applications for permanent Head of Department. Probably after around 3 months because there was always a possibility that the old Head of Department would come back. So, they decided to make it permanent, and they asked if I wanted to apply. I thought to myself, "Maybe" but then I thought if I wasn't accepted for Acting Head, surely, I wouldn't be accepted for the permanent role. So, I said no'.

He admitted that his confidence level was gradually eroded over the years, and he never tried applying again since then.

And then the interviewee #10FA claimed she just smiled all the way to getting her first main job after leaving university, laughing at her memory:

'For my first job, I went to the interview, and I could not understand the man interviewing me at all! Looking back, I was only 21 at the time. My way of dealing with that was to just smile and nod at the right places. It worked because I was called back to a second interview. I don't know how I did that but obviously I found a way to muddle through and at the second interview I was able to lipread the interviewer a lot better. I got the job. Looking back, the first interview was so difficult because I couldn't understand what was being asked and all I could do was smile and nod. Obviously, I did enough to make a good impression and be called back a second time'.

Then she added that as she was made redundant a decade later, she applied for new jobs and was successful in gaining new job, reflecting that her decade-long worth of hard work and perseverance did the trick:

'They gave me notice of redundancy in October 2015, but I didn't leave until February 2016. That gave me four months to look for a new job. I applied for many positions, but I was only invited to two interviews. I was lucky to be offered both of those jobs. I decided to choose my current job. I was only out of work for two weeks before I started the new job'.

While successful in getting a new job, she argued that despite her qualifications and experience she thought herself lucky to get a job after applying for many positions.

In contrast, Interviewee #4FB attended several interviews over the years and claimed it was her deafness that is a stumbling block to herself winning a job at the end of the interview, citing one example:

'I applied for one job as a Social Worker in Deaf CAMHS. I thought the job would be perfect for me because I am a qualified social worker, I had lots of experience with the deaf community, I use sign language. Deaf CAMHS were trying to target BSL students. At the interview I failed. They said I didn't have enough hearing experience. I didn't have enough mainstream experience. Instead, they brought in someone who had mainstream experience but no knowledge of the deaf. They left after 3 months. They should have picked me! Oh well, so I failed there. That was in Birmingham. I applied for something similar in London and failed again. Not the same, similar but a different job'.

She felt frustrated that even though she has the appropriate qualifications, she wondered whether that was a convenient reason or excuse for not employing her. She then recalled a different experience:

'I went to an interview in front of a panel, but the interpreter wasn't very good and missed a lot of my signs. I just carried on signing without worrying about the interpreter. At that time, my husband (boyfriend at the time) was living in Wolverhampton, so I stayed at his place overnight. BID text me to ask me to come back for a second interview because they were undecided between me and another candidate. I didn't know that at the time. I found out years later that the dilemma was that the other candidate was hearing and really experienced, I was deaf but had no experience. I was cheaper. Maybe the other candidate would be more difficult to manage but I would be more flexible. I got the job because I was deaf and qualified. As it was a Deaf service, they decided that the role should go to a Deaf person. I attended the second interview the next day and we had a discussion, and I was offered the job'.

She then recounted the experience of having an interpreter at the job interview, describing a different one where she failed at the interview stage.

'Interviews can be difficult and finding a job can be difficult. The employer's attitude at interview can also be a problem. The first barrier can be, "Will you provide an interpreter?" Then the deaf person might get frightened because they don't know whether the interpreter provided will be good enough. When I had my interview for the NDCS I was terrified about the standard of the interpreter and hoping that the interpreter would be good enough. I was more worried about that than the interview! I need a good voiceover. When I arrived at the interview, I was relieved that the interpreter was good.'

'In the past at a different interview I had been given a poor interpreter who had to keep interrupting for clarification. Rather than focusing on selling myself, I had to think about adjusting my register and signing so the interpreter could understand it. Their English was low, and I failed at the interview because of the interpreter. That fear causes extra stress.'

She argued that deaf people need to have some form of training to develop confidence in interview skills:

'I think Deaf people need training in interview skills for instance, if you ask them for an example of how they have demonstrated a skill in the past, they will give a brief response. Instead, they should say, "In my previous job, I worked on this project...I did this and that...I did it by...I put this theory into practice". A full answer like that scores a lot more points.'

Overall, it seems that most of them have had a very few interviews, preferring to stay in one job for as long as possible – seemingly indicative of the fact that they do feel insecure about upping their desks and seeking a new job at intervals. Some of them got their jobs and did not always seek promotion within their firms. Their experiences, while varied, seemed to have one common factor, which is the willingness of the prospective employer to hire a deaf person, of whom he might have never had the experience of interacting with any deaf person before that interview. It is the link to attitude on the one hand, but on the other hand as one interviewee mentioned it is how well the deaf people know how to sell themselves well on the job market in general. That brings up the question on whether they were taught or informed in this field when they were at school or in further/higher education.

6.1.1.3 Employment → Training opportunities

It is typical that in almost every job there would be additional training opportunities which would count as part of one's continuing professional development and could assist in gaining promotion in their jobs or to support own application for different jobs within or outside their firms. It also looks at the experiences of own training in terms of usefulness and accessibility.

Interviewee #1MA said he did only one training for his job, which was to prepare him to become a supervisor and he enjoyed that short course as it led to his promotion, which proved to be his only promotion in his near two decades within the same firm:

'The supervisory role came because of a quick 1-week course that my employer paid for me to attend. The course was brilliant. There were some written elements and then there was practical demonstration modules so I could really understand what was being discussed and understand how to work safely. As a supervisor, I would be responsible for Operational Safety. We would have to make quick notes about what we could see to create a Risk Assessment. It was important that we did it. In the workplace we had to put that knowledge into practice and make sure that everything was tidied up and stored in one place, so the work environment was safe.

'So, overall the course was good. The first week took place at the course centre, but the second part was in my workplace so the assessor would visit me in my company to see what was relevant in my setting. I could apply the knowledge to myself, which was useful. I did well and I passed. Part of the course was also based on a workplace assessment. Putting those skills together: the course, the practical element, learning directly from my supervisor, it was useful to raise my skillset. Up to that point, my knowledge was solely engineering but that was it. I needed more. I enjoyed that process of learning. Of course, I had an interpreter for that course'.

He liked the practical elements and stressed he did not mind doing some notes as required of a supervisor.

Interviewee #2FB never had training opportunities when at variety of workplaces, apart from attending the 13-week free training course prior to her getting her first job. Interviewee #4FB claimed that she was very busy working long hours as a Social Worker that she did not pay much attention to own CPD or training courses.

Interviewee #3MC who worked within different sections of Civil Service for decades, explained that he did his courses at the university part-time more for his own self-development rather than for improving his own chances of gaining either promotions within Civil Service departments or even new jobs outside.

Like him, interviewee #5MA did additional courses from different universities but with the sole aim of betterment in terms of gaining promotion and seeking different jobs as part of career change.

Interviewee #8MA in his last job before retiring sometimes attended the staff training away days [he recounted his experiences of having to find an interpreter in order to access training!]

'I informed the PA that I would be attending 50 days in advance. 6 days before she contacted me and said, "I have no interpreter. Can you contact your personal contractor?" She expected me to make the arrangements. I didn't need just one interpreter, I needed two because it was a full day event! I was so annoyed, but I said, "Fine. I will do it". I worked hard to make the last-minute arrangements and fortunately was able to find a second interpreter using Facebook. My company had a new process that each Supplier must have a Purchase Order number so I spent ages trying to sort that out because I was told that if the interpreter didn't have one, they wouldn't be paid. It was so hard. I spent ages, contacting various people, going around in circles to get what I needed. I was so stressed and annoyed because if it had been booked through the normal process, all that would have been required was a requisition form, rather than a Purchase Order number. I explained all this to them, and I asked if they were aware of how difficult they had made things for me, but they didn't care. I'd had enough!'

It seems that for him, grabbing such training opportunities from his work would be time-consuming as he explained that more often than not, it would be left to him to seek interpreter support for his access to training. He argued that it was clearly demotivating, and he sometimes missed out on such opportunities.

But in his earlier days working for a different firm, he found himself training the others which he was not too happy about as he noted that those he trained ended up in superior positions in comparison to himself after a while, remarking this:

'I continued with that job for a while. It was account payables so paying invoices and that kind of thing. I stayed there for four and a half years and got promoted twice to managing accounts. At the time I was based in Peterborough. I'd had enough of the job, working with hearing people, training them how to use spreadsheets. I was a bit brain dead; I'd had enough of it. It was a good job, and the pay was good, but I'd had enough of training others.'

Interviewee #9MB did some training on the job, with an eye on selecting those which will be useful and beneficial for himself in his job. Thus, he did not want to waste his time doing meaningless training, citing:

'The qualification was good, but it didn't give me all the skills and knowledge that I needed. I learned the remaining skills through on-the-job training. Yes, that was my choice to do other training in the

workplace. It is such a rapidly developing field that although the qualifications were relevant, technology changes so quickly that your skills need to be continually refreshed through ongoing professional development’.

He added that after a while he was encouraged to join a professional body, which he readily agreed as he felt that their training programme which he could pick and choose would enhance his career prospects, citing thus:

‘Once I became permanent, I was asked to join the IET – The Institute of Electrical and Engineering Technology. Now it’s E&T. I was told that I must join that organisation. That meant meeting the development criteria that they set. So, my employer encouraged me to do that, and I paid from my own pocket to raise my skills to the required level. I also worked around the office in various departments so that I could learn about different types of technologies – drafting, technology, finance etc. That was useful because it gave me an overview of the company’.

Similarly, Interviewee #10FA ensured that she attended ample training within her job to progress – claiming that not to do so could seriously hamper her career prospects partly in view of her deafness and her employers’ and senior management’ attitudes towards her being deaf, explaining using an example from her first job which she worked for a decade before being made redundant:

‘In my previous job, the one I had for 10 years, I was given promotions, but I had to do a lot of qualifications and training to prove myself. In comparison to my hearing peers, I felt that I had to do more training and work harder to prove myself because of being deaf. I had to really show by action that I could do what my qualifications said.

Interestingly, I did a one-week project management course with a written exam at the end. The pass mark was 70%. Out of the whole class, only me and one other person passed. The others failed. I thought to myself, I might be deaf, but I passed that course! I know what I am talking about!’

She added that when she first joined the same firm, she was lucky to have a great mentor, thus:

‘I joined the company in 2005. For about 2 or 3 years, I worked with a 70-year-old man! He taught me everything I know. I think because of my deafness, I benefit from learning from him on a 1:1 basis. If I was hearing, I think I would have been thrown into it and had to struggle through. Having 1:1 training really benefited me as soon afterwards I took on management responsibility’.

This is rather unusual that a company would let a new member of staff have a 1:1 training with a colleague within the company – it seemed that this company was willing to invest time and money on her as they had faith on her taking on eventual management responsibility.

Overall, the experiences of these interviewees are very diverse in that some will have had quite a bit of training opportunities throughout their careers whereas the others will have had very little or virtually no training – with a couple of them seeking further training outside their firms in their own time and using their own money for their additional qualifications.

6.1.2 School Experiences

This looks at their experiences when at school, of which some of them went to specialist schools for the deaf, while the others went to mainstream schools. It explores on how well each interviewee was prepared for life in the real world in terms of their learning, social relationships and gaining qualifications, etc. It also considers the impact of own deafness in their confidence for when leaving school and entering employment, sometimes directly after school or via the further or higher education route. It is perhaps relevant in terms of the statistics from CRIDE which has continually shown that a much lower percentage of deaf children obtain at least 5 GCSE passes in comparison with hearing children.

The selection of 10 interviewees were done to have a reasonable mix of differing school experiences as there have been continual discussions regarding the merits or otherwise of sending a deaf child to a mainstream school as opposed to a specialist school for the deaf. The merits or rather the lack of, have been looked at in Chapter 2.

Interviewee #1MA who went to a specialist school for the deaf, which allows signing – which is something he acknowledged is rather unusual as many of these specialist schools forbade the use of signing in the classroom as a hark back to Milan 1880 Congress.

He recalled his experiences of his schooldays and how it prepared him for life:

'At school, I communicated completely in BSL but at home it was a mixture. I used speech with my hearing friends, and I communicated in BSL with my deaf younger sister. She attended the same school as me one year later. She did the same as me. She attended mainstream for a year and then was transferred to RSD'.

He believed that his school did a good job of preparing him for life after school, remarking:

'My education and childhood gave me the confidence to manage within the workplace. I had the skills to communicate in speech and BSL, depending on what was appropriate'.

In contrast, Interviewee #2FB, who grew up signing with her deaf family felt attending a specialist school for the deaf which strongly advocated the use of oralism method of communication was a bad idea, stating:

'I think attending an oral school [secondary] was the wrong choice for me because I was used to a family where we communicated visually or wrote things down. Being forced to rely on speech was a complete change for me and I struggled. Whenever the teachers were out of the room, I would always revert to sign language. Sometimes I would just nod along, pretending to understand what the teacher was saying whilst sneaking a look at a classmates' work to understand what was being said. Other times I would pretend to understand and then ask one of my peers for clarification. I really struggled with that, so I felt that 5 years of school was enough. Most people stayed on for sixth form but when I reached the age of 16, I decided I'd had enough'.

But her main reason for stopping at 16 was:

'I had lost all my self-confidence'.

She criticised her school experiences insisting it did not help her prepare for future employment:

'When I was at school, I was given nothing like that. I wasn't prepared at all. The only thing we had was a brief talk about Careers before I left. I wasn't given any guidance. I had to work it out for myself and go to the Job Centre. Before there was something called a Labour Exchange. So, school didn't prepare me at all for work, and I wasn't academic.

'My education didn't start at school; it was when I had an interpreter. I would say I was about 30 years old when you were able to access a seminar through an interpreter – i.e. almost 15 years after I left school'.

She then added the reason she attended that school was because of her deaf mother who wanted her to better herself, explaining:

'I think School was more academic. I remember my mother telling me that she didn't want me to work in a factory because at the time working in a factory was common for deaf people. My mother wanted me to work in an office. I only studied for 3 O-levels and only passed 2 of them. The two I passed were creative: Art and Needlework. Nothing academic. So, I wasn't really prepared for the future!'

Interviewee #3MC commented that he went to a hearing primary school in the UK first before finishing off abroad, then returned to the UK to a hearing secondary school which he did for 3 years before being pulled out and sent to a secondary specialist school for the deaf. He recounted this:

'Yes. I don't regret that I went to hearing school because I managed. I wasn't 100% an outcast, no. You get very tired, and you don't have the social equality. Most deaf never really fit in because there are a lot of demands on the social expectations, sporting expectations and academic expectations. Anyway, by that time when I left school [for the deaf] in 1982, work in the civil service was very easy to get. There were lots of jobs at that time and I spoke well.

'After having left school, I gradually caught up with my O-levels and I had a Diploma in between so I got a job as a Clerical Worker in the Immigration Department.

'Re the 'catch-up' strictly speaking I actually did most of my education outside of school. I have a University Degree, a Diploma and 5 O-levels but most of that came after I left school because I was forced to do so with a private educator and coach. I only had 3 O-levels when I left school, but I could speak well, I could manage. I enjoyed talking to the boss. I managed to communicate well and that's why they gave me a job, I think. At that time, way back in the 1980s, you didn't really need O-levels'.

It thus indicated that he managed fine at different schools, but he had been playing catch up as far as gaining qualifications are concerned in the decades after leaving school.

However, he claimed that school experiences did not really help him in obtaining employment but mainly due to taking advantage of the Government regulations of the time [he was referring to the early 1980s]:

'In terms of obtaining employment, in 1982, 1983 there were so many jobs available in the government offices. Even cleaners with no formal qualifications were able to become clerical officers if they had worked long enough. Today, all that is finished, gone. I got there because at that time they had a 10% disabled quota. That has now been dropped. That has finished now. It was a bit patronising, but they

had an automatic 10% quota for all disabled people, not just Deaf but wheelchair users, the lot. That was the general government policy in those days.'

Interviewee #4FB from a signing deaf family recalled the challenges of learning English at an oral school, which she felt was important for career:

'I am impressed by my level of English; it was better than it is now. I would like perfect English. I know that my English is good for a Deaf person but it's not as high as I would like it to be. I can't hear. At school I couldn't hear my English lessons. My teacher was oral, I couldn't understand what they were saying. Videos didn't have subtitles – for Shakespeare for instance. I didn't understand anything.'

'Just theorising, if my school was bilingual, maybe my English would be better up to degree level. English in school was fine but then, maybe if I hadn't struggled as much as I did, I would have taken English at A-level and I could have pursued a career in journalism. English was hard, particularly hearing English because there was so much speech in the classroom. I just decided to leave it and focus on business instead. Degree level English would have involved learning Latin as well, which would have been so hard. My deafness definitely put a stop to it.'

'My friend studied A level English. She speaks and hears well but she still struggled. My English was better than hers, but she was better at speaking and listening. I just didn't see the point!'

She was clearly frustrated and as an undertone hinted she was sent to the school which employed the wrong mode of communication which she argued, did hamper her learning process, and narrowed the field of potential career options, which seemed to irk her as per the last couple of lines when she mentioned her friend who had a better speech than herself.

However, she acknowledged that she went to the right school notwithstanding, commenting:

'Really that oral school didn't suit me, but it had the best education provision. There were other Deaf schools around that used sign language, but the level of education provided was very low. So really, I was lucky to have attended that school, it was unfortunate that it was oral, and I struggled to understand the teaching. The education at school prepared me for A-levels and meant I could do A-levels because I passed all my GCSE's with good marks. I gained GCSE's through oral education that prepared for progress to A-levels. It prepared me for A-levels, which I passed and then was able to go on to university.'

Interviewee #9MB who is of similar family background, thought attending specialist schools for the deaf is a must, even though these might be boarding schools, explaining where his family attitudes influenced this way of thinking:

'My families' deaf attitude is linked to attending boarding school because all four generations of my family attended boarding schools for the deaf. I attended a full-time boarding school for the deaf from the age of 6. Before that, I attended a local school where they used Total Communication, where they adjusted the communication methods to suit the student. I was too young to know what I wanted then, so I just went with the flow at school although naturally I used sign language. I was then sent to Mill Hall Primary School, which had a strong oral approach to teaching. It was very strict in terms of using oral communication, which I found quite a shock at first'.

However, like the deaf parents of Interviewees #2FB & #4FB, his parents were of the same opinion of the merit of sending their deaf child to be exposed to an oral education despite themselves using sign language at home. It might seem a paradox to an outsider person who might not be versed in a typical deaf family unit. He commented:

'My parents always felt that an oral education was the best option and I remember saying that choosing the best education was the most important thing. They felt that having an oral education would prepare me for living in the hearing world. I remember that clearly. When I was 11 years old, I went to Mary Hare School. Compared to Mill Hall, Mary Hare, in my time, was more flexible in its' approach to communication. Everyone is shocked when I say that, because they consider Mary Hare to have a strict oral approach to teaching. However, when I attended, it was more flexible and they allowed us to use a mixture of speech, BSL, Sign Supported English in class and to communicate with each other. Although the majority of the teaching was still oral'.

Despite the philosophy of his parents, which he seemingly supported, he expressed doubts on how well the school prepared him for when he leaves school:

'Well, I don't know if my education adequately prepared me for a career. In some ways, yes. When I look back to my school days, I had a good relationship with my peers. However, our relationship with those in authority, our teachers was not as good. There was a divide between us. I always felt that me and my peers were passive. We weren't assertive in the way we communicated with our teachers. Perhaps that was just the style of education then, but I don't feel we were really taught how to engage with people in authority. They were tough on us and we just went along with what they told us to do. That prepared us in some ways for when we would deal with people in authority in the hearing world'.

It is clear from the above that he would have liked to have learnt how to deal with his non-deaf peers and non-deaf seniors, and he regretted not having had the opportunity to develop these skills in that respect. It is similar to the view of an orally educated Interviewee #5MC, who felt that while he benefitted academically, he did not gain much in terms of social development as the following paragraphs would show.

Interviewee #5MC indicated that apart for just a few weeks when he was about 5 where he briefly attended a school for deaf children which he admittedly doesn't have a recall, he never went to any specialist school for the deaf, instead going to local schools, noting:

'My first memory of education was when I was about 4 or 5 years old. I remember going to a school for the deaf and finding it strange that the other children were signing but I could not. I was moved to a different Primary School [. . .] but the mainstream school was nearby. I remember walking up a hill to get there, but it only took 5 minutes. My two older brothers already went there'.

He recounted his experiences of being at a local mainstream school in quite a positive light, explaining that being young himself, one would have much less of social inhibitions:

'I remember everyone looking me up and down as if I was strange. I probably did look strange with my hearing aids and radio aid around my neck. There was no one else like me so it must have been unusual for them. I was the only deaf child there so I managed the best I could. It wasn't bad. I was so young that I didn't think much of it because I knew no different but as you get older you become more aware of people looking at you as though you are different. In mainstream I was taught reading, writing and maths as normal. I achieved well. Out of about 30 children, I would say that I was in the top 5. I attended Primary School from the age of 5-11 and then I had to take the biggest step between the ages of 11-18 and my parents had to decide what to do about my education'.

Upon reflection, he did not seem too perturbed about the missing out of the possibility of attending a deaf secondary school, i.e. Mary Hare, which was a grammar school at that time, commenting on his views:

'There were three options: Mary Hare, a school with a PHU (it wasn't local. The nearest one would have required a long taxi journey, or a house move, which was difficult at that time), or a private school, which was already attended by my two older brothers. My parents would have to pay for that themselves, it wasn't free. I remember visiting Mary Hare when I was about 10 to see how I felt about it. I only have brief memories of that visit, but I remember it as being a very dark and sombre place. I didn't

feel very connected to anyone there because although everyone was deaf, I didn't feel any connection to them. My Primary School was a fully hearing environment, so I had never spent any time with other deaf children. I didn't feel great about Mary Hare, although if my parents had picked it, I would have been okay with the decision. The Private School was opposite my house. I could literally see it from my bedroom window when I opened my curtains in the morning'.

He argued that it was hard to develop social confidence, but he overcompensated in different fields claiming he got an education, so the academic skills were there, but lacking social confidence. He had to develop that confidence himself later, with no external help. He managed himself, by going away at weekends, going to the Deaf Pub, going to chess tournaments, and these helped him to develop socially.

'It helped me to have resilience and determination. I think if I had gone to a Deaf School and then found myself in a hearing work environment, that would have been a complete culture shock for me. I was determined, I realised I had to grin and bear it. In the same way I had to get through school, I had to do the same in the work environment. I was resilient. I stood firm, I just carried on. I do sometimes think about what my life would have been like if I had gone to Mary Hare. I just don't know. That is a big question. It's interesting. Maybe I would have lower academic skills but function better socially? I don't know'.

He felt that being sent to a private school benefited him in terms of gaining good exam results in readiness for the university but not for personal and social development since he got into the secondary school, reminiscing:

'After 11 that changed, and it was much harder. So, they came to check on my academic progress, but at no point did anyone ask about my social skills. They were focused solely on academic education. Social skills were not of any importance. My Primary School was mixed. It was a state school – free of charge. Boys and Girls. My secondary school was a private school and boys only. To be honest I think having no girls there and being the only deaf person, made the whole experience even worse! It was a double blow'.

Interviewee #7MC has a similar experience recounting the following:

'We weren't taught any sign language at the primary school, where I was based at a PHU unit. After that I went to a secondary school where I was the only deaf person in the school. I took the same radio aid with me and that was fine for interacting with teachers. I had a support worker who travelled to different schools.

'Either once a week or once every two weeks she came mainly to check that the equipment was working. I was mostly fine there. Yet there would be the occasional thing re the communication breakdown but mostly it was fine. I had a statement of special educational needs (SEN) which the school and my parents organised. I didn't actually see it until years later! But they were trying to make sure that I had what I needed. My memory and my parent's memories were that they always said, "He's doing fine" because my grades were always good'.

Despite himself being profoundly deaf, he thought that working hard at school with the necessary technical support [i.e. radio aid in his case], he would get good results which would enable him to get into university as stated above which showed that the teachers were not too worried about his deafness as he was always getting good grades at school.

In contrast, Interviewee #6MA, went to a specialist school for the deaf, but was frustrated at times by his experiences there, noting:

'I went to a Deaf school, but it was oral. My education was at the time when sign language was banned in education. It was like that for the whole of my school life. At school we weren't allowed to sign but outside school we communicated using gesture and 'school' signs. Some of my peers had deaf family so I picked up some sign language from them in a social setting.

'When I was at school, I wanted to be a lawyer. I liked the idea of a political career and being in the courtroom debating. My teachers didn't think that was a good idea. They said it wouldn't work because my English skills weren't good enough, I am deaf, and I don't speak. They put pressure on me to train for a career they deemed more suitable. They made that decision for me. They said I was good at art and design so they suggested I would be good as a Drafting man in the field of architecture. I didn't argue and went along with it, but I was told what to do'.

After working in the field of architecture, he later went back to study as a mature student leading to a change of career and reflected this:

'Clearly the school did not prepare me for a career. I took control and decided for myself what I wanted to do later'.

Interviewee #10FA has a similar experience and added that learning to speak despite her deafness is a bonus for herself, recalling thus:

'I went to a mainstream Primary School. It had a PHU but used an oral approach and didn't encourage sign language. I went to a Deaf School [Mary Hare] when I was 11, where the education was oral. With my hearing aids, I'm still severely deaf. At Primary School, I had Speech Therapy from the age of 5-11. My parents were very good and made me do my homework too. I think all of that has helped me now'.

She emphasised that a sufficient ability to speak is always useful in playing a small part for her career progression. Yet like many of the other interviewees, she expressed doubt on whether her school experiences well prepared her for a suitable career, noting:

'Your question was whether I feel my education prepared me for a career. I think that education focuses on academic qualifications. That is important because having good grades and qualifications opens lots of doors. But I don't feel that I was given the right career advice.

'There was a lot of pressure then to go to university to do a course in Business or Engineering. There was no emphasis on careers like Teaching or Nursing, people related jobs. It was more academically focused. So, in a way, yes, my education did prepare me to do that. But, when I was 16, 17 or 18 years old, I wasn't prepared to look at the other career options out there for me'.

Moving onto Interviewee #8MA, he has similarly frustrating experiences even though it was in a variety of different settings as he explained:

'I went to a normal mainstream school, and I had no communication support. The teachers educated us through speech, and I didn't understand what they were saying. I moved to another school and the same thing happened. I couldn't understand. At the time I was educated there wasn't much understanding of learning disabilities, and they didn't know what to do for me. My school was a bit backward. Now there is a lot more understanding about learning disabilities. When I was about 7 or 8 years old, I moved to a different school. I went there every day. Three or four of us attended a PHU (Partially Hearing Unit). I spent 50% of my time in the PHU and the remaining 50% in the mainstream side of the school. It was the same story in the mainstream side; I couldn't understand what was being taught. The PHU was a little better, but I still didn't understand everything. We had a qualified Teacher of the Deaf, but she communicated orally so we had to lipread'.

However, he added that he managed to 'catch up' when he moved to the boarding school, which was a specialist school for the deaf boys, yet reminded it was not 100%, noting:

'When I was about 11 years old, I moved to a boarding school. This was when my education really started because we had experienced teachers of the deaf and I could actually understand what I was being taught. I learned a lot. Some staff were unqualified but still experienced. I completed my O-levels/CSE's and finished when I was 16 years old. I achieved 4 O-levels'.

He added that one valuable asset he brought with him from his schooldays where he had to rely on oral communication is the skill of lip-reading, stating:

'Definitely the case that communication skills that I gained at school were valuable for me in later life. Some of my work colleagues were difficult to lipread. Some were patient. It was still difficult to lipread and I would say I only understood about 80%. Some colleagues were easier to lipread and very kind to me'.

It is a clear mix of different school types and different communication method approaches as well as not always focusing on the pupil's social or personal development but instead focusing on whatever qualification a typical deaf pupil might be able to achieve. A good majority might have a mix of positive and negative experiences at school but stressed that they were often not always given good advice on what to do career-wise or what to expect from everyday life situations which may not necessarily be work-related.

Their schooldays would be marked by whether they would learn to speak or rely on sign language; teachers' expectations of what the pupils might be able to achieve in terms of qualifications; however not so much on the emotional development which interestingly did not seem to affect these ten interviewees so much – as the section 5.2.3.2 on 'mental wellbeing' would amply demonstrate.

6.1.3 Further/High Education Experiences

For those who have attended college or university, this section considers the relevancy or usefulness in this type of education for seeking and maintaining their jobs regardless of whether their job level is commensurate with their qualifications achieved. This section has the purpose of checking whether these interviewees are said to be 'under-employed' in their professions or not. This is another part of my hypothesis which argues that deaf people in general are sometimes, reluctantly or otherwise, willing to be in a job which is below that expected of his own qualifications.

Starting with Interviewee #9MB who attended college and recalled his experiences positively:

'Before I entered the workplace, I went to college. Initially, this was a culture shock because I found myself in a class full of hearing students as the only deaf student. That was a real challenge for me. I remember when I went to college, I had to look at myself and think about what I needed. Although I thought a notetaker would be the best, I was encouraged to try all the options available, including a BSL interpreter. I gave the BSL interpreter a go, but it didn't work well. There was a complete communication breakdown. My course wasn't suitable for a BSL interpreter. The notetaker on the other hand was brilliant. I could keep the notes and take them away with me after class. The difficulty was when I wanted to participate in class discussions. That was much harder to facilitate. I did an HND for two years and I did really well in my studies.

'I feel that those 2 years were the most beneficial part of my education than the education before it because I was able to focus on a course that I had chosen myself to do. Nobody had forced me to do it. It was my decision. I did that for two years. At the beginning it was difficult because I had a lot to learn and no one knew me or how to work with me or how to help me. As time passed, we got to know each other and rather than my peers helping me, I was able to help them. Other students ended up approaching me for help all the time. I realised then that I was their equal, perhaps more competent than them and that was a positive step. It gave me confidence, which prepared me for the workplace. I really enjoyed the HND at college more than my previous education'.

Thus, by inference, he argued his two years at college prepared him well for his future career. However, he did toy with the idea of expanding his HND into a full degree but decided against it claiming in the world of technology, a degree course can easily become outdated:

'I thought if I started with the HND; if it went well, I could jump on to a degree course later. The HND was at Degree level but only for 2 years. After that you went into work experience and that is what I did. I never ended up doing the degree at all in the end. The qualification was good, but it didn't give me all the skills and knowledge that I needed. I learned the remaining skills through on-the-job training.

'That was my choice to do other training in the workplace. It is such a rapidly developing field that even if you complete a high-level qualification, within 3-4 years, that qualification is out of date! I had peers who were studying for a degree while I was studying for my HND. By the time they entered the workplace; their degree was already outdated. Although the qualifications were relevant, technology changes so quickly that your skills need to be continually refreshed through ongoing professional development'.

He argued that learning on the job was more beneficial for himself in terms of career progression.

Interviewer #1MA attended college locally for a couple of years and found it a bit of a challenge, remarking:

'At the age of 16 I was not sure what I wanted to do as a job. I was directed towards a course, and I thought I might as well do it. I grabbed the opportunity at the local college. I didn't really enjoy studying I just patiently did it. Once I got my NVQ 1 and 2 and my BTEC qualification, that was enough. I didn't think University was for me. To me, higher qualifications meant more paperwork and I wanted to get into the workplace. I wanted to be active. I wanted to get out there. Some years later, I got the supervisory role at my work, and that came because of a quick 1-week course that my employer paid for me to attend'.

He was evidently being pragmatic and regarding the paperwork needed for studying he has his disdain for this – indicating his preference for handwork, whatever comes may. He simply saw a study at college as a necessary minor step towards obtaining eventual work – he never went to college again since.

Interviewer #2FB like him above attended a local college although for a short time after having left school in her 5th year stating:

'After passing 2 out of 3 O-levels, I went to college for 13 weeks. The course doesn't exist now but at that time it was called a Punch Card Operator. I learned that for 13 weeks and during that time we learned about technology. The teaching was oral again, but the teacher was very easy to lipread. Lovely! It was a college for disabled people, it wasn't just deaf students, a range of disabilities. There were two deaf students, me and one other person. The teacher would focus on us. The rest of the class were hearing. We managed, particularly because a lot of the course was practical, and it went well'.

Again, like Interviewee #1MA, she never went to college again afterwards but did attend some training sessions, usually work-related CPD activities, where she claimed she for the first time really appreciated education.

'After that my education was really through different seminars that I attended where an interpreter was provided. That was an eye opener because through sign, I was able to access learning whatever was on offer at that time. Looking back, I realise that my education started then, when I could access an interpreter. My education didn't start at school; it was when I had an interpreter'.

She reminded that she was 'self-taught' rather than having benefited from schools or college.

Interviewee #3MC has a different experience in that after school, he went straight to work for several years and then decided to go to college to gain further qualifications, explaining thus:

'I went to college. College was good, many interesting people but I wasn't sure that the Diploma course was good for full time employment. It was specialised [it was book-binding]. But I used that to get to university two years later on a part time basis. It was really good, I enjoyed that. I enjoyed University more than the office. Because it was a historical course. This makes it easier if you are deaf because you can read books to catch up. I like history a lot, yes'.

He used college as a reason for gaining access to university as he always enjoyed history and so studied history specialism as part of the university degree, and he freely admitted that doing the university course is not specifically linked to his job at that time but more for his own enjoyment. He said he was in his mid-30s at that time when he started doing the degree course on a part-time basis. However, he acknowledged the usefulness of his university degree stating:

'I did not use the qualification, but it was useful to get to university, to be at a higher level. Just to clarify, I did my degree when I was working for the Metropolitan Police, part time. The Degree was a BA Honours Degree in Modern History'.

He did it for pleasure and prestige as he was in his early 40s when he completed his part-time degree course, commenting:

'I didn't try to use my high-level qualifications to hit that glass ceiling. Many others would not stand for that, they would try to hit the glass ceiling and break through the barriers. Not myself because my qualifications came later. By the time I got my degree, it wasn't worth it. I only really got the Degree to show that I am not stupid. For myself. I wanted to demonstrate, on a private level, that I have a bit of a brain. For the prestige, not so much but anyway as I would argue that a better description for doing this is self-satisfaction'.

Unlike the above 3 interviewees, interviewee #4FB went to the 6th form college with the intention of gaining A-levels with the aim of getting into the university – but found college a struggle:

'I then attended a hearing sixth form college to do my A-levels for 2 years. It prepared me for A-levels, which I passed and then was able to go on to university. However, I struggled at college because I had no interpreter and no support. I started with 3 A-levels and in the end, I had to drop down to 1 (Economics – Finance) because I struggled to understand the teaching due to the lack of communication support.

Everyone else was hearing and I couldn't understand what they were saying. So unfortunately, I had to drop 2 A-levels. Maybe if I had been given the right support from the age of 11, things would have been different'.

She argued that it is a matter of being given relevant and suitable accessible support whether at school or at college, she would have gone much further. Yet she persevered and went to university – she described her experiences at the first university she attended, thus:

'I went to university twice. The first time I studied Business Finance at Derby University. HRM – Human Resource Management. That course was for 2 years, and I was given an interpreter. It was the first time I had been given an interpreter and about time! I didn't continue with the Degree because I experienced some bullying. I was the only deaf person on the business course and the other students were not nice to me'.

She changed to a different university and did a completely different course – she explained later that she chose the new course subject as her mother, though deaf herself, is a qualified social worker for many years.

'The second time I went to University, I did a Social Worker course. There was no interpreter, but it was a lovely group and I enjoyed it because I had the background of using Social Workers in the past'.

Formerly a social worker, she has now different jobs, but shrugged it off while admitting that she is overqualified, stating:

'Let me think of my current job title; it's a new title. Family Engagement Officer. My title changed last week because the previous one was not appropriate. I'm now a Family Engagement Officer. I'm overqualified. My last job was an Information Officer. I was overqualified for that as well. Before that I was a Social Worker. I had the right qualifications for that role'.

This is not a unique phenomenon as it is a similar case for interviewee #3MC who has a degree, albeit achieved during his career, but not seeking promotion to the right level as commensurate with his the then newly gained qualification.

Interviewee #5MC did not go to college at all but went straight to the university immediately after completing A-levels in his school. He recalled his university experiences and its challenges:

'I went to the University of Reading. The first term was difficult as it felt very different, but the second term was easier. By that time, I knew people better, we had been out together drinking so it was easier to make small talk. I think it was difficult because I was living at Wessex Hall and everything happened at Bulmershe campus and it was a long way to go so I didn't feel that I was involved.

'I coped better in the evenings when I could go out socialising and have a light-hearted evening. In the daytime it was all just lectures and I felt a bit bored. I was lazy to be honest. I remember using the old clunky computers and waiting for my work to print, slowly a line at a time. In my first year I stayed in halls but in my second year I stayed in a private house. I was asked to house share by a friend, and I thought I might as well even though it was a bit expensive. That was much better because it was more like real life. In the halls you were tied to their rules, their mealtimes etc. In the private house it was more relaxed because you could eat anytime and do what you wanted. I was out a lot - drinking. All the time, drinking! I couldn't do that now; it would be impossible! That was 1992 – 1995'.

He clearly immersed himself in the so-called stereotypical student life at that time, flunking most of the lectures, which perhaps is a camouflage for subconsciously deciding not to stress himself trying to follow these lectures on account of his deafness. However, he made an effort to work a bit harder in his final year but demonstrated what he relied upon in order to get a university degree at the end:

'In the third year, I had to get stuck in and try working harder. Really, I don't know how I passed because I missed nearly all the lectures. Anyway, I wasn't bothered. I self-studied. I took myself to the library, read all the books, made notes. I remember one lecture was on Friday morning at 9am. Early! I didn't like that because I would normally wake up at 10 or 11am. I missed nearly all of those. It was on Econometrics, linked to Mathematics. I hated that.

'I preferred English where I could explain things about economics in words. That was where my strength lay, Maths was a weakness. In the third year, you had to take a final exam plus write a dissertation of 10,000 words which was a lot to write and hard work! I had to do a lot of research on the national minimum wage (before that was approved) and discuss the benefits and negatives of such a scheme. I submitted my dissertation one day late I think so I was marked down for that. In the end I got a 2:2, I just missed getting a 2:1. I did 6 or 7 exams overall plus the dissertation. Some of them I got a 2:1, others a 2:2. My marks were averaged out and I got a high 2:2, but literally just missed a 2:1'.

Over the years, he admitted having reflected on what other qualifications he might have liked to do, as about a decade earlier he was facing redundancy:

'During that period, when redundancies were being announced I remember thinking hypothetically what the perfect job for me would be. I realised that I really wanted to help the deaf. I thought about the skills I had. I knew I had good English and Maths so that would be perfect. Then I started thinking about other qualifications I might need. After all, years earlier I had achieved a degree. I had reasonable A -levels. They weren't brilliant but good enough'.

However, he added that despite gaining a degree, he felt it was a challenge finding a job afterwards citing communication as an issue, even though he does not use sign language and speak reasonably clear enough:

'My options were limited. Really, I needed a few months of work experience to practice my skills and gain confidence. I had only had a few weeks. I think hearing people jump straight into employment, but it is much harder as a deaf person to find work. Being unable to hear and communicate is an issue'.

Similarly, interviewee #7MC went straight to the university, and insisted that going there was beneficial for himself career-wise in general, explaining his reasoning:

'So, the education has helped with that because I specialised in Science at A-level and then did a degree in Science at University. The job I am doing now is because of the education I gained earlier'.

However, he then acknowledged he was considering whether to go to higher level degree upon graduating at that time but demurred:

'I found it hard after university to decide what to do. I had thought at one time of carrying on at university. But, in my final year I felt that I wasn't really good enough and I backed away from that idea. Looking back, maybe I should have considered other possibilities. But for a year I thought about what to do. I had two short term jobs and I read a lot of career materials about what jobs I could do and possible jobs for me. I always thought that writing might be a career for me because I have always enjoyed that. Either Scientific writing or editing so I spent that year trying to decide between the two and I applied for several different jobs. I got interviewed for some of them. Toward the end of the year, I got offered two jobs: one at the place where I work now and the other at a Science Journal Publishing Company. That would have involved copy editing, checking the layout and format, proof reading. That was quite a big company and where I am is a small company. I made the decision to go with the small company. That was quite a long time ago now.

'I wanted to be a Scientist really. At the point of university, it changed. The qualifications I chose were compatible with that job though'.

After nearly two decades in this field, he freely admits to considering returning to university, to assist perhaps in a career change, remarking:

'Also, in terms of the change of career, there is the possibility (I'm not sure yet) of going back to university. I had a meeting with someone at the University to discuss the support they have available compared to when I was at university before. I was very impressed with some of the new technology that they have'.

He reflected that it is partly due to the fact he stayed in one job for so long and it was perhaps getting a bit too comfortable for him.

Interviewee #10FA also went straight to university after school. Upon reflection despite her steadfast attitude at that time, she thought she might have chosen a different career path if she was to go back in time, explaining:

'I left school in 2002, and I went to university. Your question was whether I feel my education prepared me for a career. I think that education focuses on academic qualifications. That is important because having good grades and qualifications opens lots of doors. But I don't feel that I was given the right career advice. There was a lot of pressure then to go to university to do a course in Business or Engineering. There was no emphasis on careers like Teaching or Nursing, people related jobs. It was more academically focused. So, in a way, yes, my education did prepare me to do that. But, when I was 16, 17 or 18 years old, I wasn't prepared to look at the other career options out there for me.

'While my education gave me guidance on a suitable career path, and I followed that advice. But I realise now that they were limiting my options, limiting my ideas of what I could do as a career? I studied Business at university and it was because of my school's influence. When I was doing my A-levels, my Art teacher encouraged me to consider going to Art College. At that time, I said no and insisted that I was going to study business instead. I was thinking about the future, and I felt that studying Business would open more doors for me. So, I chose Business over Art. But now, a few years down the line, I'm a little disappointed that I made that decision'.

However, she felt that while the career might have been hoisted upon her, she felt it was still the right direction as far as her career so far has progressed:

'But the qualification gained, my Degree in Business, that is definitely relevant to the job I have now'.

Later on, she made a very telling comment claiming that if she was not deaf she might never have attended university as per her two hearing siblings:

'If I was hearing I would have attended a mainstream secondary school like my brother and sister. I probably wouldn't have gone to university. I think I would have done an NVQ in something like Childcare or done an apprenticeship. I don't think I would be where I am now. My sister works for the NHS as a nurse. She is half-way to becoming a fully qualified nurse. My brother is a mechanic. They both did not go to university'.

It seemed to be her way of thinking that being deaf herself, she would need to 'fire on all cylinders' in order to prove not only to herself but to other people, they be in work environment or even family members.

Moving onto interviewee #6MA, his experiences were different as he claimed he was instructed to go to a specific college for a certain course as recommended by his teachers:

'After school I went to a residential college for 3 years. My teachers put pressure on me to train for a career they deemed more suitable. They made that decision for me. They said I was good at art and design so they suggested I would be good as a Drafting man in the field of architecture. I didn't argue and went along with it, but I was told what to do. That is what I went to college to study'.

That was in the early 1980s, but then in 1990 during the recession, with many of his peers losing jobs within the CAD field, he decided upon a career change by undertaking further course, re-educating himself as he put it:

'Jobs were drying up and I decided to change career. I did that by re-educating myself. I put myself through management courses to raise my career prospects. I was looking at finding a different career path.

'At the time I was elected to work for the RNID [Royal National Institute for the Deaf]. They needed to engage deaf people to help them to develop their political influence. I worked with them on a 3-year project. I decided to re-educate myself through a qualification called a CMS – Certificate of Management Studies. I then went on to complete a Diploma through evening study at university. Following that I went to the Open University to do an MBA. Altogether it took 5 years, funded with my

own money. I paid for everything myself to improve my career prospects and find a new pathway to management. That was only possible by upskilling myself’.

He reiterated the following statement as linked to his own studies:

‘Clearly the school did not prepare me for a career. I took control and decided for myself what I wanted to do later’.

In contrast, interviewee #8MA never went to college after leaving school, explaining what happened:

‘When I was 16 years old, I achieved 4 O-levels. After that I was supposed to have a place at a sixth form college but when I went for the panel interview, they weren’t sure about my suitability for my chosen career with the CSEs I had. They weren’t confident in me and so I changed my mind about going to college. I decided to start looking for a job instead’.

It indicated that the attitudes of the college staff within the panel were daunting to him, that he did not relish the prospect of a couple of years at that college so sought work instead. He admitted that it was unfortunate as he did further studies years later to improve his career prospects, which happened to some avail. He stressed that though he undertook all the additional training, he still found it very stressful:

‘I took the initiative to study myself and fill those missing gaps with evening classes, correspondence courses, self-study at home. It was a lot of work!’

‘I feel if I had been given communication support at college, maybe I would have passed the qualifications quicker or without so much effort on my part. I would have benefited from the teaching better. At that time, there was no support available’.

He then mentioned the importance of gaining appropriate qualifications for his job, but felt that it made no difference in terms of upwards mobility in the career ladder scale, recalling:

‘It was definitely due to a lack of deaf awareness because I had some accountancy qualifications before some of my colleagues had them. I was ahead of my colleagues in that way, but that wasn’t always reflected in promotions. I think that’s because my manager lacked deaf awareness.’

I feel it was linked to a lack of deaf awareness because I already had the qualifications so that wasn't the issue. I felt that my manager saw my qualifications but then discounted me because I was deaf, and he viewed that negatively. No. Never. I was never offered management or leadership role as a deaf person. However, I've had different managers: black, ethnic minority, women but never a deaf or disabled manager'.

Concluding this section, while most of the interviewees have attended colleges or universities, it was not always after having left school, but some of them were playing 'catch-up' in terms of gaining appropriate qualifications as needed for their careers.

And whether by design or by accident, these further or higher education studies might be useful for them to study – however almost all of them have highlighted the challenges of studying for a variety of reasons, i.e. insufficient level of support for deaf students at such educational institutions.

6.2 Conclusion

The following sub-sections summarises the findings from the interviewees' comments for three different themes.

6.2.1 Employment - Summary

There are three sub-themes within Employment theme and the first is Gaining Jobs

Several mentioned the struggles in getting a job, stating typically applying to many jobs to no avail. However, the three non-signing deaf interviewees attended several interviews over time, and by relying on their 'reasonably clear enough' speech they followed the interview panel to good effect. Therefore, this group is divided into two – first group of those who might have someone with him for interviews such as family members or interpreters – second group of those who would go it alone during interviews.

Next sub-theme is Job Interviews

There were some comments on whether to reveal deafness before attending interviews, one argued he never did and as a result got invited to several interviews albeit with mixed results.

On the other hand, one interviewee always insisted on putting down on application form her deafness and readily acknowledged that it could be the reason why she got invited to so few interviews.

But overall, many of them do not have much experience of attending job interviews, which could denote that they may feel rather insecure about updating their CVs and seeking a new job at intervals.

After getting their jobs, several tended never to seek promotion, arguing it is all down to the willingness of the prospective employer in hiring a deaf person or not.

Thus, one might argue is linked to the general attitude of those on the interview panel, but then would it also be the issue of deaf people needing to know how to effectively perform at interviews.

The third and final sub-theme is Training Opportunities. It is about whether these can be useful or relevant for the deaf staff in acquiring further skills which could lead to seniority and/or promotion. Several claimed to not having had training either in-house or provided by external training providers. But a couple of others did own self-study via universities, training centres etc. for own self-improvement as part of CPD – one for own prestige but the other for seeking promotion. One pointed out the reason for deaf staff sometimes not bothering with training opportunities is that it is due to lack of access as he had asked for interpreting support but often it was not provided, so did not attend.

Overall, the experiences of these interviewees are very diverse in that a few will have had some training opportunities throughout their careers whereas many others will have had very little or virtually no training.

6.2.2 School Experiences – Summary

This looks at the school experiences of these interviewees – where most of them attended specialist schools for the deaf which employed the oral mode of communication, and that signing was at least frowned upon and downright banned there.

Those from deaf family, despite using sign language at home, went to specialist schools for the deaf which banned the use of sign language, because of good education provisions in terms of qualifications which would be important for seeking employment afterwards.

Then those signing deaf from hearing family went to primary mainstream schools before going to secondary specialist school for the deaf. Mentions were made re the development of lip-reading skills and speech therapy, which helped up to a point. Yet they remarked that the career choices on offer from school subjects were rather limited. All three acknowledged some benefits of the schools in terms of gaining some qualifications and some communication skills only.

The final three who are non-signing commented that their schools did not prepare them well for the life after school, i.e. in developing social confidence leading to loneliness which perhaps ironically made for resilience in career.

It becomes evident that from school experiences the pupil's social or personal development was put aside to achieving qualifications. Apart from both positive and negative experiences, they felt they were not given useful advice for future careers.

6.2.3 Further/Higher Education Experiences – Summary

All the interviewees have attended further and/or higher education sometime in their careers not necessarily after having left school though that is the case for most of them. It seems that the recurring underlying feeling is that further qualifications are usually useful for their jobs, yet it has been a struggle studying there for a variety of reasons – usually due to lack of suitable access.

Having attended deaf schools, some found upon joining a college or university as culture shock, as often due to being the only deaf student within a class of hearing students, leading to certain difficulties in classroom activities participation, for instance.

Almost all have challenging experiences of full participation in further education but saw attending college or university as the necessary stepping-stone to gaining employment. Some felt the difficulties lie with the college or university in terms of provision of support for deaf students, i.e. notetakers and interpreters.

When probed further regarding their qualifications and their current job positions, many of them acknowledged being overqualified for their jobs and felt that it was better than not having jobs.

Seeing that they have attended college or university, it is interesting to note that some of them have their doubts on the purpose of further or higher education as far as job seeking is concerned, this in addition to also highlighting generally insufficient level of support for deaf students at educational institutions.

Chapter 7: Results -NVivo findings → Third Research Question:

7.0 Introduction

The third of the three chapters looking at NVivo findings explores the data analysis of the interview transcripts as linked to the third Research Question:

What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

7.1 Data Analysis of the 10 interviews using NVivo: Third Research Question

As already indicated for this third Research Question, the three themes being analysed are the following

The data was carefully analysed as per the research questions and the following themes emerged:

- Family background and support
- Wellbeing and mental health issues
- Deaf Identity – relevancy or otherwise

7.1.1 Family issues and support

This section looks at how deaf employees might fall back on own family for support at the present time and whether this is sufficiently relevant to their coping with everyday life at work with mainly hearing colleagues and management. It also looks at the upbringing and whether family support and encouragement is the key to one's character as an adult in dealing with their work environment and raising to challenges present in their work. So consequently, does family support – either current or in the past – play an important part in the self-confidence of a deaf person within that environment which can be lonely at times due to communication barriers and/or challenges.

From the 10 interviewees, one might argue that these participants are split into two groups – one having parents who are hearing and thus much more likely to communicate using spoken and written English which is the case for the 7 of them – though four of these would grow up and acquire sign language as their preferred mode of communication in their adulthood, even though they would need to revert back to spoken language when meeting family members who would typically be hearing and would more often than not have no understanding or knowledge of sign language.

The other three participants are deaf family thus are exposed to sign language from an earlier age, thereby acquiring the spoken and written English during their education – sometime with parental input – some deaf parents are confidently able in English language – usually written rather than spoken. Of the three from deaf parents, I checked with them on their parents' fluency of English language, just one

of them [interviewee #2FB] confirmed that her parents were not fluent in English language and as she grew up, she sometimes found herself helping her parents with translation as her English were slightly better than her parents. The other two interviewees [#4FB and #9MB] indicated that one of their parents had a good command of English which was somewhat useful in terms of access to the everyday language when they were growing up.

This is just a useful background knowledge for us to indicate how important and perhaps relevant family support is for each of the interviewee, and whether this changes over time as each of them embarks on their career path.

Interviewee #1MA reflected on his parents' concern in ensuring that he sought and obtained the appropriate job, explaining that they got him assessed:

'I started applying for formal jobs. Actually, before I did that, I went to see a psychologist like a career assessment. It was my parents' idea. They wanted me to go to see this psychologist for them to assess me and see what jobs would be suitable for me.'

He also added that communicating with his family was a bit of a challenge in that he would have had to meet them more than half-way to discuss in general, explaining:

'I tried my best and improved my writing. At home my parents spoke to me and my grandfather was hearing too. We communicated in a mix of signing and speech; half and half.'

He mentioned his hearing mother learnt a bit of sign language as he grew up partly because he had a younger sister born a few years later who was also deaf. The rest of the family never learnt sign language which perhaps was par for the course as per the other interviewees.

Interviewee #6MA is the only one deaf in his family unlike #1MA who has a young deaf sibling:

'I was born profoundly deaf. All my family are hearing. I am the only deaf member of my family. Although my family is large, I am the only one. I went to a Deaf school, but it was oral. No one in my family signs'

He briefly explains his frustrations with his hearing family, claiming this was what he did to solve the problem though not to everyone's pleasure:

'When I socialise with my hearing family it is terrible, boring. I'm treated like I'm part of the furniture. I do it out of duty and go home. I don't enjoy it. But I booked an interpreter for a large family gathering and some of my family were not happy. Yet I was determined to bring an interpreter because it worked well for me. It freed me from worrying about all the problems. I think you have to be clear with yourself.'

'For a big family gathering, I would definitely bring an interpreter. Some deaf people disagree and think they are fine without, but I feel that without that some family don't know who I am. They forget we are people. They don't know who I am until I speak through an interpreter'.

He recalled the reaction of his father when he started talking to his son via an interpreter:

'My father was so shocked and didn't know who his son was or what I did before that happened. Prior to that our conversation was, "How are you? How are the family? How is your job?" I would just nod. That was it. The next time he would ask the same questions. Very brief.'

'But with an interpreter I can actually engage with him, have a joke, have a proper conversation and in-depth discussion about the barriers I face as a Deaf man and what I am doing about them. He is aware now that I am discussing these issues in Parliament. It should be like that. Without an interpreter it's not possible. It is important that my identity is clear, I don't want to shy away or lack confidence. You must be determined to stand firm for your rights'.

He then added he has a deaf wife, but believes he ought to have the best of both worlds wherever possible, remarking:

'My wife signs. My wife is Deaf, and my son is deaf. Although he is oral as his first language. Sign language is his second language and he signs fluently but he has good English. I believe that I live in both worlds for good reason'.

It is interesting he expects his deaf son to speak orally before learning sign language which seems to reflect on his own personal experiences when he was growing up.

Interviewee #10FA comes from a hearing family and while married to a deaf man, has hearing children. Being a career-driven working mother, she emphasised the importance of family life as much as is possible, explaining:

'With my current job, I often find myself working in the evenings. It's got to the point where I don't give myself a good break from work. I need to get that work/life balance. My husband is very good about it. At the same time, I'm starting to feel that my job is affecting my family life. I want to be able to spend time with my children and focus on them without being distracted by thoughts about work. I need to be able to put my work to one side and give myself a few hours in the evening to focus on myself and my family.'

Yet on the other hand, she reminded of the challenges of keeping up with her hearing parents, siblings, and other relatives, offering this:

'Family is very important to me. I do feel involved in my family but there are times when I feel like an outsider. When my family are all together, they talk quickly, and I can't follow it. I am grateful to my mother because she tells me what everyone is saying when she realises, I am not keeping up. Sometimes they forget I can't hear! Yes, and sometimes they've been drinking! Then they get over excited and the speech speeds up.'

She seemed rather bemused when recalling this yet indicating how lucky she was to have her mother who would give her asides on what the others might be saying. This would contradict the next interviewee's comments in the following paragraphs.

Moving onto Interviewee #8MA who is married to a deaf wife but has no children, he outlined the difficulties he had with his hearing family such that he no longer has contact with any of them nowadays, citing an example:

'I realised that my mother and father, my mother especially, were in denial about me being deaf. Some of my relatives never really understood what it meant to be deaf. One of my uncles came to visit my father, his brother. He was talking to me and he asked me, "Are you better now?" Clearly, he doesn't understand what it means to be deaf. He thinks it is an illness, a medical condition. I decided to cut off from my family.'

However, he qualified his previous comment stating that he knew no better, claiming:

'Growing up I never really felt part of my family but to be honest at that time, I knew no different.'

He then added about when it really hit him re the lack of familial understanding and support:

'My parents never really made any effort to communicate clearly. Their lip pattern was always unclear and difficult to lipread. To be honest, my deaf friend's mother was better than my own. When my father died, I broke off contact with my mother because at the funeral there was no interpreter for me. None of my relatives or cousins offered me any support to help me understand what was being said. Nothing!'

Of all the interviewees from hearing family, Interviewee #8MA seemed to be the one having the most difficulties with his hearing relatives to such an extent that he simply decided to cut himself off from them 'for his own sanity's sake.'

Interviewee #2FB, who has deaf parents commented:

'My father's family had a good attitude toward Deaf people because my father and my uncle are deaf, and my father had married a deaf wife and then had a deaf child (me) so there were 5 of us altogether in the family who were Deaf.'

Referring to the other non-deaf family members such as aunts, uncles and cousins, etc, she bemoaned thus:

'I don't ever remember struggling within the [deaf] family. The only issue was that some outside family members [who were hearing] could be a bit patronising. That was the only negative thing, otherwise it was a positive experience, growing up with the signing family.'

Interviewee #4FB, who has similar background as Interviewee #2FB, has a slightly different outlook:

'My mother and father are Deaf. They communicate with me in sign language. At home and at school I learned English. My parents also taught me English at home.'

She emphasised the importance of family life as part of work-life balance and how it influenced her recent job-change. She was formerly a social worker working long hours but became a part-time Family Engagement Officer, explaining:

'At the end it was a juggling act, trying to balance my work with seeing my family. I hardly saw my family. I was happy at work, but I didn't see my own husband or my own children. I was worn out. I would have the weekend off. Monday to Friday was too much and I worked so hard and for so long for no financial reward. Everyone was the same, we all had the same frustration and my motivation started

to decline. I was burnt out. In the end I decided to change to a different LAC, different hours, more routine.'

Linking to her relationship with her 3 children, she reflected upon thus:

'Because the Social Work system at that time was good, you engaged with people, you took care of them, built relationships to improve their quality of life. Now, it's all paperwork. You make a lot of judgements. The system is not good, it's not supportive. I've lost faith in the system. I also have to think about my work/life balance. I've got three children now. Back then I didn't have children. I need to make sure I have time for my children and balance my work and quality of life.'

It was clear that after a long period of working for what she perceived as little reward, she changed tack and decided to focus on family life, i.e. becoming less ambitious in her career progression for the time being.

Interviewee #9MB has a slightly different out-take on his upbringing and family relationships, simply stating that thanks to his family he is a Deaf person with pride who communicates in sign language:

'I describe myself as Deaf with a capital 'D'. That's linked to my family being Deaf and growing up in a family that had a strong Deaf identity already.'

Interviewee #3MC, who is one of the non-signing deaf participants, came from a very small family being an only child of parents who were the only child themselves – indicated that family support is perhaps not so relevant:

'I have a problem because I don't have a lot of family. I've always been an only child at home who has had to go out and do things. [. . .] I don't have much family, so I have had to learn a way of doing everything myself. Without being selfish I have had to do everything very carefully because the first impression is very important. I don't have anyone to argue my side if I have a problem with a hearing person.'

He claimed that due to this, he developed his personality such that he became a person who deliberately always kept his nose clean:

'That's why I talk well because they don't know me. I must be easy going. I have to be submissive because it's easier for me.'

Interviewee #7MC who is a single man, did not seem to think family is very relevant or important in his life, noting:

'At home I have family and friends. I don't see much of my neighbours, but I have friends and family. I follow the local and national news but in terms of getting involved in community events, I don't do much of that. And focusing on friends and family, I used to think my social grouping was fairly large but actually it's not that large, it's quite small. There are about 3 friends that I see several times a year and then there are a circle of people I see through chess clubs and events, but they are acquaintances really'.

Interviewee #5MC vastly differed from #3MC and #MC7 stating thus:

'I'm healthy, I'm doing okay, my family are fine. That's what is important to me. Maybe that is old fashioned. [. . .] When I was younger, I had the Deaf Pub, Deaf Chess. I was part of the community through socialising. Now I focus less on socialising and more on family and work. I still play chess, but I don't go the Deaf Pub anymore. A lot of them have been cut now anyway, which is disappointing. I accept that I must be balanced. My family is my number 1 priority'.

Referring to his childhood, he recalled his parents being reluctant to send him away to a boarding school for the deaf [Mary Hare], preferring him to go to a local school. He added he has a good relationship with parents and siblings.

'It was up to my parents. I was only 11 years old, so I didn't know what was best in the long run. So, I visited Mary Hare a while before and then my parents spent time discussing it. They didn't like the idea of me being in a boarding school away from the family home. They worried that I would feel isolated or have a negative feeling about that. It was a long way to travel'.

He then commented on the challenges of family communication:

'My wife is hearing. I communicate with your wife, mostly via speech and lipreading. If I struggle to understand or I am not wearing my hearing aid, basic sign language. She learned some sign language a long time ago. It's not bad. We use text and email. The difficulty is when we socialise because all her friends are hearing, and it is difficult to follow their conversations. [. . .] My daughter is a bit older, so it is easier to communicate with her; it is still quite difficult with my son. With time, it becomes easier to get on the same level. Their speech becomes clearer, easier to lipread. It's still not 100% though. My daughter is more used to me, so we manage'.

He acknowledged the challenges of life in general which might explain the paradox of him visiting the Deaf pub, Deaf chess, as he is predominantly using oral mode of communication but revealed he picked up some basic signs as well as fingerspelling over the years – he explained it was usually for a few hours on most Friday evenings.

Summarising, it seems that those from hearing families have challenges usually linked to attitude and communication needs. It would need at least one family member to ensure the channel of communication remains open even if partial. By contrast, those from deaf families have different challenges in that while they have access to information from family members from a young age, it remained the case that they need to develop communication skills when interacting with hearing family members.

7.1.2 Mental Wellbeing

With all the recent Covid-19 pandemic and several lockdowns affecting the general wellbeing of different people in the UK, I need to emphasise that the questionnaires and interviews were all conducted well before the start of Covid-19 pandemic, so each of the 10 participants would have different experiences and issues or challenges as linked to own personal mental wellbeing.

This looks at how they cope with everyday life in general bearing in mind, that they would be working full time typically 5 days a week, thus on Mondays to Fridays they would be more likely to interact with hearing colleagues from work [assuming that there is some inter dialogue of some sort between themselves] than with own family members or friends, who might be deaf like themselves.

The previous section looked in part on the amount of family support where applicable and it undoubtedly played a part on a person's wellbeing – thus one would argue that the stronger the familial support, the better personal mental state one might find oneself in.

All 10 selected interviewees have confirmed that they have no history of severe mental illnesses or disorder, thus just like an average person, they would experience the usual ups and downs of life in general.

Interviewee #9MB had a few stressful incidents but he shook them off claiming:

'I haven't really thought about stress to be honest. That was usually linked to communication. But those communication issues were occasional. I didn't have those problems a lot. I remember another woman [who was hearing] in the team, agreeing with me about the same grievance. She went off and spoke to

the manager and told them how she felt but the manager didn't take any notice anyway. What could we do? Nothing'.

He also remarked that it is often the older staff with attitude problems, but again has his own mantra:

'I also realised that some hearing people were indifferent to me, but that is just normal, that is what happens in life. Work is most important not what others think of me'.

He recalled a few instances of how he had to deal with managers:

'There was one project that put me under a lot of stress because the manager was putting us under pressure to complete a project within a very tight deadline. Each stage of the project had strict timescales. I explained to my manager that the deadlines were impractical with the rest of my workload and although I could meet certain stages of the project, other dates were impractical. He was unhappy about that because he had already agreed the dates with the client. I explained the issue to the client who seemed to understand but the manager couldn't grasp it. Software was another world to him, and he didn't understand how long software takes to engineer. My manager was angry. I did the best I could and put in overtime. I did not have a family then, so I worked early/late and weekends to meet their unrealistic expectations. I remember once my manager came up behind me and physically shook my chair. He was stressed over some equipment in the demo room, and he wanted me to go in and sort it out. I was shocked by his actions; I never expected him to physically shake my chair. I didn't challenge him because he was so senior, and I couldn't see the point as it was a one-off event. If it had happened repeatedly, I would have said something. I suppose it was the equivalent of shouting at a hearing person but because I was deaf, he decided to shake my chair instead. I'm not sure but perhaps that was why he did it. I also realised by looking at his body language that he treated me differently to my other colleagues. I feel that was definitely because I was deaf.

'To give you another example; the stairwell in the office was a spiral, suitable for two people passing each other in opposite directions. It was common that if you were at the top of the stairs and could see two people wanting to come up, you would wait and let them pass first or vice versa. There was one occasion when I was coming up the stairs and two people were coming down, one of whom was the same manager with the bad attitude. Initially he moved behind the other person to allow me to walk up but when the manager realised it was me, he stood in my path and squared up to me; I had to reverse back down the steps to get out of his way. When we were going through the door; this same person didn't hold the door for me but let it slam behind him. His bad attitude was obvious but fortunately I

didn't work on any projects directly under him. That was his way, and he was soon to retire anyway so I left it.

'I don't know if he felt threatened by me. I wonder if that was just his attitude to disability. He couldn't deal with it. I don't know'.

He claimed that as not everyone stayed at the same project or job forever, it was just a matter of biding one's time before those with 'bad attitude' would leave or retire.

Being ambitious himself, he commented about the start of his career:

'I think the first 3-5 years of my working life were more stressful than the rest because of communication issues. I needed more information at the start of my career, and I had to manage the situation so I could communicate effectively and complete my work well. That took time and required me to be proactive. I had to approach colleagues ahead of meetings to explain what I needed from them or to ask if they needed anything from me. That meant I could prepare in advance so I could understand it better. I hate to take notes after meetings and spend time reading so I understood the content. That was a bit frustrating because it took me away from my actual job and took extra time. It was beneficial long term though and became less necessary the longer I was there.'

As he was younger at that time, he felt he could cope in order to ensure he remains on the same footing as his colleagues at work.

Interviewee #10FA who is similarly ambitious with her career just like interviewees #9MB & #6MA tended to brush off issues at work and does not see it as much impacting on her wellbeing:

'Occasionally, there are some people who don't want to talk to me because I am deaf and approach a colleague instead. I just try to ignore that and think, "Oh well, your loss!" That often happens that someone will approach a hearing colleague instead of speaking to a deaf person. I understand'.

She once had a bit of a clash, describing it as due to ignorance on the Project Manager's part – admitting that she was lucky to retain her job despite her choice of words:

'I remember working on one project. I had a Project Manager above me. The manager at that time made no effort to understand my deafness. For example, maybe I said something, and he made a comment back, which looking back wasn't appropriate. It was because he was ignorant. I tried my best to carry on

and work well with him but inside I felt my blood was boiling. At one point, I spoke to my line manager about the situation, and they said there was nothing they could do, they were there to stay. I carried on as normal on that project, but one day, he made a comment and I just flipped. I'm embarrassed to think about it now. I flipped, I had a go at him and told him exactly what I thought. We had a big argument in the middle of the office. I stormed out. Looking back, both of us were lucky to still have a job after that. It was unprofessional. At the same time, though what I said to him was what a lot of other people were thinking. No one had the courage to stand up to him and say it. For me, my upset was more linked to his attitude towards me personally. He didn't understand my deafness. That made me frustrated. My frustration simmered below the surface for a while until one day when I just flipped. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. That person's negative attitude stemmed from ignorance'.

She mentioned that she had the right qualifications, good job and strong family unit so felt that it was not much of an issue in general.

Similarly, Interviewee #6MA does not see mental health as much of an issue arguing it is important to be resilient as much as is possible, explaining:

'I'm trying to say that for me resilience means finding a way through management so you can learn to cope. Maybe cope is the wrong word because coping can be linked to mental health issues. I mean you must learn to manage challenges. My biggest weakness is not being able to say no. Throughout my life, my working career, voluntary work, I have found it hard to say no. I'm asked for help and I do that on top of my normal job. Resilience to me means how I, as a Deaf person overcome the challenges I face, such as discrimination, negative attitudes and knowing how to adjust your behaviour accordingly.'

However, he acknowledged that there have been times of stress, but it is linked to interpreter availability at his work, noting:

'There have been a variety of stressful things, but one incident particularly stands out. It was awful. Actually, I'm not sure if it is appropriate to mention. Let me think. I recall a few times when we needed an urgent meeting to have a discussion, but I didn't have an interpreter. That caused me a lot of stress because how could I participate without one'.

Interviewee #1MA made a little mention of own personal wellbeing stating that it is just a usual thing to be stressed sometimes at work as if it is something that should happen to everyone at work regardless, commenting:

'Like all jobs there are occasional times when it is stressful. [. . .] some of the company's customers understand that they must be patient and give us advance notice but sometimes they are demanding, and I might have to change the order of our work tasks so we can complete what they need sooner than expected. It's stressful sometimes but manageable.'

And he later then added this:

' . . . attitude is very important in a team to ensure that everyone feels equally valued.'

Interviewee #2FB also employed a similar attitude, saying she is not too stressed at work, just ensuring she finds something to overcome whatever challenge or problem it might be, in her own way, giving an example:

'At break times everyone would be together, talking to each other and I would feel left out because I couldn't follow the conversation. Sometimes someone would come over and tell me what the conversation was about, but they would normally give me just one word, the topic, and that was it. I became a bit reclusive and decided to have my lunch outside, away from the office instead because I'd had enough. I would go out for a walk, perhaps go to a café. Alternatively, I would bring my own lunch but bring a book to read so I didn't have to converse. I had to remember that as well as my lunch I always had to bring something to do.'

She then emphasised:

'That's what I had to do!'

Interviewee #5MC sees himself as in the middle of the road in just about everything in life including own personal wellbeing explaining:

'I wasn't bothered about not being a high achiever or being ambitious. I was comfortable in the middle. I wasn't feeling stupid at the bottom, but I didn't feel superior by looking down on others from the top either! I could look up and down! Being in the middle is perfect.'

But then he admitted that he found his work stressful at times, as he relies on oral mode of communication, citing a few examples that happened to him over the years:

'When working for the Office of National Statistics, I'd had enough. I wanted a complete change. I didn't like the hearing environment, I found it too stressful. I wanted a change to something that would give me job satisfaction. The other hearing staff had left long before, but they were able to find other jobs easily. It was different for me. It was stressful. I needed to take a holiday to switch off'.

Interviewee #7MC wears hearing aids and relies on oral communication and manages generally fine with colleagues but would get stressed when it come to the use of telephone at work, saying that his hearing level is not sufficiently high enough for him to be able to decipher what was said at the other end of the phone:

'One thing that can cause stress sometimes is using the telephone. I can use the telephone but only if it is very quiet and there is no noise, and only if there is no noise at the end of the person I am speaking to, and they don't have a strong accent. So, it can be difficult. One of the most stressful moments was when I emailed a photographer to ask them for some information. This happened once or twice. They receive the email and instead of emailing back, they phone me. I would get phone calls about twice a year and I would think, who is that? I would answer it and the receptionist would tell me there is someone calling for you. Because it happened so rarely, I would find myself talking to the photographer and I would struggle to understand what they are saying. I would tend to try my best and then normally I would email them back after the call to say please email. One time it was very stressful, and I talked to my manager, and we agreed that I would not use the phone anymore. I'm trying to change that again because I want to be able to use the phone'.

It was interesting to note his comment at the end where he insisted, he still wanted to be able to communicate on phone on rare occasions, so that he might be seen to be as one of the team at office. Another example of this might be from his later comment in the interview but with an interesting contradiction at the end:

'Sometimes if I have just a brief meeting with someone, I might not say I am deaf. It might not be worth mentioning. Sometimes people will ask me but sometimes they don't. If someone asks me, I am always happy to say, "I am deaf, I wear hearing aids" and I explain about lipreading'.

Perhaps it is his way of managing stress and challenges at work by being selective about revealing his hearing loss.

Interviewee #3MC has a slightly different outtake on this, remarking:

'It's just that I'm not one of those angry deaf ones who feels that I've not got enough on my plate. One thing that my deafness manages and is bad, I never expected too much.'

When pressed later about his comment 'those angry deaf ones', he explained that he meant that there are some so-called militant deaf people who would use sign language and argue for own rights and recognition. He felt that he would prefer to keep own sanity and wellbeing by keeping a low profile, thus minimising the potential for stress-inducing circumstances. He reminded:

'I had more than enough qualifications for that kind of work. I just wanted an easy life. I didn't want stress and I don't like challenges. I don't regret not seeking any promotion in that job or previous jobs, because there was another deaf man, I won't mention his name, but he got promoted to management and he became so stressed. He had so many problems in the office. I would die at the thought of that. I want an easy life'.

Interviewee #4FB, being a social worker herself for the most of her career, has a nuanced outlook on mental health not only for herself but also for the deaf community in general via her work and social contacts, stating how it is somewhat linked to Deaf Identity:

'With regard to the Deaf identity – as for how important is that for me. Alas it's a mental health issue. At the moment deaf mental health is a hot topic, especially following the recent campaigns for better mental health awareness within the deaf community. Currently skills and knowledge are lacking, and we need more support in the mental health community to make people come out of their shell. Deaf people often experience mental health issues at the hands of society who create barriers that lead to frustration and poor mental health for deaf people. We face oppression all day, every day. I experience that myself'.

She felt that this issue is not solely confined to work situations but also for everyday life, claiming:

'The problem is there is no deaf awareness, no Deaf role models and as a result there are a lot of mental health issues.'

She recalled how her stress levels went up when seeking jobs and gave her own idiosyncratic reason for becoming a social worker instead:

'Hearing people can apply for a local job and be successful. For Deaf people it is so much harder. You need to handpick jobs and look for the ones you think you would have the best chance of getting. I know there is a desperate need for Social Workers, so I have more chance of getting a job like that. If I applied

for a job in a clothing shop such as Marks and Spencer or Primark, I wouldn't get it. Even if I applied for a basic job, I wouldn't get it because of the emphasis on communication. That stress leads to an increase in mental health issues. It is so difficult at the moment.

She then commented that not being part of society or work environment impacted on her own wellbeing and gave a rather sarcastic comment:

'I feel like an outsider. I feel part of the Deaf community. The gay community I am not really part of. I am not part of the black community, but I think both are welcoming!'

Interviewee #8MA felt that it is society in general influencing attitudes of colleagues towards their deaf peers leading to stressful circumstances, whilst not sure of what the solution(s) might be:

'I think disabled people and deaf people have something in common; we are all disabled by society. It's difficult. Some people have mental health issues and learning disabilities. Everyone is different so it's hard really'.

On top of this, he recounted a few examples of his colleagues either being ignorant, disinterested or just having a poor attitude towards deaf colleagues:

'I spent ages, contacting various people, going around in circles to get what I needed. I was so stressed and annoyed because if it had been booked through the normal process, all that would have been required was a requisition form, rather than a Purchase Order number. I explained all this to them, and I asked if they were aware of how difficult they had made things for me, but they didn't care. I'd had enough!

'I feel like I have to chase up everyone to get them to act and it isn't my job. It's so frustrating. I am deaf, I should have boundaries. But, if I don't get involved, no one else does anything. Another issue is that sometimes my manager asks me to do menial tasks. If he did it himself it would take 30 seconds, but he gives it to me. That kind of thing shocks me, and I can't understand why he does that. I despair! It makes me so despondent, and I lose motivation. What does he think I am? A lackey?

'That made me feel unsettled and frustrated. Plus, new staff members have come in who lack deaf awareness. Then they leave and another comes in and you start again. Maybe one has good deaf awareness, but they don't stay. My confidence was constantly fluctuating. It was like a game of snakes

and ladders. You make progress and then you slide down to the bottom again. That was an ongoing cycle.

'At the end of the day, I couldn't wait to get home'.

He explained that was the reason he grabbed the opportunity to retire early as he simply had had enough.

Summarising from all the ten participants, it seems that while mental wellbeing is important and relevant to their life in general not only at work but socially, it seemed that they would feel stressed and perhaps frustrated by some of the ongoings at work that might seem to exclude them from fuller and active participation in the work environment.

Overall, most of them are pretty resilient and feel that they are coping satisfactorily stating for the most part that it is the hearing colleagues who simply do not know how to interact with the deaf, and indicating it is the same old story that weaves throughout their lives ever since their early childhood.

Basically, they tend to shrug it off and get on with their work to the best of their ability as well as making the most of the working environment, be it toxic or not.

7.1.3 Deaf identity

There is not much extra detail on Deaf identity for the third Research Question, which might confirm it is a separate entity from mental health issues within the workplace. This is although there is a reasonable abundance of research looking at the importance of having own Deaf identity to maintain one's own wellbeing. This should be an area of further research and analysis in future projects.

7.2 Conclusion

The following sub-sections summarises the findings from the interviewees' comments for three different themes.

7.2.1 Family Issues and Support - Summary

There are two groups – one having parents who are hearing and thus much more likely to communicate using spoken and written English – and the others having deaf parents so growing up with sign language.

It is worth noting that out of 7 from the hearing upbringing nowadays use sign language but reverting to spoken language whenever meeting hearing family members.

For those growing up in a hearing environment, they acknowledged that it was daunting at times communicating with hearing family members, noting that they never learnt sign language.

Only one said he enjoys the best of both worlds, having hearing family but now with a deaf wife and child. He, like several others, remarked that he got his support from deaf spouse, not the family in managing work/life balances.

Having family always presents different kinds of challenges so for the deaf members it can be linked to attitude and communication issues – however all would typically rely on parents for access to information which might not be in full detail – hearing parents might not tell everything, and deaf parents might not have full access to information for passing on.

Family support while potentially useful is not essential for one's wellbeing or motivation at work. However, these deaf employees would still fall back on either family or friends for support, where necessary.

7.2.2 Mental Wellbeing – Summary

While it has been researched that the stronger the familial support, the better personal mental state one would have, this sub-section specifically looked at mental wellbeing as linked to work situations only.

Several commented about some stressful experiences at work, some of which is likely linked to own deafness combined with negative attitudes of colleagues. They took the view that 'Work is most important, not what the others think of me!', which is useful for inner calmness at workplaces.

Some argued that it would be wise sometimes to keep one's head and maintain a low profile, thereby maintaining stable well-beingness.

They concurred on the necessary resilience in navigating through the maze of management and simultaneously manage all challenges associated with own work such as completing tasks, etc.

Evidently all of them have their own coping strategies for dealing with stress at work so that their general wellbeing is not too affected, while acknowledging that at times they do feel stressed by some

of the ongoings at work that might seem to exclude them from fuller and active participation in the work environment.

Yet they are generally fine with this explaining that it is the hearing colleagues who simply do not know how to interact with the deaf, and indicating it is the same old story that weaves throughout their lives ever since their early childhood. Basically, they tend to shrug it off and get on with their work to the best of their ability as well as making the most of the working environment, be it toxic or not.

7.2.3 Deaf Identity – Summary

From these transcripts, there is little comment on the issues of Deaf Identity, as already explained within Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.

However, a couple of points were raised here.

One interviewee remarked mental health issue is very topical, she felt it is necessary to understand purpose of Deaf Identity. Due to barriers at work, having inner identity linked to deafness would help maintain own harmony in work/life balances and coping with challenges, as it is felt that society needs to undergo some form of deaf awareness, thus more inclusive of deaf people.

Others noted that deafness is a misunderstood disability, leading to potentially higher stress levels at work, thus perhaps having own Deaf Identity could assist because deaf people are 'disabled by society' and that permeated into workplaces.

Chapter 8: Discussions

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings via SPSS and Nvivo and explores the answers for each of the three research questions and consider whether the original hypothesis has been proved or not. Each of the research questions will have links to the sub-themes which emerged from the combination of the interview analysis and statistical analysis.

It has been argued time and time again that deaf people are not always employed to their fullest potential and to maximum ability in terms of their acquired skills and expertise, so one might claim that they are probably 'under-employed'. This brings into consideration on whether Deaf Identity is the key to survival in the everyday world, as they might find themselves somewhat limited for whatever reason in accessing to information in their employment for career progression.

Furthermore, it is generally agreed that education is the starting point of one's life journey irrespective of whether he is deaf or not. So, for a deaf person, no matter what form of education he has [segregated, integrated, BSL or oral mode – or a combination of these], should feel valued in a positive manner. That should formulate into an underpinning value for any average deaf person to be able to maintain own well-being throughout their lifetime.

The following sections attempt to answer the research questions as linked to the original hypothesis.

8.2 Research Question 1: How Deaf Identity as is linked to one's self-esteem relevant in attaining successful employment in the hearing environment?

Three recurring themes for the first research question are:

- General Communication
- Employment [3 sub-themes]
- Deaf Identity

8.2.1 RQ1 – Theme: General Communication

From the interviews, time and time again they have stressed the need to be patient and becoming proactive when communicating with colleagues at work, which they acknowledge to be quite a challenge. It is partially linked to making oneself understood. Freitas et al (2021) considered resilience as the key to one's overcoming barriers in language. Some of the interviewees who are more reliant on using BSL would have appreciated improved access to communication especially that it is a key skill one

must have to progress in the career scale, for instance. It is linked to Mertens (2014) who argued that resilience would not be necessary for a deaf person to possess if the language is made accessible and available to them – either BSL or written English.

Callis (2016) looked at how deaf people would have to work harder in securing employment and then maintaining their position, and they have had to be quite resourceful. It is evident from the interviews that some of them resorted to seeking alternate ways around the problem such as sending emails which then cuts down the need to communicate orally, as some of the hearing colleagues would continue to struggle to understand them even after having worked together for several years in some cases. The hearing colleagues naturally migrated towards each other when communicating or conversing as they found it easier as having similar attitudes and experiences, thereby leaving deaf people out in the cold (Koutsouris et al, 2020).

Despite frustrations such as colleagues taking ages before replying to emails when a quick telephone call might sort things out quickly, each deaf person came up with own different coping mechanisms, and de Freitas et al (2021) explained that perseverance of such deaf individuals is linked to innate acknowledgement that communication and language are typically identified as barriers when they were growing up and continues into their adulthood. Wright et al (2013) identified the different coping mechanisms as linked to own inner and external resources at his disposal, which is further confirmed by Listman & Kurz (2020) via their studies of deaf adults in their navigation of life in general.

From statistical analysis, there was a possibility that using spoken English is a critical factor in the consequently higher self-esteem a deaf person has at work environment – however as mentioned during Chapter 4, caution is needed as there was not enough in the sample for definite confirmation. Putting aside the advantages or otherwise of utilising the spoken language, Marschark et al (2017) insisted that most deaf children would often grow up using spoken language as their parents would often be hearing and so not knowing anything about sign language. This is despite the 1996 study by Gregory and backed up by recent research from Alqahtani (2022) commenting that deaf children relying on spoken language struggled with later language development, but it is noted via these interviews that several of them attended additional courses during adulthood to gain extra qualifications.

8.2.2 RQ1 – Theme: Employment

For this section, there are three sub-themes:

- Attitude
- Motivation

- Promotion

Looking at attitude, it can be interrelated with resilience, as it became apparent that the worse the attitude of colleagues at work, the more resilient the deaf employee becomes in dealing with their behaviour. General comment is that it is necessary for the deaf employee the deaf staff to become more resilient and adapt one's way into fitting in with the workplace environment, but the other claimed that it would be a matter of time before some hearing colleagues might improve attitudes as a way of acknowledging the deaf member of staff as a useful key player.

The 'poor' attitudes would have started from the schooldays of both deaf and hearing peers (Iantaffi, Jarvis & Sinka, 2003) where at school, 'postcode lottery' applied such that some would work well for a deaf child irrespective of own hearing loss, and similarly it is noted there is great variation in mainstream teachers understanding and recognising the needs of deaf pupils.

Transferring to workplace environment, similar findings were had by de Waal-Andres & van Beest (2018) and Milkman, Huang & Scheitzer (2012) explaining that to achieve success at work, the deaf employee should co-operate with hearing colleagues effectively for own enhanced career prospects, which would be challenging as they would tend to see the workplaces being deemed to be competitive environments, such that the employers would find themselves having the need to co-operate with their competitors in the guise as colleagues and vice versa. Furthermore Sheikh et al (2021) argued for 'bridging the organisational culture gap' (p.187), where deaf employees not only need induction but some mentoring which could make it easier to deal with an embedded hearing workplace environmental culture, which some deaf staff might find overwhelming if not intimidating.

That would perhaps partially explain the attitudes of certain hearing employees who would focus on their own rat races, that despite the deaf employee would likely be pitched on a non-level playing field, that while all employers would play by the same set of rules.

Moving onto the next sub-theme (motivation), having deafness being seen as disability can be a disadvantage, leading to frustration with one's lot at work, creating a potentially vicious cycle of slowly declining self-motivation courtesy of a lower glass ceiling.

This contradicted Callis (2016) claim that due to difficulties in gaining employment in the first place, the deaf employees tended to work harder in securing their position at work. But Luckner & Stewart (2003) added a caveat that it is through family support that the deaf adults had to work harder in life.

When becoming demotivated at work, one might experience stress and consequently lower self-esteem, as linked to the interaction between a deaf employer and work environment factors. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) explained the link between the development of stress and experiencing a situation which seemed to be unmanageably demanding than the person's own resources which in this case could be limited by own deafness.

An interviewee commented that it is normal for all workplaces to have its associated stresses and challenges of doing their jobs up to the right level expected of themselves regardless, but the question is how much can cope with it without getting too frustrated.

Achieving promotion within employment proved quite challenging for most of the interviewees, as the general comment was that in the main, they did not get promoted at all or not for several years mainly due to failed applications or interviews, that they simply stopped bothering applying. Calderon & Greenberg (2013) pondered on the importance of establishing socio-emotional development as the basis for life success via the realisation of own vocational potential, but it is not happening.

The key is improved attitudes from hearing employers which should improve the self-esteem as the deaf staff would feel appreciated, motivated, and thus confident in seeking promotion. This would also break down the perceived prejudices of the senior staff within the interview panel who might already have pre-conceived thoughts on the ability of the deaf to be able to take on extra responsibility and hold the job down.

8.2.3 RQ1 – Theme: Deaf Identity

From the interviews, the subject of whether one has Deaf Identity and whether it is of relevance cropped up in some of the interviews but in brief detail.

For example, one of them explained that even if she acknowledges the usefulness of Deaf Identity issues, she saw it as a separate issue from her work circumstances. This irrelevance is an interesting contrast to Bat-Chava (2000) who found that those who are culturally deaf and enjoys bicultural identity [i.e. having the best of both worlds] would have higher self-esteem in general, and therefore more likely to reap professional success.

One other interviewee equated the need for the presence of own Deaf Identity with good wellbeing, which she explained is essential to having good work prospects, explaining that it is in recent years that mental wellbeing is very much in the forefront. However, this is a lone case amongst the ten interviewees and interestingly her comments as a deaf person of deaf parentage coincides with Strong

(2007) statement that the incidence of mental health issues amongst deaf people who are born into deaf family is lower than that for those who are born into hearing family.

It is perhaps unsurprising that some of them felt Deaf Identity as unimportant with one of them even hiding own deafness at times whenever it suited him, thus the consensus is that it is not necessary a weapon for dealing with everyday challenges within the hearing work environment.

Yet from SPSS data analysis, it is found that one's upbringing impacts on self-esteem, in which those born deaf to hearing parents and maintaining the continued use of speech throughout the adulthood without ever resorting to sign language have much higher self-esteem and confidence at workplace environment. This is perhaps a direct contradiction to Strong (2007) which looked at the communication angle rather than employment.

This would augment the view that access to oral education is beneficial for a deaf child in terms of language acquisition, though there are studies arguing that it is nowadays more effective only in conjunction with cochlear implantation which enhances some additional hearing (Rinaldi & Caselli, 2014; Jimenez, Pino & Herruzo, 2009; Mitchener, 2015) Nicastrì et al (2021) emphasised the support of parents in enhancing the development of communication skills.

This indicated that not only being reliant on the spoken mode of communication is the key but coupled with family support and having cochlear implants is critical to having higher self-esteem at work. This is confirmed via SPSS data analysis which showed that in contrast to the traditional hearing aids, which had no effect on the self-esteem, cochlear implants usage is critical to enhanced confidence in the workplace.

Blume (2009) linked to its implantation to the arising of parental expectation which could lead to empowerment in general, whereas BATOD (2015a) indicated that it would lead to much higher expectations of educational attainment which is itself imperative to successful job attainment. Despite Blume (2009) warning about the 'media hype' surrounding cochlear implants, there is evidence that tangible benefits in better access to spoken language is noted (Wilson & Dorman, 2008; Harris & Paludneviene, 2011; Tomblin et al, 1999)

8.3 Research Question 2: How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?

Three recurring themes for the second research question are:

- Employment [3 different sub-themes]

- School Experiences
- Further and/or Higher Education Experiences

8.3.1 RQ2 – Theme: Employment

For this section, there are three sub-themes:

- Gaining Jobs
- Job Interviews
- Training Opportunities

Looking at seeking and gaining jobs, OECD (2010) and Scheiber (2015) showed that people with disabilities [including those who are deaf] have low employment rates in comparison with those without disabilities, worldwide. As recent as 2013 in the USA, Scheiber (2015) found that employers in general continued to discriminate against disabled job candidates even if highly qualified. Furthermore, the data also showed that those with disabilities are twice as likely as the non-disabled to be unemployed.

From the interviews, there is once again a divide between those who have good speech and those who don't, thereby more reliant on sign language. That is to say that first group of those would go it alone during interviews, often managing to follow the interview panel to good effect and gaining jobs with relative ease in contrast to the second group of those who would have someone with him for interviews. That someone could be a family member speaking on their behalf or even a booked sign language interpreter.

This brings up the question on what exactly is 'effective communication skills' as Luckner & Stewart (2003) claimed that is achievable only after hard work over the preceding years without going into specific detail on what it entailed, but Callis (2016) noted that the deaf people seemed to have no choice but to persevere through the whole cycle beginning with seeking job, attending interviews, and then maintaining their jobs, etc.

The second sub-theme looks at job interviews and it is an interesting phenomenon for all the interviewees in that they would aim to minimise the need for attending such job interviews as much as possible for the simple reason in that it was challenging which is to be expected but also dealing with the logistics of smooth communication.

Basically, the thinking of these interviewees coincided with the findings of Scheiber (2015) such that the competitive job market would make them feel rather insecure about upping their desks and seeking a new job at intervals. Some of them got their jobs and usually never sought promotion. They argued that

it is all down to the willingness of the prospective employer in hiring a deaf person or not, i.e. linked to attitude within workplace which is covered in section 8.2.2

The third sub-theme considered training opportunities as linked to improved job prospects. Further and higher education will be looked at separately in section 8.3.3. It is acknowledged from the interviewees that there are obvious benefits of doing some training within their jobs, but it is more of a question about access to training.

A couple of them solved the access problem in a roundabout way by doing self-study via university and training centre, partly for own prestige but also hoping to gain promotion, while there are others who admittedly never had or made use of training opportunities over the years, which led to the question of why that is the case.

It might be linked to the challenges to remaining resilient and be cherry-picking in making choices at their workplace which might unfortunately hinder their potential career progression, as Freitas et al (2021) remarked that a deaf person, resilience became necessary during childhood and continued through life with instances such as missing out on full social interaction to some extent within mainstream surroundings, and a recent study by Listman & Kurz (2020) indicated on how much resilience a deaf person could possess not only at workplace but in general.

This might confirm why several of them might deliberately demur from seeking additional training opportunities in their careers.

8.3.2 RQ2 Theme – School Experiences:

From the SPSS data analysis, it does not make any difference to one's self-esteem in general and at work as far as attending schools is involved. It would not matter if a deaf person was to attend a specialist school for the deaf or a mainstream school – such that their experiences are mixed in terms of own experiences – be these positive or negative.

This is despite the assertion by Ladd (2003) and confirmed by a recent study by Anglin-Jaffe (2020) arguing for the importance of specialist schools for the deaf in which it is not only for educational purposes but for the deaf community network, i.e. one looking out for the other. That is irrespective of the communication mode at school (Ladd, 2003) and recent CRIDE (2022) report indicated that in the year of 2020-21 at least 88% of deaf children communicate using spoken English.

That very much matches the 10 interviewees as only one of them attended a school where signing is allowed. As well as for the past decades, it is still the case today that a good majority of these schools applied oral mode of communication, and that signing was at least frowned upon and in some cases, not allowed at all.

Most of the interviewees, having attended these schools, had speech therapy to improve communication skills however with mixed results. A common refrain was that their school experiences did not very much help them for the future careers, as they were not given useful tips. They also felt that the career choices on offer from school subjects were rather limited.

Separately the three of them who attended mainstream schools admitted to feeling lonely and perhaps paradoxically steeled them better for the harsh realities of the competitive work environment, as one claimed. This concurred with the findings by Schwab (2017) and Terlektsi et al (2020) which looked at the apparent lack of meaningful friendships between deaf and hearing pupils at schools.

The choice of different types of schooling and their impact was investigated by Marschark (2003) who believed that the challenges of developing specific cognitive abilities might not always be understood by the teachers. Rohde & Thompson (2007) thought that measurement of cognitive ability could predict future academic and thus vocational achievement without going so much into detail on how a deaf child might develop own learning skills.

It could be linked to different schools applying own teaching and learning methods for each different deaf child that could potentially lead to limited vocational choices at the end of schooldays (Marschark, Lang & Albertini, 2002).

On a final note, most of them willingly acknowledged some benefits of the schools in terms of gaining some qualifications and some communication skills but not much else.

8.3.3 RQ2 – Theme: Further and/or Higher Education Experiences

All ten interviewees attended further and/or higher education sometime in their careers not necessarily after having left school though that is the case for most of them, for the recurring reason in that they strongly believed that further qualifications are usually useful for their jobs, which concurred with the statement that degree completion would define as success (Adelman, 2006), but most of them argued that it had been a struggle studying and achieving these citing lack of access as the main reason.

Seeing that they have attended college or university, it is interesting to note that some of them have their doubts on the purpose of further or higher education as far as job seeking is concerned. They all have highlighted in general the insufficient level of support for deaf students at educational institutions. Allen (1994) estimated that just under 10% of deaf students arrive at college with reading age of 14, which might explain the struggles that some of the interviewees have had with further educational studies – this led to Cuculink & Kelly (2003) wondering whether the struggles in achieving high level qualifications such as degrees might be because of the programmes being devised primarily to support the typical hearing students during their courses. This would perhaps be linked to lack of access, such as provision of notetakers and/or interpreters.

From SPSS Analysis, it is confirmed that different levels of the highest qualifications achieved made no difference to own self-esteem thereby indicating it is irrelevant to what qualifications a deaf person will have achieved, and this concurred with Cuculink & Kelly (2003) study showing that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of students' hearing loss across degree types earned; thus, hearing level did not appear to be a relevant factor in their graduation patterns.

This brought up the suggestion that hearing loss is not a factor in educational attainment, but the successful and accessible education would be the key to a young Deaf student achieving their qualification in the subject(s) of their choice. I looked at the SPSS data analysis for differing levels of hearing loss and once again it is not statistically significant as linked to achieving qualifications and to self-esteem in general.

Despite the challenges associated with further and higher education, the consensus was that it is a 'necessary evil' or a steppingstone to gaining employment. Several of them claimed to be overqualified for their jobs and felt that it was better than not having jobs, as two of them recalled that despite achieving a university degree, they found it hard to find a job for a while citing communication as the primary reason for failing to get past the interview stage.

8.4 Research Question 3: What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

Three recurring themes for the third research question are:

- Family Issues and Support
- Mental Wellbeing
- Deaf Identity

The third theme, Deaf Identity has already been explored in depth within Section 8.2.3, so will not be repeated in these sections.

8.4.1 RQ3 – Theme: Family Issues and Support

As linked to upbringing, it is a mixture of those who grew up using sign language on one hand, and spoken language on the other hand, which is linked to how the parents communicate and in what mode. Deaf parents would use sign language and hearing parents, spoken language.

It should also be noted that some of the deaf adults from hearing family background do change over to using sign language upon adulthood.

A lot has been written about the importance of family support for the deaf child and adult, e.g. family support is essential to aspire the deaf adult to draw in own inner resources to face different challenges in life (Wright et al, 2013; Luckner & Stewart, 2003)

However, Conventino et al (2009) qualified this to the demographic factors of the family, i.e. type of parental education, stay-at-home or working parents as well as number and age of siblings.

This is evident for several of the interviewees saying that they get support from family in different ways; one of them from deaf family background commented her parents emphasised the importance of learning English to prepare her for the real world for when she leaves home to work as a young lady. Another was happy to join in hearing family gatherings if she ensured she is seated next to her mum who would give her asides on what the others were saying as she herself would not be able to follow, thereby emphasising the importance of access via good mother-daughter bond.

Kurtzer-White & Luterman (2003) warned that family support can be affected by the parental grief in having a deaf child such that it could impact on the success of parent-child bonding.

The challenges of successful parent-child bonding are underlined by the acknowledgement of most interviewees that it was daunting at times communicating with hearing parents and siblings in some cases. A couple of them nowadays rarely have contact with hearing members of their families mainly due to their attitudinal problems, arguing instead that family support is not so relevant for supporting them at their work, suggesting friends instead.

Mohay (1991) queried the attitude of several school heads who argued for the right of a deaf child to the spoken English language since as high as 95% of the deaf children are born to hearing parents.

Lederberg & Mobley (1990) noted that somehow deaf children of hearing parents receive much less communication than do deaf children of deaf parents.

Woolfe et al (2002) researched that most hearing parents do not have sufficient proficiency in sign language to optimize social interactions with their deaf children. On top of that, they would typically converse orally with other hearing family members, innocently limiting a deaf child's access to informal conversations.

Summarising, family support can be a double-edged sword in that it would be linked to attitude and communication issues. They confirmed that they have relied on parents for access to information which might not be in full detail – hearing parents might not tell everything, and deaf parents might not have full access to information for passing on.

Family support is helpful for many of the interviewees up to a certain level, and they have found support to cope with work from different quarters.

8.4.2 RQ3 – Theme: Mental Wellbeing

Many of them acknowledged the challenges of everyday work situations and sometimes endured some stressful experiences, which Pipp-Siegel et al (2002) succinctly put it as linking between stress and emotional strain due to adverse challenges at work.

They have had different experiences, one admitting to having lost her cool and swearing at a colleague who was continually displaying poor attitude towards her, other merely biding his time by reflecting that not everyone stays at the same job forever and a third once had to take a few days off work annual leave just to recover after a difficult situation with difficult colleagues. Fellingner et al (2009) demonstrated the links between the general mental wellbeing and conversation opportunities, explaining that wellbeing can be affected by the feeling of being left out due to difficulty in maintaining working communication for whatever reasons.

The word 'resilience' propped up during some of these interviews as a way of finding own way via the maze of management and simultaneously manage all challenges associated with own work such as completing tasks, for instance.

It is linked to lifelong skill in the personality development as a deaf child before transitioning into a deaf adult, where resilience and sufficiently strong mental wellbeing (Radovanovic et al, 2020) and it is argued that this came about due to social isolation which started as a child, e.g. from hearing family,

school education, and thence onto workplace. This is confirmed by the interviewees who commented that it is the same old story weaving throughout their lives.

Linking to their childhood experiences confirmed the findings by Wright et al (2013), Listman & Kurz (2020), Freitas et al (2021) and Mertens (2014)

Basically, they tend to shrug it off and get on with their work to the best of their ability as well as making the most of the working environment, be it toxic or not, by applying their own coping strategies for dealing with stress at work so that their overall mental wellbeing is not too affected.

8.5 Miscellaneous Findings not fully linked to the Research Questions

From the data analysis two factors are found to have no effect on self-esteem in general and at work, and these are gender and age. This implies that no matter whether you are a male or female, young or old, the self-esteem scales are not impacted, unlike the other factors which have been considered in the preceding sections.

Another finding which is unsurprising is that income at high level improves self-esteem in general and at work, in particular those earning £50,000 a year. It is very much the same as for the hearing employees who would have higher self-esteem as commensurate with higher earnings. Rohe & Stegman (1994) confirmed a correlation between poverty and lower self-esteem, while Gecas (1982) noted that income is positively associated with self-esteem.

From the data pool of 146 participants, it is a small number earning that much, yet it remains the case that those earning over £50k per year have higher levels of self-esteem in general and at work than those earning less. The fact that it is a small number earning a high annual income is indicative of the reality as confirmed by Walter & Dirmyer (2013), thus while true for the hearing population, it is the same for the deaf population, too.

8.6 Research limitations

There are several limitations within this research, which are wide and varied. To begin with, despite the fact I succeeded in getting some 146 participants to do the questionnaires, only 4 of them are from ethnic backgrounds; 3 are Asian and one is mixed race. It is rather disappointing currently where the UK is a very culturally diverse country and according to Government statistics around 7 out of 8 people in the UK are white, thus making it 13% non-white in the UK. In my sample, 4 out of 146 converts into 2.7%, and to reach a minimum of 13% to make my sample as representative of the general population as near as possible, I should have at least 19 of the participants to be of ethnic backgrounds.

It would have been interesting to find out whether these ethnic deaf participants would put own deafness more of an issue than own racial origins in seeking and then attaining own employment. This should be an area of further research.

Upon reflection, the dearth of such participants of such ethnic background might be attributed to the fact that I am a white, middle-class, and middle-aged male.

Moving onto the age bracket, the fact that I am a middle-aged male, belonging to the 50-59 age bracket with a deaf wife who is in the 40-49 age bracket is not lost upon myself as I note with interest that 98 out of the 146 participants belong to these two age brackets. The other three age brackets have far fewer participants such as those aged 60 – 69 have 25 participants and then for the 30-39 age bracket has 21 participants, while I managed to find only 1 participant in the 20-29 age bracket.

This is perhaps reflective of my age, but with regard to each participant's schooling experience this is rather unfortunate because a majority of deaf people in the UK aged below 40 would most likely have attended the mainstream schools rather than the specialist schools for the deaf, which is the consequence of the Warnock Report of 1978 advocating the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools which was reinforced in principle by the Education Act of 1981.

It would have been interesting to be able to compare in more detail the experiences of those who attended hearing schools who are aged 39 and below so that the researcher would be able to ascertain whether these deaf participants would have their own formative years' experience as a grounding for their own career opportunities. Again, this should be an area of further research.

It should be noted however that three out of ten participants in the interviews did attend mainstream or hearing schools but then all three belong to either the 40-49 or 50-59 age brackets.

Moving onto the levels of hearing loss, most of the participant have severe or profound hearing loss. Only 13 of them would either be hard of hearing or moderately deaf, which would indicate that they would have less than 50% hearing loss and they freely acknowledged that their speech for the most part is understood by their colleagues. As there are 28 participants in the survey who do not use sign language, this by implication would denote that 15 of them would be at least severely, if not profoundly, deaf but still be reliant on spoken language regardless of the apparent unclarity of speech at times.

Consequently, one might argue that these findings would not very much be of relevance to those deaf employees with at least moderate hearing loss, and this could be another area of research.

Then from a completely different perspective, that this study is somewhat limited because it was conducted by a researcher who could be termed as an 'insider', partly because of its methodological design [via data collection and analysis] and because of the size. It can be argued that size of 146 participants might suffice in the first instance, it remained comparatively small in terms of percentage as linked to the number of deaf people in the UK who are born deaf or have become deaf at a very young age.

As an 'insider', it is naturally a challenge to be as objective as possible but being in a subjective position did give me a key motivation for this research project and it is an influence on how thesis was designed and conducted. If this method of data collection was utilised by a non-deaf researcher focused on the same research questions and hypotheses, it could be argued that he might emerge with different findings thanks to being an objective and neutral researcher.

However, it had to be said that this research design has its own safeguards via ethical considerations including consenting and confidentiality, although I am a deaf person who would have had similar experiences as these participants.

Another limitation to consider is that there would be potential ambiguity of data as well as possibly more than one interpretation of the transcriptions, for instance the purpose of this thesis has implications for employment policy and practice which could link to educational practice. However, the drawback of this limitation is that because the qualitative part of the mixed methodology gives priority to the individual, then the subjective experience is restricted, such that these findings could become less important or influential in the Government or legal policy and practice.

Another possible limitation linked to the qualitative part of research is due to time constraints. Even though a total of 10 were interviewed, each interview lasted between an hour and ninety minutes, which in a nutshell is a miniscule part of their times. It has been considered but not followed up the different approaches of keeping daily video diaries, written diaries or even the researcher joining in the participant observations, which could have offered a bit more in-depth sighting of the way they deal with their lives at work settings. But by applying the life history approach in the interviews permitted ample ability to relate own perception of their lives to the original research questions.

Additionally, it might be debated that focusing on the deaf participants but not on the workplace colleagues or managements could give rise to one-sided bias. An option for this research would be to either interview or send questionnaires to non-deaf working colleagues about their experiences of working with a deaf colleague, and its associated challenges.

Doing this might have given this research a more rounded balanced outlook and reduce some form of bias via looking at one angle of perception. This again would be an area of future research which could help gain an understanding of how the 'other side' could contribute to better ways of working with deaf employees and at how they are viewed and perceived.

There is a danger that this research might be deemed less meaningful because it is not very much surrounded by other similar research as evident by the dearth of literature in this strand. Therefore, it became a limitation in that it is a unique, yet 'off the beaten track' in the world of research literature on deafness.

To resolve this limitation, in the long term it would be necessary to contemplate more than one study undertaken by a range of different researchers, deaf and/or hearing to maintain the objectivity and using a far wider range of different deaf participants of all creed, race, sexual orientation and religion as the intended aim is to create a policy which would benefit hundreds and thousands of prospective deaf employees for the remainder of the 21st century and beyond.

Even considering the above limitations of my research, I believe I have put on the spotlight the challenges or otherwise of deafness within the exclusively hearing work environment, covering the individual perspectives from the interviews and the general statistical data.

8.7 Contributions to knowledge

Having now considered these limitations, I will now focus in more detail on the original contribution to knowledge that my research makes. I believe my work has made an original contribution to knowledge in several ways.

Firstly, resilience is the key for any deaf person to cope with the challenges of everyday working environment where often this deaf person regardless of which mode of communication he prefers to use, is the sole deaf person in the whole workforce. Developing own inner resilience would begin during childhood and continues throughout the rest of their lives.

It is an important insight into the lives of deaf people in work environment and how it impacts on own self-esteem at work as well as in everyday life in general. As outlined in the literature review, there is not much of an exploration into the resilience of deaf adults at workplace in contrast to that experienced by themselves when at school or in everyday life.

However, if a deaf person possesses good and reasonably clear speech with good command of the written and spoken English as well as already having cochlear implant(s), then he would have a much higher self-esteem at work than others with or without hearing aids in addition to not having clear speech with a likely preference to using BSL.

This is an important find from this research, however it needs to be made clear that having cochlear implants when as a child for educational reasons is not the answer, it does help go some way to enhance confidence in dealing with the competitive world of work and dealing with hearing colleagues and management who would more likely than not to have awareness of deafness in general.

Additionally, those with good speech or good command of English, would come from a family of hearing relatives. They would not know sign language at all and rely on oral mode of communication to talk with the deaf member of family, throughout the childhood. So, when entering the world of work, they might with confidence, be able to communicate up to a certain level there so that they cope better with different challenges one would associate with typical work environment.

Once again, it is not necessarily the case that going to either mainstream or specialist schools which use oral mode of communication is the answer, as evident from research, which stated that it made no difference on which type of schools a deaf child attended or the mode of communication at school to the self-esteem he experiences as an adult at work. It is due to the fact it is linked to the upbringing. An example is that a deaf person from a deaf family might have more confidence in themselves through use of sign language when growing up before acquiring the spoken/written language, but that does not transfer to workplace environment where their self-esteem is significantly lower.

The research findings suggested that those deaf people who are reliant on sign language regardless of whether their parents are deaf or not, need to be able to cope with the 'terrible attitudes' of work colleagues who would often not know sign language and might already have preconceived ideas of deaf people inability to 'function' at the fullest level at work, leading to frustration for the deaf people. The answer to this problem lies with the deaf awareness training programme for the non-deaf colleagues so that they will learn to understand and appreciate the diversity of their deaf colleagues. This suggestion might lead to a much happier and more productive workplace for all around such that the self-esteem scale would show much higher score which would match these of the non-signing and cochlear implant deaf users.

I believe that the application of different self-esteem scales demonstrates the different level of psychological impact on each deaf person having to live with own impairment as well as workplace

environment constraint. These workplace experiences, negative or positive, had profound effects on the deaf employees and influenced their attitudes to their career aspirations which leads to coping strategies to maintain own mental wellbeing for the five days a week at workplace.

Having own Deaf Identity can be useful as the signing deaf people testified, but it is not critically essential an issue for dealing with workplace as they felt it made no difference to dealing with attitudes of work colleagues and management, but resilience and perseverance is the key instead.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will reflect on the contributions to original knowledge via literature review and it will also look at the significance of this research with recommendations for future research.

The aim of this chapter is also to combine all the arguments and findings as linked to the themes which I have discussed to reflect each of their own significance and impact. In the following sub-sections, I will reprint the original research questions as linked to the overall aims of my research.

Considering the limitations from my research, the overall significance and associated implications will be commented upon. It is noted however that there is a comparative dearth of literature which specifically focused on a deaf person experience at a typical workplace setting [this is to say where a deaf person would find himself being the only person with hearing loss within the work environment]. This is even though a lot has been written about technological aids for deaf people [hearing aids, loop systems and cochlear implants, etc.] and about educational support for deaf children and so on.

As a researcher, I have tried to address the complex and challenging realities of deaf people within their work environment and how they dealt with challenges regardless of how successful they might have been in climbing the greasy pole. Due to dearth of literature in this specific strand within deafness, it is perhaps unsurprisingly yet astonishing that the views of such deaf people within this context have ever been acknowledged.

As a researcher I must work on a tightrope in balancing between utilising my own personal experiences and reflections on the participants' data during analysis before reaching these conclusions, as one of the main aims of this thesis was to explore the lived experiences of such deaf people and their job challenges from what could be argued to be own unique perspectives.

9.2 Research Questions Revisited

A quick preview of the three research questions, viz.:

- 1) How Deaf Identity as is linked to one's self-esteem relevant in attaining successful employment in the hearing environment?
- 2) How one's schooling either at Deaf or mainstream schools can prepare for dealing with challenges in seeking and obtaining employment?
- 3) What is the impact on the mental wellbeing in the everyday life of a Deaf person, who might be working 5 days a week?

The overall aim of the research was to garner insight and understanding of the connection between own identities [i.e. Deaf Identity or the lack of], own coping strategies as linked to wellbeing [i.e. different levels of stress and any breaking points that might have been experienced] and self-esteem at work and in the wider context of general society.

From that point, the researcher then investigated about how the participants felt about their deafness and whether they saw own deafness as a hindrance or irrelevant in their own career aspirations. That covered, then one must bear in mind the implications of one own's socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-disability factors mainly in their answering of questionnaires, but also from the interview transcripts.

This research has taken on board some consideration on how deafness is utilised, maintained, or ignored in relationship with the participant's job endeavours as associated with the corporeal reality of living with impairment throughout their lives.

In this study, the participants defined their own concepts of own self-esteem in general and at work, thereby positioning own identity as lower down the scale of own priorities of everyday life as related to work. Through dealing with challenges of being the 'only deaf in the village', most of them have somehow become resilient at work thereby becoming more perseverant with the substantial minority freely admitting being resigned with their own lot for their own sanity's sake.

These findings suggest that regardless of whether a deaf participant's own identity embraces own deafness or not, to succeed on an equal footing at workplace environment would depend twofold: one is the need to change the attitudes of their management and peers, as it is down to general lack of deaf awareness and understanding of the deaf employee's needs; two is the school experiences of deaf participants in which the majority of them attended the specialist schools for the deaf, and these did not prepare them well for their future careers.

However, as the ages of the participants would explain the prevalence of them going to specialist schools for the deaf, it is a fact that more and more of the younger deaf people [typically under 30 at the time of writing] will have attended mainstream schools such that they will have exposure to hearing peers and society from an earlier age, which further research will be needed to indicate whether it would go towards to solving the challenges of the younger deaf people in their work environment in the mid- to late- 21st century.

Based on the above findings, it is evident that having a Deaf Identity is not a critical key component for a deaf person to utilise for dealing with challenges at work, as several have commented that this aspect was not relevant in securing equal footing at workplace environment and realising their career aspirations.

Furthermore, following on from the findings via questionnaires, the ten interview transcripts expressed in depth the interviewees' reflections, thoughts, ups, downs, struggles, frustrations, and elation when providing own picture of balancing between working and living with deafness. Their stories as expressed do give a valuable and powerful insight into their private inner sanctums, which the researcher became privileged to be given more than just a peek inside.

Thus, these topical life histories illuminate a mixture of career challenges and aspirations in parallel to providing individual insight into a range of related issues concerning identity, societal perceptions, workplace ethos, dominant narratives, moral values [influenced by either medical or social models of deafness], and notions of physical perfection. They also reflected on their hearing loss and the way people might or might not be perceiving them.

In this study, the participants reflected on the disappointments and elations at work while placing the issue of Deaf identity low on their scale of everyday life priorities such that while revealing that Deaf identity is not necessarily worthless but simply not relevant to their working life – they propounded that dealing with the attitudes of colleagues and management is the key. One might concur that the villain of the piece, i.e. poor attitude via the lack of deaf awareness and understanding has been exposed.

9.3 Research strength, significance, and implications

One point emanating from my research is the information gleaned from the overall data which illuminated on how we all think about deafness in general and thus maybe by implication the general understanding of how the general society 'disables' the deaf people within the context of their work environment, thereby creating challenges on where we go about within the everyday life. It is perhaps essential to look on the 'other side' i.e. to consider how the general society think about deafness and what it means in terms of one's inability to contribute. I have tried to highlight the dynamic nature of the intersection between self-esteem at work and deafness, and then the importance of developing or exploring what exactly is meant by deaf awareness or rather the lack of.

The general lack of understanding of the needs of deaf employers is linked to the current influence of the medical models of disability and deafness. The key challenge of these findings is to explore ways of

appreciating or perhaps celebrating this lack of physical abilities that fall somewhere outside of socio-cultural expectations.

Furthermore, the participants' experiences at work displayed the fine balance between positivity and negativity of dealing with challenges which might have been exacerbated by own deafness. Many of them did not consider the need to demonstrate to hearing peers their pride in deafness where applicable; in fact, a significant number of the signing deaf participants felt that while possibly important to have own Deaf identity, it is irrelevant in terms of their own career aspirations. Some of them from the preceding sentence would acknowledge its presence in circumstances outside of their working hours. And then there are others who sees deafness as a negative so would attempt to minimise this disability and focus on other positives.

The preceding paragraph would confirm what is already known within the research world on deafness, which is to say that the signing deaf people would typically have different outlook in life compared to the non-signing deaf people. An important point of consideration for future research would be perhaps to split this group and present separate findings and suggested course of plan(s).

Basically, most of them are simply saying that despite occasional drawbacks and disappointments at work, they do not want to seek pity or praise, but desire to be recognised for their own capabilities at work and be rewarded for their efforts while putting the issue of their deafness on the back burner. At the same time, arguably due to the attitudes, usually negative or ignorant, the participants might not have the chance to downplay own presence of hearing impairment or the limitations this sometimes presented. They made the point of reminding that deafness is not a disability that could be cured so tried not to worry about overcoming disability, but rather concentrating instead on the showcasing of their own capabilities and skills at work.

For instance, from the interview transcripts, I have been able to demonstrate on how they cope, persevere, and manage their own identities in relation to a mix of work and social lives.

From there, it became apparent for most of the participants including the interviewees that somehow deafness is, to some extent, a 'burden' to be managed with strong assumptions accompanying the presence of own physical impairment. However, the participants have continued to try and counter-attack these assumptions with negative connotations on the head.

Finally, Seal (2015) argued from her research on the importance of trying to instigate some form of social change and resistance through research with 'minority' groups. She explained that it could be done via highlighting the presence of disempowering narratives to challenging institutional practices.

From being a researcher myself, I believe I have played a small part in stirring the hornet's nest in creating a scaffold for the deaf people to showcase their marginalised realities in the work-related everyday life and then to share the understanding of their experiences in this day and age in relation to the current socio-medico cultural climate.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

This dissertation provides an overview of the challenges of deaf people working within the exclusively hearing environment and overcoming socio-medico cultural attitudes. As this dissertation has already identified the study's limitations, several suggestions for future research are discussed in this section.

Due to very few non-White participants taking part in this study, an area of further research could be to look at whether these ethnic deaf participants would put own deafness more of an issue than own racial origins in seeking and then attaining own employment. This is partly linked to well-documented challenges certain ethnic groups have had in seeking employment in the UK, and this study would confirm whether this particular group are at a so-called 'double disadvantage' in seeking jobs. And then with the sample size not being so generalizable to the UK population, a large and long-term study project with several researchers in the team could collect significantly more sets of data courtesy of a much longer time frame. This might be an added advantage of successfully seeking more participants of different ethnic backgrounds. A key to its successful recruitment would be to ensure more than one researcher in the team would also be of ethnic origin. It is perhaps stating the obvious, but the more responses gathered from different ethnic groups, the greater power this research must promote the implementation of perhaps better understanding and appreciation of deaf employees in general.

Additionally, within the set-up of such a large research project, it might be practically possible to consider different methods of data collection via online focus groups, observation, and journal or diary writing because these methods could also provide robust and insightful data regarding each group's attitudes, thereby strengthening the reliability, validity and credibility of research findings.

As linked to the above, another point of consideration would be to compare the experiences of deaf employees in the UK with similar groups from other countries and identify whether these two different countries mirror each other or not. If another country is found to give more positive findings than that of the UK, then these comparative studies conducted for both countries would likely provide further information regarding how one could improve the deaf participant's lot within the work environment. From appraising such practices in other countries, the UK could develop better working practice to the

benefit of both the deaf employees and the hearing peers or management, which would lead to a more inclusive society within and outside the work environment.

Moving onto a different angle, looking at the age of the participants, a different research project could be set up to focus on those participants who are aged 39 and under [i.e. born in the 1980s onwards] who are highly likely to have attended mainstream schools rather than the specialist schools for the deaf, which has already been declining in numbers since the 1980s. The key reason is that this could investigate whether placing a deaf child in a mainstream setting, i.e. where almost all the pupils are hearing, would ensure that this deaf child who grows up into a young deaf adult be better placed to deal with working in an almost exclusively working environment or not, still taking into considerations the usual other factors in play, e.g. level of hearing loss, level of support at school, mode of communication, etc.

And as mentioned in the previous section, looking at ways of improving communicative working relationships between deaf and hearing employees, an idea might be to either interview or send questionnaires to non-deaf working colleagues about their experiences of working with a deaf colleague, and its associated challenges. This would be akin to looking at the other side of the coin and this should lead to an understanding of how the 'other side' could contribute to better ways of working with deaf employees and also at how they are viewed and perceived. This would then be coupled with a list of recommendations on better working relationships.

In the long term future, different research options could apply certain methods to understand and analyse different power structures from the work settings that might be replicated on the outside in a wider scale; hereby via an analysis of the Government policies on disability [with a particular focus on deafness in employment] via the various institutions, such as local councils, service providers, multi-national firms who would be in a position to create an atmosphere of equality at workplaces.

Finally, on a completely different direction, one might wonder about how deaf people in general are influenced by 'ableism' with the subconsciously inherent desire to appear 'normal' and same as everyone else who can hear. This might be the key to how this factor associated with ableism can intersect with the deaf people's experiences and well-being which would have an influence on how they present themselves to the outer world or on how they represent themselves, despite own hearing loss.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Form

University of Reading Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one: Staff project: PhD
 Name of applicant (s): Ilan Gabriel Dwek

Title of project: PhD Study on how educational experiences and deaf identity relate to employment success.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Timothy Williams

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO	
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:			
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	√		
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	√		
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	√		
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	√		
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	√		
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	√		
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	√		
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	√		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	√		
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	√		
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	√		
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	√		
Please answer the following questions	√		
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	√		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?		√	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?	√		
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/intema1/im2s/Staff2ages/im2s-training.as2x)?	√		
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	√		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	√		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			√
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?			√
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			√

<p>I 0) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data¹, or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?</p>			√
<p>11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?</p>			√
<p>12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?</p>		√	
<p>12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes" , does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?</p>			√
<p>13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?</p>	√ see note below		
<p>13b) If the answer to question 13a is " yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments , where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.</p>		√	
<p>14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?</p>		√	
<p>14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes":</p>			√
<p>My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.</p>			
<p>If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below</p>			

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

<p><u>no significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)</u></p>
<p>As my research goes beyond the accepted custom and practice of teaching, but I consider that this project has no significant ethical implications, I have ticked the box above. Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.</p>
<p>Approximately 100 deaf adults</p>

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:

1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

The title of this project is an investigation on the impact of mainstream education on the deaf school-leavers - by contrasting 'achievement' with 'underemployment' - and exploring whether 'external factors' influence achievement or otherwise.

The reason for this project is that with the ever-increasing number of specialist schools for the deaf closing down [at a recent BBC TV episode of 'See Hear!' it is now confirmed that there is only 21 of these left in the UK], more and more of the deaf children are attending the mainstream schools of which they are vastly outnumbered by their hearing peers. Provisions for the deaf and hard of hearing children varies between each of the mainstream school - such that every young deaf school-leaver would have different experience of schooling in terms of support for their academic achievement.

There is a bundle of recently-published articles on progression levels of young deaf school-leavers and there seems not much written about the use of BSL [British Sign Language] and whether it is used within the mainstream school settings as well as that we need to bear in mind the prevalence of cochlear implantation on young deaf children - with the proviso that by having these implants they should be able to hear more than hitherto, thus developing speech cognition as a consequence, thereby rendering the use of BSL redundant in the eyes of the teachers at these schools.

Yet there are statistics showing that slightly above average number of young deaf adults have mental health issues, criminal tendencies and lack of confidence [i.e. low self-esteem] in making a life for oneself - i.e. gaining a meaningful employment.

To start my research, I would start by inviting a select group of deaf adults who have made successful careers in the hearing environment workplace to participate - and from these questionnaires, try identify the underlying factors in their success. I

am aiming for at least 50 people with the upper limit of 100.

I will be using two questionnaires - Rosenberg's general self-esteem scale and then the other questionnaire on stigma and self-esteem of deafness [loosely based on the one used by my supervisor]. Once these are done, I would conduct a semi-structured interview with a selection of deaf persons [separately] which will be filmed, with their permission and then transcribed for data analysis.

From the large sample, I will select 9 people based on their gender, family background [i.e. whether their parents are deaf or not], communication methods [i.e. some use signing for communication and others use speech and lip-reading for communication]

All the participants will have to be deaf - not necessarily well versed in BSL - and aged over 25 and in employment. I will attempt to ensure a fair balance in gender.

For a majority of the participants doing the questionnaires, it will necessitate me visiting them either at their homes or at a local deaf centre. The combined questionnaires should take between 15 and 30 minutes to complete. It needs to be taken into consideration that some deaf people would prefer to meet the researcher *tete-a-tete* rather than via online if their command of written English is not fluent enough to enable the completion of the questionnaires so would require the researcher to use sign language to translate the questions. For a smaller group of participants doing the interviews, it would take up to an hour and this would take place at a different day from doing the questionnaires so breaks would not be very likely required.

The key purpose of this research is looking at whether mainstream schools with possible lack of deaf role models does have a detrimental effect on the mental well-being of a young deaf adult in terms of perhaps lacking 'Deaf identity' which I hypothesise to be an important key factor in enabling a deaf person to cope in a fully hearing environment work place which is applicable to a high majority of working deaf adults.

Referring to possibility of some participants becoming distressed or not wishing to participate any longer, I have the contact details of experienced psychologists from at least two different services [i.e. National Deaf Services Counselling and Synchronicity Therapy] - which specialises in support for deaf people regardless of their preferred communication methods i.e. speaking or using sign language. I would have these details with me for every occasion, just in case. If a participant no longer wishes to continue, then I would have to scrap their answers and/or interview statements from data collection. However if he/she stops around half-way point, then I would then check if it would be acceptable for me to keep partial information gleaned or not.

Thus the overall aim of this research is to seek to either confirm or dispel the theory that deaf identity is paramount to a typical deaf person's wellbeing regardless of the type of schools they attended; the preferred language they use [be it spoken or signed], etc.

I have prepared the information sheets as well as the associated consent forms.

The estimated start date for giving out questionnaires is September 2018 and the estimated starting date for the selected interviews is April 2019.

NOTE-Question 13b - I will be using British Sign Language for some of the deaf participants who use BSL as their preferred or first language instead of the spoken and/or written English. These interviews will be filmed and then transcribed into written English for access purposes.

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.

1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: _____

Print Name:

Date

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed:

Print Name.....

Date.....

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

Appendix 2: Risk Assessment Form

University of Reading
Institute of Education

Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014

Select one:

Staff project: PGR project: MA/UG project:

Name of applicant (s): Ilan Gabriel Dwek

Title of project: PhD Study on how do educational experiences and deaf identity relate to employment success? Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Timothy Williams

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	Filmed interviews of each deaf person as well as completing the questionnaire where applicable
---------------------------------	--

Where will data be collected?	At various locations - University London Road campus; participants' homes; deaf clubs
-------------------------------	---

Significant hazards:	None - as I will be bringing the camera and tripod [property of University of Reading]. During the filming I will ensure that there are no trailing leads from the camera to the socket. If however, it is unavoidable then I will follow location-appropriate guidelines on dealing with hazard prevention
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Who might be exposed to hazards?

Existing control measures:	None of concern in private settings - however the onus is upon the researcher to inform the supervisor and/or his spouse to indicate of his whereabouts when he goes to the participants' homes. Otherwise the public rooms fall within the deaf club's Health and Safety responsibilities
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Are risks adequately controlled? Yes

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have read the Health and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed: Print Name.....ILAN DWEK..... Date...06.09.18

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) **OR** BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: Print Name... Date.....

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Guidance notes for the completion of the risk assessment form

Significant hazards:

Only list those that you could reasonably expect to cause significant injuries or affect several people. Will the work require the use of machines and tools? How could you or anyone else be injured?

Will injury be significant?

Will the research take place in a high-risk country?

Will the work require the use of chemicals? Check safety data sheets for harmful effects and any exposure limits?

Will the work produce any fumes, vapours, dust or particles? Can they cause significant harm?

Are there any significant hazards due to where the work is to be done, such as confined space, at height, poor lighting, high/low temperature?

Who might be exposed?

Remember to include yourself, your supervisor, your participants, others working in or passing through the work area.

Those more vulnerable or less experienced should be highlighted as they will be more at risk, such as children, people unfamiliar with the work area, disabled or with medical conditions e.g. asthma.

Existing control measures:

List the control measures in place for each of the significant hazards, such as machine guards, ventilation system, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), generic safety method statement/procedure.

Existing safety measures and procedures in place in the establishment

Remember appropriate training is a control measure and should be listed. List any Permits to Work which may be in force.

Are risks adequately controlled?

With all the existing control measures in place, do any of the significant hazards still have a potential to cause significant harm.

Use your judgement as to how the work is to be done, by whom and where.

Additional controls:

List the additional control measures, for each of the significant hazards, which are required to reduce the risk to the lowest so far as is reasonably practicable.

Additional measures may include such things as: increased ventilation, Permit to Work, confined space entry permit, barriers/fencing, fall arrest equipment, etc.

PPE should only be used as a last resort, if all else fail

Appendix 3: Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form



Project title:

PhD Study on: How do educational experiences and deaf identity relate to employment success?

INFORMATION SHEET

What is the study?

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the mainstream education on the current deaf youth [ages 16 – 25] and how their career prospects might compare with the likes of yourselves. The results of this study will be used for research purposes, within my dissertation and as part of external research publications in the future.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been asked to participate in a research study and selected to be a possible participant because of your relevance to this study as a deaf adult working within an almost exclusively hearing-orientated work setting. A total of approximately 100 working deaf people have been asked to participate in this study.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Also, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting the student researcher, Ilan Dwek on i.g.dwek@reading.ac.uk if you wish to withdraw from the study.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked first to do a brief questionnaire and then you might be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher, lasting approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. The transcription will be shown to you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. The information gathered will be used by the student researcher for data analysis.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. You will be assigned an identification number (ID) only to distinguish your responses from those of other participants. This ID is in no way associated with your name. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the student researcher, Ilan Dwek, and the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Williams, will have access to the records. The student researcher can also send the results of this research to you electronically if you wish to have them. Your participation in this project will not cost you anything.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor by emailing him on timothy.williams@reading.ac.uk

Signed: (Ilan Dwek – Researcher) Date:

Consent Form

Project title:

PhD Study on: How do educational experiences and deaf identity relate to employment success?

I have read and had explained to me by Ilan Dwek, the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to complete a questionnaire:

I consent to being interviewed:

I consent to have my interview being recorded:

I consent to the use of anonymised quotes in subsequent publications:

Name:

Signed:.....

Date:.....

DATA PROTECTION ACT



This is to certify that

▶ **Ilan Dwek**

has completed the **Data Protection Act 1998** online test on

▶ **5/15/2018**

7:36 PM

with a score of

▶ **70** out of **100**



Please print this certificate as a reference to indicate that you have completed this online course by clicking on the printer icon.

gj,



Appendix 5: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale



**University of
Reading**

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

Instructions:

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feeling about yourself.

If you strongly agree, circle **SA**.

If you agree with the statement, circle **A**.

If you disagree, circle **D**.

If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	I take a positive attitude towards myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Appendix 6: Hearing Impairment Self-Esteem Scale

Hearing Impairment Scale:

This is a series of questions about yourself and deafness [medically referred to as hearing impairment]:

Instructions:

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feeling about your hearing impairment.

If you strongly agree, circle **SA**.

If you agree with the statement, circle **A**.

If you disagree, circle **D**.

If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

If you do not know, circle **DNK**.

1.	Even though I am deaf, I feel just as capable as the next person of getting and holding a job.	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
2.	Even though I am deaf it has not affected my ability to sustain close relationships with non-deaf people	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
3.	There have been occasions when I have avoided social situations because of my deafness	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
4.	My deafness makes it more difficult for me to make friends	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
5.	Most people would willingly accept a deaf person as a friend	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
6.	Most people believe that a deaf person is just as intelligent as the average person	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
7.	Most people believe that a deaf person is just as trustworthy as the average citizen	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
8.	Most employers will hire a deaf person if s/he is qualified for the job	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
9.	Most people in my community would treat a deaf person just as they would treat anyone	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
10.	Once they know a person is deaf, most people will take his or her opinions less seriously	SA	A	D	SD	DNK

Appendix 7: Self-Esteem at Work Scale



Self-esteem at WORK Scale:

This is a series of questions about yourself and deafness in your work environment:

Instructions:

Below is a list of statements dealing with your views about your job and work in general.

If you strongly agree, circle **SA**.

If you agree with the statement, circle **A**.

If you disagree, circle **D**.

If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

If you do not know, circle **DNK**.

1.	My boss understands me	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
2.	I understand my boss	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
3.	I have enough time to respond to my boss' queries	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
4.	I understand the tasks I am given by my boss	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
5.	I understand my boss when he/she discusses with my colleagues	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
6.	I understand my boss when he/she tells me the preparation and deadlines of my task	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
7.	My colleague(s) understand me	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
8.	I understand my colleague(s)	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
9.	I can participate in team discussions	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
10.	I can understand my colleagues during team discussions	SA	A	D	SD	DNK

11.	I feel good about how I communicate in meetings	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
12.	I feel relaxed when I talk to other colleagues	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
13.	I feel relaxed when I talk to my boss	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
14.	I feel relaxed in team discussions/meetings	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
15.	I feel happy in team discussions/meetings	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
16.	I feel good in team discussions/meetings	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
17.	I feel lonely because I cannot understand my colleagues	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
18.	I feel frustrated because it is difficult for me to communicate with my colleagues	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
19.	I get upset because the other colleagues cannot understand me	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
20.	I get upset because my boss cannot understand me	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
21.	I feel nervous when I talk to my colleague(s)	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
22.	I feel nervous when I talk to my boss	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
23.	I feel nervous in team discussions	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
24.	I feel frustrations in team discussions	SA	A	D	SD	DNK
25.	I feel unhappy in team discussions	SA	A	D	SD	DNK

Appendix 8: General Questionnaire

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Please circle where required:

1. What level is your hearing loss?

Profound	Severe	Moderate	Mild	Hard of hearing
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2. When presenting yourself to hearing colleagues, choose which best describes yourself as:

deaf	Hearing impaired	Hard of hearing	Other [please state]
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3. What language do you use most of the time at home?

English	BSL	Other [please state]
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4. How many people live with you at home?

None	1	2	3	4	More than 4
------	---	---	---	---	-------------

5. Are any of the people living with you deaf?

If yes, please circle how many:

None	1	2	3	4	More than 4
------	---	---	---	---	-------------

6. Is there family history of deafness?

If yes, please circle which family member(s):

Mother	Father	Sibling	Children	Grandparent(s)	Other [please state]
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7. Do you have any other disabilities you wish to disclose?

8. When you attended school, what mode of communication did you use at classroom with teachers?

English	BSL	Other [please state]
---------	-----	----------------------

9. You attended at which of the following school(s):

	Oral (speech)	BSL (signing)	Bilingual
Deaf school			
Mainstream school			
PHU or Resource Base			
Other			

10. Did you have any access to interpreter, CSW, LSA at school? [How often and at what level]

a) Hours or days within a regular classroom [applicable to mainstream schools]

11. Highest qualification achieved – GCSE/O-Level – A-Level/GNVQ/BTEC – Graduate degree/HND – Postgraduate degree

12. Current job [Job title – position of responsibility – length of time, etc.]

13. Highest qualification achieved – GCSE/O-Level – A-Level/GNVQ/BTEC – Graduate degree/HND – Postgraduate degree

14. Any promotion at work achieved [when was the latest?]

15. Was it easy or difficult to find a job?

16. Do you change jobs often? Any barriers?

17. Present job satisfaction and motivation levels → has it recently increased or decreased?

18. How do you communicate with colleagues and bosses?

19. What kind of support, if any, is available? [E.g. interpreters, lip-speakers, etc.]

20. Have you ever been unemployed?

a) If yes, how long?

b) How many times?

21. Do you wear hearing aids at work?

a. If yes, then explain how useful it is

- b. If no, then list your reasons
22. If you haven't cochlear implants, would you consider having these in future?
- a. If yes, then when and why
 - b. If no, then why not?
23. There is stem cell research ongoing looking at 'cures' at all ailments including deafness. If offered a cure for your deafness, would you grab it or not?
- a. If yes, then why and please envisage how your life would change
 - b. If no, then list your reasons
24. If you are hearing, would you be doing the same job or not? If different, what would it be?
25. Do you feel it a challenge juggling between deaf and hearing world [i.e. at work]?
- a. If yes, then describe – {does it make you frustrated?}
 - b. If no, then why not?
26. Thinking of your well-being, what kind of support in life do you have?
- a. Is it from family members?
 - b. Non-family members?

SEPARATE DEMOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS

Please circle where required:

1. What is your gender?

Male	Female	Other [please state]
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2. What is your marital status?

Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Civil Partnership	Other [please state]
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3. What is your age range?

20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 and over
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4. What is your ethnicity?

5. Which county do you live? [City acceptable if no county, e.g. London]

6. Do you live in a city, town, or village?

7. How many hours per week do you USUALLY work at your job?

Under 16 hours	16 to 24 hours	24 to 35 hours	Over 35 hours
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8. What is the size of your employer [manpower]

Less than 5	5 to 10	11 to 50	51 to 100	Over 100
-------------	---------	----------	-----------	----------

9. What is your job title?

10. What best describes the type of organisation you work for?

- Private sector
- Non-profit (religious, charitable, social assistance, arts, etc.)
- Government
- Health care
- Education
- Other

11. Do you have any decision-making authority at your job?

- Final decision-making authority (either as an individual or as part of a group)
- Significant decision-making or influence
- Minimal decision-making or influence
- No input

12. What is your total annual income?

- Below £15,000
- Between £15,000 and £25,000
- Between £25,000 and £35,000
- Between £35,000 and £50,000
- Over £50,000

Appendix 9: Semi-Structured Interview Question List:

QUESTIONS for semi-structured interviews:

EDUCATION – PREPARING FOR WORK

1. Looking back at your educational experiences, do you feel these prepare you well for your future career aims/plans?
2. Do you feel you have the correct or relevant qualifications for your current job?
3. How important do you think your communication skills is for your job to proceed satisfactorily?

CURRENT JOBS

4. How do you communicate with colleagues and bosses?
5. What kind of support, if any, is available? [E.g. interpreters, lip-speakers, etc.]
6. Present job satisfaction and motivation levels → has it recently increased or decreased?
7. Do you feel lucky in doing your job as it is something that interests you?
8. Are you resilient at work? Putting up with others?
9. What type of situation at work has caused you the most stress?
10. Do you feel frustrated and impatient at work? What are the factors leading to this?
11. Within the work environment, did you occasionally find that you are ‘going through the motions’?

CAREER PATH

12. Regarding your current career, is this something you choose to do?
13. Seeking jobs – how easy/difficult was it? Do you change jobs often? Any barriers?
14. If there is one or two things you could change – what would that be?
15. Is there any sublime wish regarding your career? Is it the wrong career or promotion elusive, is deafness really the issue or impediment, etc.?
16. Have you had any leadership role or experience?
 - a. If so, describe the challenges of taking the lead, etc.

IDENTITY & BELONGING:

17. Do you feel part of the whole community?
18. Regarding your hearing loss, do you see yourself as disabled?
19. Regarding your disability, how do you classify this type of disability as? [e.g. [Deaf, deaf, HoH, etc.]

I would like to ask you a final question:

20. Competency can be said to be a concept linking three parameters – knowledge, skills and attitude. Which of these three is the most important to you?

THANK YOU