

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS IN A MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

This is a phenomenological study aimed at unveiling the lived experiences and difficulties of the Deaf and Hard of hearing (D/Hh) students in a mainstream education system. Specifically, the study is directed to discover the difficulties of the hearing impaired and their coping mechanisms and to examine the participants' self-concept. The end-in-view is to make the processed data available as tools in designing a profound and proactive guidance program that is responsive to the needs of the D/Hh students in the mainstream, which would eventually help them reach their full potential. The study used the data collected from nine (9) Deaf students and one Hard of hearing learner who are currently enrolled in a regular class. Of the ten (10) participants, six (6) are in college, and four (4) are in high school.

Findings show that most of the difficulties encountered were brought about by language barrier that creates a gap between two worlds: the world of the D/Hh and the world of the hearing, which affects the participants' academic performance and sparks off in the negative feelings and loneliness when in school. The participants expressed that they feel lonely in school, most notably when they encounter difficulties. They also experience negative feelings and emotions when in school, such as feeling rejected when in a group, that they are not normal or are different from those who can hear, and they feel being left out. They view their impairment as negative in itself. However, it is strongly observed that they do not mind those negative things; they are conscious of them. Despite those feelings, they still show a positive attitude that reflects their resiliency. Their coping mechanism has made them withstand the difficulties they encounter in school. Their strong relationship with their mother is something praiseworthy revealing that their mother constantly assisted them not only in their studies but also in their personal life. The support system was ultimately established among their group.

The findings suggest emphasizing the function of the administrators in creating and implementing a more aggressive and relevant guidance program for both the D/Hh students and the teachers who would mold them to become productive and active members of the community.

Keywords: deaf, hard of hearing, mainstream education system

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important human activities. It is a holistic approach that is vital to the growth and development of a person. Educational institutions must see to it that students learn when they are in school. This applies to all types of schools: public and private, basic and higher education, regular and special. Likewise, this mandate of ensuring that learning takes place when students are in school applies to all types of learners: fast and slow, male and female (and even those in the so-called “third sex”), young and old, and abled and disabled.

While there has been much progress concerning equality when it comes to access to learning and education regardless of the types of learners, there have been issues when it comes to the types of schools or classes offered or provided to disabled students. These students are often referred to as handicapped. Less-offensive terms used to refer to them include “differently-abled” students.

Murphy (1986) defined mainstreaming as the integration of disabled students into the regular class. Other authors such as Birch (1975) used the word inclusion to describe this practice. Dizon (Dizon, Sacris & Mercado, n.d.) elaborates mainstreaming as the placement of disabled students into the regular class after fulfilling specific admission requirements. The provision of interactions with regular children and with the regular class is established. It may also include shadow teaching in the regular class, pull-out provision for one-on-one teaching, and individualization in the special class. It may involve ancillary or auxiliary services to cater to their needs.

Salend, as cited in Dizon, Sacris, and Mercado (n.d.), states that mainstreaming is the carefully planned and monitored placement of students into regular education classrooms for their academic and social educational programs. Further, the academic program within the regular education classroom should be adapted to address the instructional needs of the mainstreamed student, and the social program should be designed so that the mainstreamed student is assimilated into the social climate of the class and accepted by peers.

According to Baldo, as cited in Dizon, Sacris, and Mercado (n.d.), the Deaf and Hard of hearing (D/Hh) students are individuals with communication differences, which include children with learning disabilities or speech and language disabilities. They also fall within the category of lower-incidence disabilities which means that they are learners who are far less commonly represented in schools, have disabilities that may be present at birth or acquired later in life, can be associated with impairments that range from mild to severe, and may have impairments that are either temporary, permanent or even life-threatening. Therefore, D/Hh are exceptional children needing special care in school as special learners.

Republic Act 9258, otherwise known as the Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004, revolutionized and concretized the profession of guidance and counseling. The law obligates those in the profession of Guidance and Counseling to create a holistic and integrated approach for the discovery, enhancement, and development of the full potential of every

individual. Booth and Samdal (1997) stated that schools represent a miniature version of society and provide opportunities for children to develop and use skills that are necessary for a healthy lifestyle (Kent, 2003). Efforts to increase participation may have greater success if professional staff will employ specific strategies to foster positive interaction (Stinson & Liu, 1999).

The guidance and counseling unit in an institution has to suffuse programs to enhance the quality of life of these exceptional children and should consider and adopt programs to promote a healthy lifestyle and promote positive interaction among students. The basic tenet of guidance and counseling as a profession is to improve the quality of life of the ones being served. Hintermair (2007) cited Schumacher that to improve the quality of life is to consider the different components or dimensions, including a person's constitution, social relationships, and ability to cope with the demands of everyday life. Hintermair further provides that the deaf and hard of hearing have the capacity to live in both worlds and may have the best of both worlds by allowing them to adjust to the situation and their needs.

On the other hand, Article 14, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and Republic Act No. 9442 (An Act Amending RA 7277) provides an avenue for the disabled persons, including the D/Hh, the opportunity to develop their full potentials and stipulates that accurate programs and policies must be in place to promote the spirit of the law. Those laws align with the Social Justice Doctrine, which states that "Those who have less in life should have more in law." The spirit and intent of the law can only be put in reality if people immerse into the world of the D/Hh-- that is, to understand them and discover their challenges. The said laws were incorporated in the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 126 Series of 2011. In addition, the Department of Education Order No. 224 Series of 2013 requires all institutions to provide equal opportunity to education to all students with disabilities. These laws are social contracts that are deemed instituted in all educational systems.

Further, Estanislao (2012) stated that the ASCA Model's four overarching themes and four interrelated components provide structures that are necessary for the development of a comprehensive counseling program. Moreover, it is provided that school counselors assess students' needs. They should also design, organize, implement, and evaluate programs.

In the mainstream, the D/Hh experience difficulties brought about by prejudices that lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of their culture. In school, the guidance and counseling center is one of the vital workplaces where the psycho-social and psycho-spiritual aspects of the students are realized and met. The services must cater to all the members of the school. The psychological sphere of the deaf and hard of hearing students is a primordial concern of guidance and counseling given their hearing impairment.

In addition, Camara as mentioned in Dizon, Sacris and Mercado (n.d.) maintained that all learners, whether regular or special, need to be taught appropriate values, attitudes and habits, human relationships, occupational information and acquisition of job and daily living skills as part of basic education. This is to enable them to survive and succeed in the competitive world of work. In this case, strengthening their skills and abilities helps them become productive than focusing on their impairment or disability. It is a concern of the guidance and counseling practice to look into the potentials of these types of learners and to develop them. The school where there are D/Hh may develop a program that is geared toward their personal growth and enable them to help reach their highest potentials. The guidance and counseling center can help D/Hh students build a well-adjusted life, that is when they go out from the four corners of the school they already have acquired and developed life skills for them to become productive members of society.

Studies describe deafness and hard of hearing as a culture of its own, a minority culture that lives within its world. Leigh et al. (1998) mentioned Fitzgerald's suggestion that "it is a culture that usually gives people their sense of identity, whether at an individual or group level" (p. 329). Culture is all the learned customs, beliefs, values, knowledge, artifacts, and symbols that are communicated continuously among a set of people who share a common way of life (Calhoun, Light & Keller, 1989). Kottak (2000) believes that culture is distinctly human, transmitted through learning, traditions, and customs that govern behavior and beliefs. Macionis (2006), on the other hand, defined culture as the values, beliefs, behavior, and material objects that together form a people's way of life. It does not only shape what people do but also what people think and how they feel. Crowe (2003) further explained that culture exists as internalized beliefs, values, and interaction patterns. Given these elements of culture, it can now be considered that deafness has a culture of its own indeed with members who have varying needs. In dealing with D/Hh students in a mainstream, one must bring the self into the light of the experiences of these types of learners to fully understand their world. To understand them means to speak their language and to embrace their way of life, their culture. In striving to achieve the objectives of this study, therefore, it is of prime importance that the researcher at least gets to be familiarized with the culture of the D/Hh, specifically on how to communicate with them and interpret their non-verbal language. The participants constitute a special group; thus to reach the goals of the study is to be conscious of their individuality.

This study focuses on the lived experiences of D/Hh students in a mainstream educational institution. Specifically, it aims to (1) identify the difficulties they experience in school, (2) describe the participants' self-perception, and (3) discover the participants' coping mechanism. As to its unique contribution in the existing body of knowledge, it is hoped that readers or the intended end-users of the findings (and the emerging framework) of this study specifically the guidance counselors, as well as educators, school administrators and curriculum developers, would be able to better understand the conditions of the D/Hh, and derive substantive inputs which can be used in creating and implementing a profound and responsive guidance program for such a special group included in the mainstream education.

METHOD

This is a qualitative study that used the phenomenological process. The individuals' experiences are captured through a phenomenological lens that requires the researcher to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment or presupposition. "Phenomenological process means to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day thus, the maxim of phenomenology, to the things themselves" (Moustakas, 1994, 26).

There were ten (10) participants in this study. Six (6) of them are college students, while the other four (4) are high school students. They are all enrolled in a school that caters to physically and mentally challenged learners, such as people with hearing impairment, autism, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy.

Data were gathered through individual interviews guided by a researcher-made questionnaire that was validated by three experts: (1) a hospital-based counselor psychologist and professor who was once active with the deaf and hard of hearing organization; (2) a doctor of education and a current school administrator; and (3) a school guidance counselor.

A letter seeking permission to conduct the research and stating its purpose was sent to the administrator of the school where the participants were studying.

Consent was secured from the parents of the participants. The purpose of the study was read and explained to them. The parents were allowed to ask questions relative to the study. It was clarified that the participants' involvement is voluntary and free from any force or undue influence. It was explained that statements, opinions, and shared experiences made by the participants would be treated with confidentiality.

In addition and of primary importance, a letter of consent to the president of the non-government organization who acts as the participants' guardian was also secured. The same procedure as in securing consent from the parents was followed.

The participants were selected following these two qualifications: first, the participant must be currently enrolled in the mainstream; and second, the participant can communicate well through American Sign Language (ASL) or Filipino Sign Language (FSL).

The researcher's experience being an accredited interpreter and as actively involved in a community-based NGO for eighteen (18) years has helped in building rapport with the participants. Building rapport plays an important role in the course of the interview. It is considered as an essential element in the conduct of the study. The participants were made comfortable before, during, and even after the interview to ensure they are relaxed and at ease.

Before the interview was started, the rights of the participant were explained, which include the right to be informed about the study and the right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions.

The interview proper began with the discussion of the purpose and objectives of the study. The participants were allowed to read the prepared guide questionnaire, including the title and objectives of the study, for them to grasp what the study is all about. This is also an innovative way to identify the level of comprehension of the participants, and to assess whether they could communicate in ASL/FSL. The researcher quickly observed if the participant could sign throughout what is written in the prepared interview questionnaire.

The questions were asked through ASL during the interviews. Reverse interpreting was used in gathering the answers. If the participants' answers are quite fragmented, the researcher will capture the thought of the participant; while the participant is signing/communicating, the researcher will construct right then and there the ideas of the participant and write in the paper the "assumed" answers and convey the thought through ASL. In this process the researcher closely observed the facial expression(s) and body language of the participant and spot if they have given an affirmative answer, i.e., "Aha!" answers as expressed by signing the words "okay okay okay...", "true true true...", "yes, yes, yes..." or "right right right..." coupled with the body language of nodding their head, thumbs up or a smile. These answers are considered to be affirming the thought of the researcher in rephrasing the participant's answers. Be verbs such as *is*, *are*, *am*, *was*, and *were*, are considered not part of the usual conversation or grammar of the D/Hh. If given an affirmative answer, the researcher will not anymore delete the written answers as it already becomes the participant's genuine and authentic answers. If the participant can express his or her answers in a way that is clear, the researcher will write the words directly and show the participant his/her answers. Again, in this process, there should be an affirmation from the participant that what was written is correct and express his or her ideas and answers. The facial expression and body language are observed and recorded.

Every interview lasted for an average of two (2) to two and a half (2 1/2) hours. The written answers are the transcriptions of the interview, which were directly, explicitly, and tacitly extracted from the participants.

A video recorder was prepared to record the interview process. However, the first three (3) participants did not allow themselves to be recorded. The researcher asked, "Why?" and they categorically answered, "I am shy." When it was observed that they were indeed not comfortable to have the interview be video recorded, the researcher did not proceed in doing the said procedure. Due to these limitations of video recording the conversations, the researcher doubled his effort on being focused while interviewing to ensure accuracy of data gathered and that objectivity is kept.

After the data have been collected, the researcher proceeded to put the answers into correct English grammar without distorting the thought of the participants. An English professor validated and proofread the transcriptions. The corrections were shown to the

participants for them to verify whether or not the changes were still the thoughts they conveyed at the time of the interview. All the participants affirmed that the corrections did not change any thoughts, meaning, tone, and mood of their expressed feelings, emotions, and experiences at the time of the interview. This is to preserve the answers given by the participants and to make sure that the study maintained its objectivity and avoided bias.

Transcripts were then organized and coded accordingly. Four (4) experts validated the emerging themes; a professor, a clinical psychologist, and a professor, a psychiatrist-professor and guidance counselor, and by another guidance counselor.

According to Eckartsberg, as cited in Moustakas (1994), data analysis-explication and interpretation are processes where the data are read and scrutinized to reveal their structure, meaning configuration, coherence, and the circumstances of their occurrence and clustering. The emphasis is on the study of the configuration of meaning involving both the structure of meaning and how it is created.

In analyzing the data, the researcher adopted the Guidelines for the Phenomenological Analysis of Interview Data, as suggested in Hycner (1985):

(1) *Transcription.* The transcription study went on a thorough process whereby the researcher collated the participants' answers and placed them in their respective questions. As described earlier, the participants expressed their answers in fragmented English; thus, the researcher took extra effort in translating their answers into English that is understandable to both the researcher and the participants. The participants' answers were later placed in the correct English grammar form. After doing so, the researcher went back to the participants for the validation of their answers.

(2) *Bracketing and the Phenomenological Reduction.* Here, the raw data, that is, the transcriptions, were approached with openness to whatever meanings emerged. Moustakas (1994) strongly suggests that in phenomenological reduction, the task is that of describing in a textual language just what one sees, not only in terms of an external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self. The qualities of the experience become the focus; the filling in or completion of the nature and meaning of the experience becomes the challenge.

(3) *Reviewing the interview for the sense of the whole.* This is a process where the researcher repeatedly read the transcript and the personal notes written during the conduct of the interview to discover the essence of the lived experiences of the participants, which is the purpose of the study. This process is necessary to elicit the units of general meaning, which is the next process.

(4) *Delineating units of general meaning.* This means that a unit of general meaning as those words, phrases, non-verbal or paralinguistic communications which express a unique and coherent meaning differentiated from that which precedes and follows.

If there is ambiguity or uncertainty as to whether a statement constitutes a discrete unit of general meaning, it is best to include it. At this point, all general meanings are included, even redundant ones, and the interview transcriptions become final and have undergone validation by the participants. This is important due to the nature of the participants being D/Hh. It is crystallization and condensation of what the participant-D/Hh has said, still using their literal words. The objectiveness of the study is ensured. The researcher has bracketed his presuppositions and tried to stay as factual as possible to the data gathered, and a sense of the whole of the interview as a context. This is done with as much openness as possible, though, at this point, it does not yet address the research question to the data. Openness here means that the data gathered are treated without bias, and presumption is suspended.

(5) Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research questions. Here, the objectives of the study and the units of general meaning were reviewed to determine whether what the participant has said responds to and illuminates the research question.

(6) Discovering emerging themes. In this stage, transcripts were coded and grouped accordingly. The same was sent to four (4) independent judges for validation and verification of the units of relevant meaning. After careful attention to the comments and suggestions from the judges, improvements were consequently made and adopted. The clustering of the emerging themes was done, and experts validated the same. Meanings that are relevant to the study were taken.

(7) Eliminating redundancies. This is done after completion of the previous steps where the list of units of relevant meaning was reviewed; redundant items were eliminated. The literal content of the units and how it was mentioned were considered.

(8) Clustering units of relevant meaning. Once the list of non-redundant units of relevant meaning was made, the researcher renews the effort to bracket his presuppositions and tries once again to stay as accurate to the phenomenon as possible. The units of relevant meaning were determined to identify if these were naturally clustered together, that is, whether there seems to be some common themes or essence that unite several discrete units of relevant meaning. Such an essence emerges through rigorously examining each unit of relevant meaning and trying to elicit the essence of that unit of meaning given the context.

(9) Determining themes from clusters of meaning. At this phase, all the clusters of meaning were interrogated to determine if there are central themes that express the essence of these clusters.

FINDINGS

Findings are presented following the sequence of the objectives of this study: (1) to identify the difficulties of the Deaf and Hard of hearing students in the mainstream education; (2) to discover the participants' self-perception; and (3) to describe their ways of coping with their difficulties.

For purposes of organization and clarity, tables that quantitatively summarize data are shown in each section. Meanwhile, transcriptions (statements directly derived from the participants) are italicized; translations/corrected statements in English put inside brackets follow each transcript for a better understanding of meaning expressed. Likewise, some significant facial expressions or gestures displayed by the participants are purposefully included to situate readers better. In addition, owing to the participants' natural limitations in terms of articulation, some responses are immediately translated and put in corrected English form instead of first writing or describing the literal expressions based on signs made by the participants. Such translations, after being verified with the participants, are finalized and presented in this narrative enclosed inside brackets. [An example of this is that on the participants' description of their feelings of loneliness in school].

The Encountered Difficulties of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Participants encountered difficulties that are categorized in this study into three: (1) school and academic-related, (2) negative feelings (emotions), and (3) loneliness. As shown in Table 1, under the school and academic difficulties, two most experienced difficulties can be noted: first, ten (10) participants communicate by writing on the paper and second, all and the same participants shared that there are only a few classmates and teachers who knew conversational sign language. Meanwhile, participants also expressed their negative feelings. Three (3) of them feel sad and lonely, and another three (3) feel frustrated. In addition, three (3) participants feel they are not normal and are different from others. Moreover, participants also experienced loneliness in school. Nine (9) participants expressed that they are lonely when they are confronted with school and academic difficulties.

Table 1
Difficulties of the deaf and hard of hearing

Emerging Theme	Participants	Number of Responses
A. School and Academic		
1. Seldom has an interpreter in class	P5, P6, P8, P9	4
2. Difficulty in complying with requirements in school	P1, P5, P6	3
3. Difficulty in understanding the things that are happening around	P1, P5, P7, P8, P9	5
4. Difficulty in comprehending lessons in class and/or handouts	P1, P6, P7, P8, P10	5
5. Communicate through writing in paper	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	10
6. Difficulty in understanding the questions and conveying answers during tests	P1, P3	2
7. Only a few classmates and teachers knew conversational sign language	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	10
8. Distracted by movements of classmates in class	P3, P4, P9	3
Total Number of Responses		42
B. Negative Feelings in School (Emotions)		
1. Sad and lonely	P1, P4, P6	3
2. Frustrated	P3, P5, P8	3
3. Feel not normal and different from others	P4, P6, P7	3
4. Feel out of place	P7	1
5. Feel rejected	P4, P9	2
Total Number of Responses		12
C. Loneliness in School		
1. Feel lonely in school	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	9
2. Could not identify reasons for their loneliness	P2, P3	2
3. Feel lonely when experienced difficulties and challenges	P4, P5, P6, P7	4
4. Feel lonely when distracted in class and understand only few things	P3	1
5. Feel lonely when left-out as part of class/group	P4	1
6. Feel lonely when bored	P2	1
7. Feel lonely with no friends around	P6, P10	2
8. Feel lonely when being stared at	P9	1
9. Feel lonely when they cannot understand what is happening around	P6, P7, P8, P10	4
10. Feel lonely when they could hardly communicate	P5	1
Total Number of Responses		25

School and Academic Difficulties

The participants' hearing condition leads them to experience difficulty in their academic performance. Specifically, it is difficult for them to understand the given questions during quizzes and could hardly comprehend their lessons in class. They find it difficult to meet their requirements in school, and they also have difficulty in understanding the things that are happening around. The D/Hh participants also find it difficult to comprehend their lessons in class.

The D/Hh participants shared that one of the main difficulties they encountered in school were the times when their interpreter was not around. When they do not have an interpreter, the participants tended to copy everything that was written on the board. They also find it difficult to follow instructions during quizzes, assignments, and projects. Some participants also said they are distracted by the movements of their classmates inside the classroom. The participants expressed a feeling that they are being ridiculed. When they experience it, they seclude themselves. They also feel they are not comfortable when being stared at. The participants also cannot relate themselves when in a group, and they work at what others are doing. Sometimes, they could hardly understand the reporting in class even when there is an interpreter. It was discovered that difficulty in comprehending lessons in class is experienced by the participants who further expressed that they cannot understand their teacher, classmates, and friends. One of the participants narrated that it is his mother or his friends who work on his assignments and projects. The D/Hh participants consider the word “deep” if they cannot understand it.

All participants write in paper when they communicate with their classmates, teachers, and their hearing friends. They also teach sign language by writing in papers and sign words. They express themselves only in English except for the participant who is hard of hearing and can understand and speak Filipino.

Difficulty in understanding the questions and conveying answers during quizzes are difficulties experienced by the participants because there is no available interpreter. One participant admits that during a quiz, he just read, sign the words, and then write the answer, but does not understand the question and feels sad about it.

Most of the participants said they have few classmates who knew conversational sign language in class. Some of the participants themselves taught their classmates to do sign language. Meanwhile, it was mentioned that some of their teachers do not know sign language. Because of this, the participants could not venture more on their studies and lessons in class.

Seated at the back of the classroom, some participants said they are distracted by the movements of their classmates.

Negative Feelings of the Participants When in School

The participants feel sad and lonely. They also feel frustrated. Some feel they are not normal and are different from others. Others feel they are out of place.

Participants Feeling of Loneliness in School

Most participants expressed that they also feel lonely when in school. Some are aware that they are lonely and attributed such feelings of loneliness to their experiences of difficulties. One participant feels lonely when distracted, and when she understands only a few things in class. The participants feel lonely when left-out as part of the class or when in a group. Some feel lonely when bored. Others feel lonely when they have no friends around. They also feel lonely when they are being stared at by people. Others feel lonely when they could hardly communicate and express their thoughts, feelings, and sentiments.

Participants' Self-Perception

Three major themes emerged describing the participants' self-perception: (1) negative view of the self; (2) positive view of the self; and, (3) positive attitude at school. The ultimate reason for the participants' negative perception toward the self is the standpoint that they are not complete and are different from others. It is significantly noted, however, that despite some negative views of themselves, they still expressed positive self-perception, that is, the view that they are good and that they have a positive outlook in life (feel motivated). Further, all of the participants expressed that they are doing good with friends, classmates, and teachers, while eight (8) participants feel happy when in school. All participants viewed themselves to be friendly. Table 2 summarizes the participants' views of themselves.

Table 2
Self-Perceptions and Attitude

Emerging Theme	Participants	Number of Responses
A. Negative View of the Self		
1. Not complete and different from others	P2, P4, P5, P6 P8, P9, P10	7
2. Inferior	P4, P9	3
Total Number of Responses		10
B. Positive View of the Self		
1. Positive Attitude	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, P10	8
2. Viewed oneself as good and has a positive outlook in life (<i>Feel Motivated</i>)	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10	9
Total Number of Responses		10

Cont. Table 2

C. Positive Attitude at School			
1.	Feel happy when in school	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9	8
2.	Doing good with friends, classmates, and teachers	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	10
3.	Friendly	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10	10
4.	Feel there is no problem encountered in class	P2, P7	2
5.	Feel there is no difference between the D/Hh and their hearing classmates	P1, P2, P3	3
Total Number of Responses			33

Negative View of the Self

The participants openly expressed negative feelings about their impairment. They feel they are not complete and that they are different from others.

Some noticeable findings in the study are the participants' feeling of inferiority or them having low self-esteem. This inferiority and low self-esteem lead them to feel negative things, but as can be noted in some statements, they right away express their positive outlook of the self.

Positive View toward Themselves

Encapsulating the shared experiences of the participants, they viewed themselves as good and have a positive outlook in life. They feel motivated despite their difficulties. Some participants feel accepted by their families.

Positive Attitude at School

Alongside their expression of negative feelings, the participants said that they are also happy when in school. The participants are unanimous in saying that they are doing well with friends, classmates, and teachers in school. All participants were one in saying that they are friendly.

Two (2) participants expressed to have no problem encountered in class.

Some feel there is no difference between the D/Hh participants and their hearing classmates.

Participants' Coping Mechanisms

Table 3 presents the coping mechanisms of the D/Hh in the mainstream. Findings show that nine (9) participants share feelings of loneliness to their family, friends, classmates, teachers, and interpreters. Six (6) D/Hh students ask assistance from their family, friends, fellow deaf, and teachers, while five (5) of them immerse in spiritual activities.

Table 3
Participants' Coping Mechanism

Emerging Theme	Participants	Number of Responses
A. Support System in School	P2, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10	6
B. Immersion in Spiritual Activities	P2, P3, P4, P6, P8	5
C. Ignoring Negative Feelings	P3, P5	2
D. Being Self-Motivated	P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9	6
E. Isolation	P4, P6, P9, P10	4
F. Share feelings of loneliness to family, friends, classmates, teachers, and interpreters	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 P7, P8, P9, P10	9

Support System in School

The participants' common way of coping with the difficulties in school is to ask assistance from their family, friends, fellow deaf, and teachers.

The participants share and open up problems with their friends or to the members of their family, especially to their mothers.

Immersion in Spiritual Activities

The participants engage in spiritual happenings such as going to church to pray, attending in recollections, and masses.

Ignoring Negative Feelings

The participants tend to ignore their feelings of loneliness, rejection, or when being laughed at. This is another means of coping by the D/Hh.

Being Self-Motivated

The participants displayed an enormous trait of self-motivation. They do self-study or read alone in the library or when they are at home. Even if it is challenging for them to understand the meaning of the words they still read and study hard. Their parents taught them too. Others do and work on their assignments and projects on their own.

Isolating Themselves

The participants seclude themselves whenever they feel being talked about or being laughed at.

DISCUSSION

The participants identified the language barrier as a source of difficulty in communication. The language barrier affects their school and academic performance. The participants' hearing impairment limits their ability to communicate effectively. Because of it, the Deaf and Hard of hearing feel a tremendous lack of connectivity between their world and that of the hearing. This can be proven by their responses when they said, "I could hardly understand the lessons in class" or "I feel I am being laughed at by my classmates." Communication is a transactional process involving participants who occupy different but overlapping environments and create relationships through the exchange of messages, many of which are affected by external, physiological, psychological noise (Adler, Proctor II & Towne, 2005).

For some reason, there were times when the participants have no interpreter during class. In such a situation, the D/Hh participants find it hard to understand the questions. Stinson and Liu (1999) mentioned Anita that the role of an interpreter is complex and crucial for supporting interaction in the classroom. In addition, Stinson and Liu opined that interpreters have a larger role other than conveying the teachers' and classmates' messages. Interpreters share responsibility with the classroom teacher of the D/Hh in providing information about deafness, in monitoring the D/Hh student's functioning, and in supporting the D/Hh students' participation in class activities.

In the mainstream, connecting the gap brought by the language barrier would mean strengthening the D/Hh students. Evidence would prove that deaf children with better language and communication skills perform better academically (Marschark, 1993), and there is strong proof for a connection between children's social-emotional development or social competence and academic outcomes (Calderon, 2000).

One apparent struggle experienced by the D/Hh is their difficulty in following instructions and directions when they have quizzes, examinations, and classroom activities. They

find it difficult to express their questions or requests of help from their teachers and classmates. It is difficult for them to participate in classroom activities. In the mainstream, teachers help determine whether hearing members of the class have a positive attitude toward the D/Hh student and whether there are good opportunities for the student to participate (Stinson & Liu, 1999). It is, therefore, important that teachers also see to it that the D/Hh can join in activities given inside the class. The teacher must see to it that the D/Hh student is not left behind. Facilitation of participation of D/Hh students in regular classes requires the effort and skill of (1) the professional staff regular classroom teacher, teacher of the D/Hh, interpreter, (2) hearing students, and (3) D/Hh students (Stinson & Liu, 1999). Considering the same, and assuring facilitation of learning in class, the school must see to it that the required skills are being provided to cater to the academic needs of deaf and hard of hearing. Appropriate training, seminars, and workshops may be given to teachers, interpreters, the hearing students, and the D/Hh to promote an environment that leads to active participation in classroom activities.

Persons who are deaf and hard of hearing are visual individuals. They get easily distracted by small things. Some participants in this study categorically conveyed that they are distracted by the movements of their classmates. The researcher observed that all the participants are seated at the back of the classroom. It is further observed that even in seminars, talks, religious activities like mass and prayer services, they are seated or located at the back of the venue. Such condition by the participants is indeed causing them difficulty. Teachers are confronted by a situation to choose whether or not a strategy (teaching method and classroom management skills) benefits a particular or majority of students in the class. In most instances, D/Hh students are seated at the back with their interpreter because the hearing students, including the teachers, are distracted by their movements. According to Wang (2009), citing Dyson and Jenkinson, teachers face constant dilemmas. The dilemma includes seating arrangements and individual attention. It is, therefore, valid to recommend that the Deaf and Hard of hearing must have a special place in front of the venue during activities. This will invite the D/Hh to become attentive in the given activity and will help them feel they are part of the program.

On the question, "Does anyone in your class know how to sign (*like classmates & teachers*)?," all ten (10) participants answered that not all their classmates and teachers know how to sign. The D/Hh participants themselves only taught the signs their teachers and classmates learned. Polat (2003) suggests that the school should create a teacher training program on sign language because the inclusion of Deaf students has been criticized due to its perceived adverse impact on the affective dimension. In addition, it was explained that special measures should be taken prior to the placement of Deaf students into the mainstream school. The placement of Deaf students into regular classes should be systematized. Plans on it must be created, programs and services must be well defined, and adjustment of students should be monitored continuously. Moreover, he explained that problems in communication are basic to an understanding of a deaf child's behavioral, emotional, and social development. Teachers play a vital role in influencing students in a class. Important aspects such as acoustic

conditions, seating positions, and the effective management of hearing aids should be considered. Effective strategies for teachers like preparation of subject material, presentation of information to pupils (students), and interaction among students to foster learning are also suggested (Webster & Wood, 1989).

Findings show that loneliness and negative feelings of the participants were brought about by their experienced difficulties in school, particularly inside the classroom. When the participants cannot perform well in class or when they cannot participate in group discussions, they become lonely. They also become lonely when they do not know or understand what is required in school. However, the participants did not bother to elaborate on their feeling of loneliness when asked by the researcher why they feel lonely after experiencing those difficulties. They answered, "I do not know why." Some participants feel lonely when they are frustrated due to their experiences in school. A participant shared that he feels lonely when someone looks (or stares closely) at him and when he does not know what is happening in the class. Kluwin, Stinson, and Collarosi (2002) believe that among affective functioning refers to general personal dispositions, including self-concept, locus of control, achievement motivation, among others. It was discussed further that affective characteristics of D/Hh students that have been investigated include loneliness. Loneliness is the self's emotional response to a lack of social participation. Perceived social competence is concerned with perceptions of the ability to establish and maintain good social relationships. Self-image is the perception of the self as a social being or socially desirable being. A study presented findings that hard of hearing students are more prone to be lonely than their hearing counterparts. The result was marginally short of the statistical significance measure but was sufficiently close to merit further investigation (Kent, 2003). It is observed in the study that even though the participants feel loneliness, this does not have a negative effect on their overall motivation to learn, and they have a strong support system among themselves.

For a guidance program to be effective and to ensure the Deaf and Hard of hearing's academic success, an institution may integrate self-efficacy, study habits, program satisfaction, and enrollment in academically rigorous courses (Richardson et al., 2010). Foster, Long, and Snell (1999) suggest that interventions must be designed to be specific where it involves changes in the behaviors of both students and instructors. According to Lang (2002), the ones being valued by the deaf students are professors who are knowledgeable about the course content and who use visual materials, teachers who communicate expectations and assignments clearly, who lecture at a good pace, make sure that students understand, challenge students' thinking, and emphasize important information. Deaf students also appear to prefer teachers who are willing to adapt instruction to accommodate students with different needs.

Desmond as mentioned in Sisia (2011) may be referring to communication as a tool that connects the gap between the D/Hh individual and society when he said that the social act of communication and participation in which exchanges support an individual's understanding of their potential for thought and for rich communication to take place, people

must be able to take on the perspective of others.

This type of understanding is what enables human society to do social coordination. Moreover, it described that language is an important facet of a child's socialization experience. It is through shared language that a child can communicate his/ her thoughts, needs, and desires. Sisia explained that the spoken language barrier that exists for deaf adolescents in a mainstream educational setting might have implications on their socialization experience and their sense of self. Considering the discussions above emphasizing the importance of communication in the life of the Deaf and Hard of hearing, it now paves the way to commune themselves in the society where they live. They may lack skills in the spoken and written vernacular (Marschark, Lang & Albertini, 2002), yet they have a language of their own that is unique but understandable.

Another theme in the study is self-concept. According to Beanne, Lipka and Ludewig (n.d) self-concept refers to the description people hold of themselves based on the roles they play and the personal attributes they believe they possess. Grup (2001) explained that self-concept is affected by interactions with significant others and social comparison. Further, an essential aspect of social interaction is linguistic communication. If an individual has difficulty communicating with significant others, this factor may affect his or her self-concept, particularly in the social dimensions like peer and parent relations. Some participants described themselves as "not complete" and that they are different from others. They viewed that their impairment places them in a negative situation. There, being D/Hh, is in itself a negative thing. They also have a feeling that they are inferior if they compared themselves to those who can hear. This is the self-image they portray. Kluwin, Stinson, and Collarosi (2002) explained that self-image might vary with the setting when the child's language skills are taken into consideration as well. Nunes, Pretzlik, and Olsson (n.d) viewed that Deaf pupils do not encounter strong negative feelings in mainstream schools in their relationship with hearing peers. They argued that, like hearing pupils, deaf pupils attract positive and negative reactions, and these are most likely related to personal characteristics that are independent of their hearing status. In other words, hearing impairment in itself is not the sole factor why the D/Hh feels negative things in school.

Meanwhile, most of the participants are found to have low self-esteem. It is observed that they would usually refuse to stay in front if there is any activity. Also, it was noted that some of them did not allow to have a video recording for the interview. Even if it was explained to them that the video is confidential and is just part of the process, the participants expressed that they are more comfortable without it. Being shy is a common feeling of the participants.

On the other hand, those Deaf and Hard of hearing who have higher self-esteem are those individuals who belong to and identify themselves strongly with their group. Identification with similar others who can provide social and emotional support has a positive impact on self-esteem (Jambor & Elliott, 2005).

Further, it was explained that a person is assumed to develop a positive self-influence when he or she found a strong identification with one's in-group. As a result, group identification is deemed one of the most important factors leading to positive self-esteem among deaf people. Therefore, the school may conduct among the D/Hh group activities that would strengthen them like team building and values formation activities.

The deaf and hard of hearing students may also work in the community involving people with the same impairment. It may help them develop higher self-esteem. In effect, they become more aware that they, too, are part of the community despite their impairment. It will help and lead them to realize that they, too, can become active and useful members of society. Jambor and Elliot (2005) presented that communication disability may lead to social rejection, little education, low-status jobs, and low income. These can have an important impact on self-esteem. Actively inviting the D/Hh to participate in community work may lead them to realize their full potentials, as this will also be an experiential learning process for them.

Moreover, the school as a formator may commit itself to understand the whole child in such a way that the child can make a maximal contribution to the community. This is in adherence to cultural holism. It is an approach to education that, first of all, holds societies as a whole community in particular within a steady gaze and is committed to understanding those worlds (Mathur & Napoli, 2011). Hill (2013) provides that the D/Hh can teach, can hold office, can appreciate music, and can do almost anything the hearing community can except the capacity to hear. Lang (2002) gave importance to social/personal factors as a key factor in the success of Deaf students in higher education. The development of social skills should, therefore, be made apparent to the D/Hh students.

This study found that the participants have a strong positive outlook in life and a strong sense of belongingness with their fellow D/Hh, yet they still have low self-esteem. The school, as an institution, may consider this as one of the needs of the D/Hh. Strengthening and valuing their sense of belongingness with the rest of the students and teachers will presumably result in higher self-esteem.

This study agrees with Kent (2003) that due to poor social relationships, deaf children and adolescents are noted to be at risk of alienation and a range of adverse outcomes, including low academic achievement. A feeling of being alienated as a member of the group or class results in poor academic performance because the D/Hh cannot participate well in class.

Some participants clearly expressed how happy they are despite their situation because they feel their family accepts them. Almost all participants viewed their difficulties as positive even if they shared how difficult it is for them when with the class.

Some expressed that there is no difference between them and their hearing classmates. It is an indication that as a human being, they go beyond their physical limitations. Crowe (2003) opined that D/Hh's positive self-image, individuality, and cultural values and norms, as grounded to the very experience within the family.

The D/Hh's limitation to the sense of hearing sharpens their sense of sight. They are visual individuals and are keen observers. Communication becomes better when there are visual aids to help them grasp the message or thought being communicated. It is difficult for the participants to "visualize" the meaning of some words, most especially when it is an abstract or a deductive idea. From the findings, the participants shared they study alone even when the words are "deep." Vermeulen, Denessen, and Knoors (2011) said that most D/Hh students need some visual support. It was further explained that one-way teachers could provide this visual support to the D/Hh students is by making eye contact and thereby enabling them to read lips or start learning it. Additionally, teachers can use a blackboard or an overhead projector to include visual support in their instructions. In this case, students need to divide their visual attention between watching the teacher, watching the board, and writing notes.

Fitzgerald, as cited in Leigh et al. (1998), stated that it is a culture that usually defines and gives people their sense of identity, whether at an individual or group level. In other words, culture may also determine and define one's sense of identity. In this study, the culture of the participants was considered. It is an important aspect before the researcher entered into their world. To remain true to the set of ethical standards and the rules set by law, the researcher was keen on the feelings and sentiments of the participants. The D/Hh, being diverse and fragile, were treated carefully, and their sense of identity was respected. Patience and a thorough understanding of the participants' "beingness" was vital so that there would be no taint of self-imposition coming from the researcher. It took seven (7) months to complete the data. If they were not available for the interview, the researcher did not influence the participants or made use of his position as their guidance officer to submit themselves for the interview. The researcher gave ample time to the participants for the interview and to decide on their own free will and volition. It is safe to conclude that the study observed objectivity and is grounded on high ethical principles. The researcher values the dignity and respects the participants as individuals. In one of the interviews, one of the participants opted not to continue with the dialogue. When the researcher asked for the reason, the participant said, "headache... headache... headache... go home... go home 6 pm" (I have a headache. I need to go home because it is already six in the evening).

Lang and Albertini (2002) pronounced that regardless of the country, the academic and social/personal characteristics of deaf students that present obstacles to their success in post-secondary programs also have their roots in both inadequate early intervention and serious deficiencies in teacher preparation for elementary and secondary schooling. It is therefore suggested that the institution can improve its program for them and channel the interventions to the person concerned, like enhancing the teachers' and instructors' skills in dealing with the D/Hh students in a class. The institution may strengthen its support services in addition to the other services of the school. A proactive, interconnected, and integrated program is ideal for the needs of the D/Hh. In addition, schools may take the initiative in facilitating communication between Deaf and Hearing peers in order to promote their integration toward other people.

Another concern that may be included in creating a guidance program is coping. To include it means to grasp a better understanding of the coping mechanism of the D/Hh. Feher-Prout (1996) defined coping as the changing thoughts and acts that an individual uses to manage the external or internal demands of a specific person-environment transaction that is appraised as stressful. Once an event is evaluated as stressful, individuals respond with the coping process. On the other hand, Lukomski (2007) described that coping is an integrative process that is affected by situational, social support and personal characteristics and further mentioned coping "as an effort to manage and overcome demands and critical events that pose a challenge, threat, harm, loss, or benefit to a person. Moreover, the term coping has been often used in a narrow sense as a response required of an organism to adapt to adverse circumstances.

The participants' coping mechanism is overwhelmingly praiseworthy. They established their system in dealing with the challenges that would best fit their way of life. The D/Hh participants asked for assistance from their family, friends, and teachers. Loads of challenges experienced by the participants in school were lightened because of the people around who are helping them. Their coping is a technique to combat the difficulties they are facing. The participants also spend time to share problems with people in school. They also immerse themselves in spiritual activities. Most of the participants shared that they join in religious activities, and it was observed they are active in attending Saturday anticipated mass. It is not a sanctioned activity, yet out of their volition, they actively join in such a celebration. The participants also joined in retreats and recollections.

The participants ignored their feelings of loneliness, rejection, and when they are being laughed at. "The perception of being *left-out* or undesirable is a characteristic of social relationships of hard of hearing students. Additionally, the prevailing negative social stigma of deafness may influence the individual personal perceptions of deafness common among young people (Blood, 1997), further increasing the likelihood of isolation. Motivation, peer relationships, and identity are areas in which deaf young people are particularly vulnerable (Stinson & Whitmire, 2000)" (Kent, 2003).

Jambor and Elliot (2005) point out positive self-regard as an important element for successful functioning in everyday life. The self-evaluation of members of minority groups such as deaf people, however, is challenged by prejudice toward them by part of the majority members of society. The mainstream school is considered to be a replica of a bigger society for the D/Hh. The D/Hh are challenged by prejudices from members of the mainstream school in such a way that they cannot avoid feeling rejected when in group activities or when with the class. They feel they are being laughed at when they see their classmates laughing around. D/Hh tends to rely on what they see and what their classmates do as against them. If they do not understand the reason why other people are laughing, they will think they are the ones being laughed at.

On the contrary, the participants do not mind the hardships they experienced in school. They want to study in school. As expressed, *"I am happy in school, I learn words," "I work hard," "I do not mind hardships, I just ignore it."* The D/Hh are motivated to study hard. They, too, have ambitions in life that someday they would become somebody.

Another coping mechanism that the participants adopt is isolation. Isolation may mean an act of separating oneself from an individual or a group. Looking at deafness, in the communication angle, detaches members from society as a whole, resulting in cognitive and interpersonal deprivation (Clymer, 1995). On the other hand distorted self-concepts can develop if deaf perceive themselves as deficient concerning the hearing people around them. In effect, if the D/Hh has experienced difficulty in communicating, and when the D/Hh has low self-esteem, they tend to isolate themselves. Moreover, Crowe (2003) quoted Clymer that hearing people lay the burden of communication on the deaf person. This may contribute to negative self-perceptions and frustration when communication is not successful. In most instances, the participants stayed away from a group if they feel they are being talked about and when they cannot understand the reason why some students are laughing. D/Hh individual develops in them low-esteem. From the nature of their limitations, they tend to isolate themselves if they do not understand the situation. They happen to misjudge other people's actions. If they are in such an uncomfortable situation, they isolate themselves. It may well be considered that in schools, the D/Hh may be taught to develop skills in dealing with their perceptions and frustrations.

As could be noted from the findings, the participants' support system is enormous. It is astounding that they always look up to their mother when they need something - may it be school-related or not. They have a strong bond with their mother. There were also other people being mentioned who help them in easing out the challenges they experience in schools like their father, classmates, teachers, and friends. However, all participants mentioned their mother to be the person who is always there to help and assist them. It is necessary to include the parents, guardians, or any members of the D/Hh to attend orientations and seminars relative to strengthening their relationship as a family. Calderon and Greenberg (1993) and Calderon, Greenberg, and Kusche (1991) found that maternal functioning and coping factors have a significant impact on a child's functioning. Findings for the relationship between parental coping resources and child outcomes suggests that maternal problem-solving skill is positively related to the child's emotional understanding, reading achievement, and social problem-solving skills" (Calderon, 2000). In effect, positive familial interactions can enhance self-esteem and support overall functioning, according to Crowe (2003).

Meanwhile, Stinson and Liu (1999) stated that hearing students may also advocate in supporting D/Hh students' participation in the class if they have a positive attitude and know strategies for effective communication. In addition, Stinson and Liu mentioned that an important factor of hearing students' attitude may be whether they have a belief of helping to include all students in classroom activities. This is important in the development of a strong support system and personal resources. Hintermair (2008) added that good personal

resources help people to be flexible in dealing with challenges. Good personal resources do not, however, deal only with stress and burdens in critical life situations, but they also basically provide – independent of existing stress factors – the possibility of actively and reflexively shaping one's own life according to one's own goals and idea. Personal resources are thus to be seen and used comprehensively as personal life skills. This can be a very effective tool for the development of the D/Hh's social skills and to overcome their feelings of loneliness.

The study supports Crowe (2003) in stating that deafness may affect an individual in many areas. Whereas some studies suggest that deafness itself directly influences self-esteem, other studies indicate that strong familial, social, and cultural influences play a key role in supporting self-esteem. Thus, self-esteem may be developed through an understanding and nurturing environment, family, and society.

Looking into the windows of the lived experiences of the participants, the study was able to infer one positive attribute of the participants is their resiliency. Resiliency is commonly known in psychology as the capacity of one person to bounce back in a given situation. As resilient, they have a positive outlook in life. They perceive themselves as good, beautiful, and happy individuals. They are motivated to study hard, can ignore feelings of loneliness and difficulties, create a support system and accept their disability, and can be with other students in school despite the communication barrier. Most of all, they can withstand the challenges in school. These positive things happened because they transcend limitations. In connection to these, the present study hopes that new portals of opportunities would provide to be within reach of the D/Hh individuals most, especially when they finish their academic degree. The institution may capitalize on the D/Hh's overwhelming enthusiasm in making their life more meaningful.

To summarize, the difficulties of the D/Hh students in the mainstream are basically due to the language barrier, which affects school and academic performance and in turn, leads to negative feelings and loneliness in school. The feeling of loneliness is brought about by the difficulties they encounter in their day-to-day life while their feelings of being rejected, and being left out is felt by them when they cannot understand what is happening around them. On the other hand, the positive view of the participants is a strong attribute they have as an individual. This is evident from the shared experiences of the participants. It can be inferred from the study that the participants are conscious of their difficulties as D/Hh. They are also aware of negative feelings, such as being not complete and being inferior. However, those negative feelings do not affect their self- perception. What is being highlighted is that they are happy, friendly, and have a positive outlook in life. This positive outlook motivated them to study hard.

Further, they admit that learning is a daily struggle. Yet, the D/Hh has an enriched and strong relationship with the hearing, such as their mothers, classmates, teachers, and interpreters. They are cognizant of their difficulties in dealing with the hearing in the

mainstream, yet they develop skills on how to deal with it. They have a strong relationship with their mother, and they develop among their fellow D/Hh strong ties. This was considered to be their foundation in their support system. In this study, the D/Hh shows a more positive attitude despite their experienced difficulties. They are individuals with high hopes. They are more focused on their positive attitude and positive outlook in life rather than on their negative feelings.

In conclusion, the most difficult effects of the language barrier to the D/Hh students in the mainstream are their feeling of loneliness, school, and academic difficulty, and negative feelings. Meanwhile, the D/Hh's negative view of themselves is overcome by their strong positive self-perception and positive attitude. Further, their coping mechanism is well established, which allows them to withstand the hardships they experience in school.

With the findings, it is recommended that schools may consider the creation and implementation of a guidance program that specifically deals with the difficulties of D/Hh students included in the mainstream education system. The guidance office may invite the college D/Hh to become peer facilitators. The creation of psycho-educational activities such as seminars, values formation workshops, and team-building with the hearing students may improve their social skills and may lessen their feelings of loneliness. Moreover, the D/Hh's academic performance may be improved when they become part of the peer facilitator program of the guidance center.

Career programs can be developed considering the D/Hh's special needs. Training on developing their special skills leading toward their understanding of the industrial setting may be proposed to the school administrators. In addition, the guidance period may address the concern of the D/Hh by asking the interpreter the problems encountered by the D/Hh students.

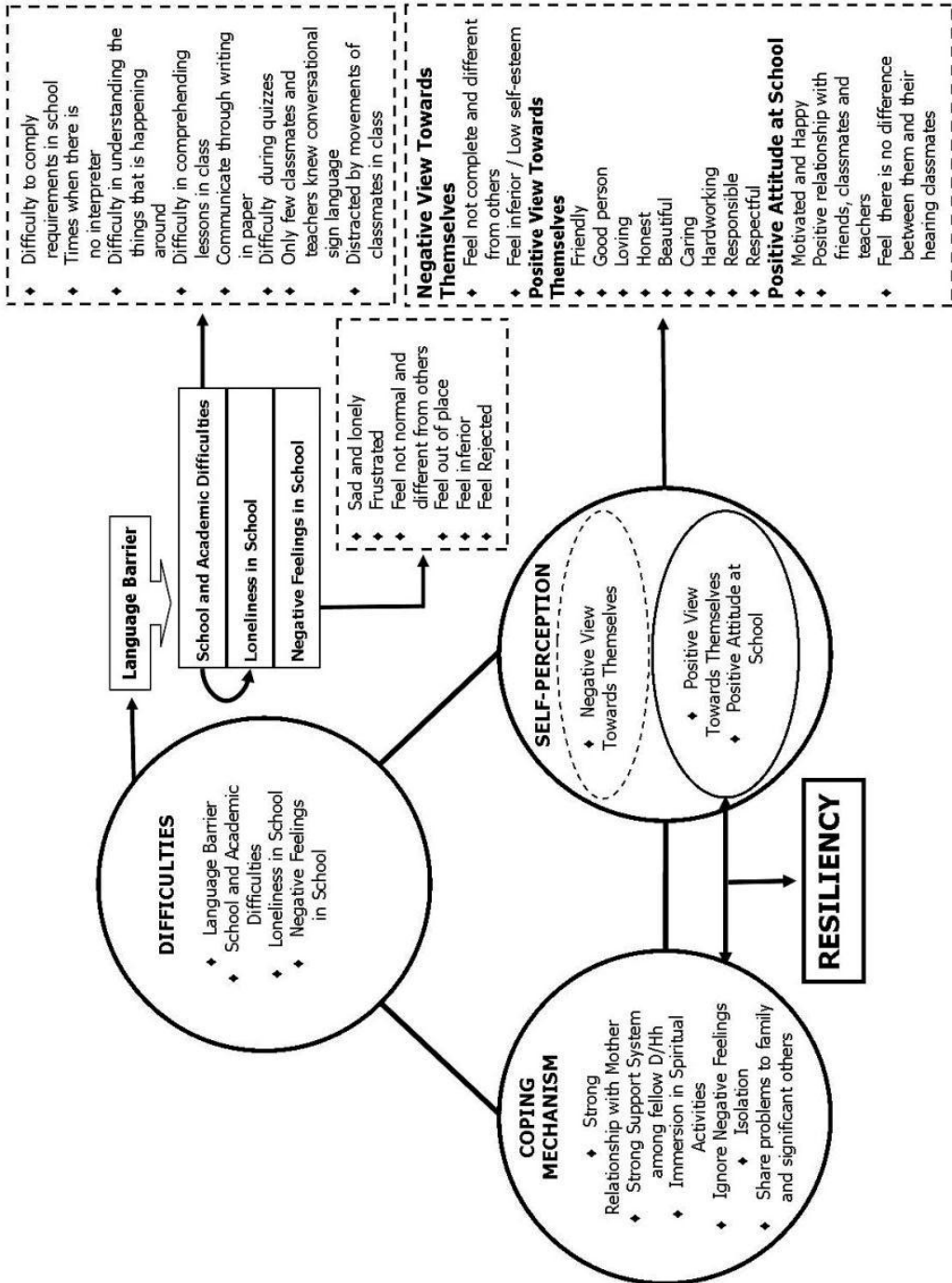
Presently, there is no existing DepEd Memorandum Order on mainstreaming the hearing impaired in the basic education. For the tertiary level, CHED Memorandum Order No. 126 Series of 2011 provides the policy on mainstreaming the hearing impaired in college. The government, through the DepEd and the CHED, can create and implement programs on strengthening the mainstreaming of the hearing impaired. Government agencies like the Department of Labor and Employment with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) may identify the needs of industries on the possible works available for the D/Hh. This may lead the schools with D/Hh to align their career programs with the identified needs of the society. The government may also encourage Non-Government Organizations to engage in programs that will support the psycho-educational needs of the D/Hh in order for them to be productive members of society.

Emerging Framework

The framework represents the experience of the D/Hh in the mainstream education system. The three interrelated circles represent the different objects of study: (1) Difficulties encountered by the D/Hh students, (2) Self-perception of the D/Hh, and (3) their Coping Mechanism. The difficulties are unavoidable experiences of the D/Hh while they are in the mainstream. These difficulties are experienced basically due to the language barrier, which leads them to encounter school and academic difficulties, loneliness, and negative feelings. The experiences of difficulties in school make the D/Hh feel lonely. Self-perception enumerates negative feelings, positive views toward themselves and a positive attitude in school. The D/Hh are conscious of the difficulties encountered in school which include negative feelings; however, they have a strong positive view toward themselves. The D/Hh view themselves as good and happy individuals. On the other hand, their coping mechanism is the strongest weapon in battling against their experienced difficulties in school.

Their ability to cope with conditions and having a positive outlook in life are manifestations of their resiliency. It enables them to withstand all the challenges they encounter in school. Their coping mechanism, coupled with a strong positive outlook in life, is a picture of how the D/Hh transcends beyond their physical limitations. The schematic diagram of this emerging framework is presented in Figure 1

Figure 1. Lived Experiences of the Deaf and Hard of hearing in the Mainstream Education



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