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PERCEPTION ON DEAF EDUCATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THEIR

LIVELIHOODS: A CASE STUDY OF THE WA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

(WADEAF) IN THE UPPER WEST REGION OF GHANA

DANLARA KWAKU BALFAAH

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BY

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PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

MARCH 2017

DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work under the supervision of the principal supervisor Dr. Cliff Maasole and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Signature…………………………………… Date……………………………….

Name……………………………………………………………

Supervisor

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Signature………………………………… Date…………………………………

Name………………………………………………………….

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ABSTRACT

The study is aimed at investigating societal perception towards the hearing impaired and their effects on the livelihood of the deaf. The study concentrated on the concept of deafness or hearing impairment, how hearing impaired people are perceived, the psychological implications of these (perceived) societal perceptions on the hearing impaired, societal and parental attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities and the effects of these perceptions on the livelihood of hearing impaired people. The research design is descriptive cross sectional in nature, wherein, a convenient sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 100 parents of hearing-impaired people. Data was collected using a questionnaire for the parents and an interview for the students whose parents have been selected and managed through coding and entry into a computer using statistical package for social science. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were generated and used to explain and interpret the data. Results of the research indicate multiple barriers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the different levels of the Ghanaian society. Lack of participation in activities and lack of belongingness were felt by majority of the participants across the different settings of the Ghanaian society. There were impediments along the way in the different transitions the individual makes from the family to school through social life and work life. The study concluded by confirming that perceptions on the hearing impaired, emotions, negative or positive, found within the family and community are central to the development of the individual and that most Deaf and Hard of Hearing experience isolation, stigmatization, stress, depression and grief is what shapes their emotions from the very beginning. The study therefore recommends that, members of the society must therefore be sensitized about the benefits and essence of educating children with disabilities including those who are deaf in churches and mosques, in the form of public symposia, and in the media. There should also be education on the causes of hearing impairments and other disabilities in children and the need to send them to school to learn a vocation so that they can develop their potentials and talents to also contribute to nation building.

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DEDICATION

To my Mother Mwentuma Mary, I dedicate this work to you for having faith in my vision and compassion.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMSD	Christian Mission of the Deaf
DRDP	Draft Report on Disabilities Policy
GNA	Ghana News Agency
GNAD	Ghana National Association of the Deaf
GSL	Ghana Sign Language
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ICF	International Classification of functioning
ICT	Information Communication Technology
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
LI	Legislation Instrument
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PHC	Population and Housing Census
P-Learning	Pervasive Learning
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
PWD	Persons with Disability
RPK	Relevance Previous Knowledge
SEN	Special Educational Need
SHS	Senior High School
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TVET	Technical and Vocational Educational and Training

UEW	University of Education Winneba
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UWR	Upper West Region
WADEAF	Wa School for the Deaf
WMA	Wa Municipal Assembly

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, the objectives, the importance, scope and the organization of the study.

1.1   Background to the Study

Throughout the centuries, deaf people have been viewed as incomplete humans because of their inability to hear and to speak. Owing to their hearing impairment, it became accepted that since speech and language were closely linked together, those who could not hear were unteachable. This pronouncement on the deaf cursed their education for many decades until the sixteenth century (1600), during the time of the Renaissance, Girolamo Cardano, an Italian physician, proclaimed that the deaf could hear by reading and also speak by writing (Schein, 1984).

One way of visibly identifying a deaf person is the Sign Language. Though all users of a sign language are not deaf, it is one of the quickest means to identifying deafness in a person or in groups. The role of sign language in the life of the deaf in families, schools, community, and employment situations is of paramount importance. While some hard of hearing individuals can lip read by looking at the mouth of a speaker, the majority of the deaf and hard of hearing I have come across in my dealings with the deaf in Ghana prefer to use the Sign Language. One possible reason for the preference of Sign Language to lip reading may be the impossibility of lip reading everyone in group situations. Sign

language therefore remains the main medium of communication among deaf and hard of hearing people in Ghana. It is the means by which they receive and give out information.

In Ghana, the sign language used is the Ghanaian Sign Language (G.S.L). The sign language is a major force that binds deaf people together. With the Sign Language, the reception of what is said, viewed, felt and thought of or spoken is through the use of the eye and gestures of hands and body. Sign language is a basic natural language for the deaf, especially for those who were born deaf. It is the means besides reading, by which the world of the deaf can be explored by the hearing and that of the hearing by the deaf. Most deaf people however, grew up in families where sign language was not used by the hearing members and where hearing members could not take their time to talk facing them so they could lip read them.

In such a situation where communication barrier exists, it leads to isolation of the hearing impaired individual within the family. This unfortunate incident often occurs also in most schools for the Deaf where communication in sign language should remain the best means of transferring knowledge. Here, children are taught in a local language which is oral instead of the Ghanaian sign language. Though the language policy of Ghana states that children should be taught in their own local language, sing language is not recognised as the local language of the deaf in this regard. .Some deaf schools implement this policy by teaching the children in the oral local languages. This creates a barrier to basic learning for deaf children right from the start of their education and causes them to be more confused especially when they have to switch from the second oral Ghanaian

language to English (Okyere & Addo, 1989). Furthermore, teachers of the deaf in Africa, most of who are hearing, lack appropriate training and certification to equip them with the knowledge and skills to work effectively with the deaf (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

In Ghana, most deaf people have hearing parents, only a few have parents who are deaf. Experiences recounted by many deaf who have hearing parents indicate a struggle to survive through isolation from parents and other siblings. Inability to relate to the deaf child in the family, leads to the child looking for socialisation elsewhere. Faced with communication difficulties and lack of acceptance and inclusion within families and societies, the deaf in Ghana, just like their counterparts elsewhere in the world come together to form their own unique communities. Formation of these communities often starts in the schools for the deaf where families send their deaf children and continues after school through regional and district associations for the deaf where other deaf people meet to learn or discuss issues affecting them.

Studies have shown a strong connection between disability and poverty, and there are efforts by governments to reduce poverty among persons with disabilities through education (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, [UNICEF], 2007) If children with disabilities are educated, they get empowered, stand a chance of getting employed, participating in the national development, and thus making them useful citizens in society (Berg, 2008).

Ensuring that children with disabilities have access to quality education as the members of society, is therefore essential and a fundamental human right which must be respected and protected (UNICEF, 2007).

Educating deaf children is an important issue which should be addressed in all educational policies and programmes. Deaf persons, as part of the community of persons with disabilities, experience the same negative perceptions as other persons with disabilities. These perceptions have been formed as a result of superstitious beliefs, creating stigma and, consequently, affecting their access to socio-economic activities such as education.

As, described earlier, the main aim of education is to assist individuals to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to make them self-reliant, self-confident, and to enable to them contribute meaningfully to society. However, deaf persons are often denied access to education because they are seen as people who are cursed, have low intelligent and do not have the capability to contribute to society (Agbengyega,2003 cited in Boadi, 2013).

The Ghana National Association for the Deaf (GNAD) is the umbrella organization for such deaf clubs in Ghana. It has branches in all the ten regions of Ghana as well as some districts within the regions and some youth clubs within the schools. It serves as an important meeting point for the deaf to discuss what has been going on during the week in their lives and to think of ways of improving life for the deaf and dealing with barriers facing them in Ghana. It is the source from which information on issues concerning the deaf are made public. For instance, a recent statement by the president of the association

highlighted some major problems for the deaf in Ghana. According to the President of the association, the deaf are regarded as unproductive and incapable of contributing in a positive way to society. Seen as economic burden on family and society, they are left in vicious way of poverty. He mentioned lack of interpretation services in places as hospitals, banks, courts, police stations among others as major problem they face. Another important issue mentioned by him is the lack of sign language skills by majority of teachers in deaf schools making it difficult for them to effectively communicate with the students and impart knowledge to them(Daily guide, 2008).

1.2   Problem Statement

Discovering disability in a child at birth is a great blow to the parents and the relationship between the child with disability and the parents may not be as close as the one between parents and a child without disability (Obi,2004). These author further emphasized that nothing can prepare a new parent for the devastating reality of giving birth to a child who is not considered "normal". Ocloo (1996) mentioned that many parents become confused and display various forms of negative reactions such as hiding the child, overprotecting or reject the child, and some even go to the extent of killing the child or committing suicide (Croot *et al*,.2008) of getting confused when a child is born with disability at birth.

Another reaction of parents is what Adima (1989) cited in Boadi (2013) called shopping behaviours. Shopping behaviour is described as the frequent trips parents make to professionals, diagnosticians and witchdoctors. Parents' enthusiasm to get a cure for their

children with disabilities is triggered by a number of factors. Parents are sometimes not told the truth about diagnosis and so they tend to be suspicious. Parents are pressurized in the communities they live into thinking that they are not doing enough for the child. They therefore make several visits to professionals and spiritualists in order to get their children's condition remedied (Avoke 1998).

Sommers (1994) cited in Obi (2004) mentioned that some parents openly reject their children with disabilities and treat them without any affection; they neglect their interest and belittle their achievements. Although most of these parents are aware of their negative attitude towards the children, they build up defenses to justify their action Reynolds (2010) cited in Obi (2004) said that the birth of a disabled infant can challenge an individual basic system of values and beliefs, trust as well as his or her sense of control over his or her own life.

Furthermore, some parents do not place much interest in educating their children with disabilities and seem not bothered about their children's poor academic performance and general development because they have low expectations of the children generally. Sometimes they appear to have given up on the children and make no effort to help them overcome barriers in society (Obi, 2004). Consequently, children with disabilities, including deaf children, have difficulty taking initiative and always depend on their parents and others for help.

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As stated by the WHO (2001), health is not only the absence of disease but also the presence of sound physical, social and psychological well-being. With this definition in mind, enquiry is made as to whether hearing impaired individuals are afforded this type of health at the same quality that is provided to the hearing. Thus, the questions posed are; how do hearing impaired people think they are perceived by the general community, what are the psychological implications of these societal perceptions and what is the effect of these perceptions on their livelihood?

1.3   Research Objectives

The objectives in this research are to find out the following:

a.   How hearing impaired people think hearing people perceive them.

b.   The psychological and current social implications of these (perceived) societal perceptions on the hearing impaired.

c.   The effects of these perceptions on the livelihood of hearing impaired people?

1.4   Research Questions

This study aimed at finding solutions to the following key questions:

a.   How does the hearing impaired community think the general public perceive them?

b.   What are the psychological and current social implications of these societal perceptions on the hearing impaired?

c.   What are the effects of these perceptions on the livelihood of the hearing impaired people?

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1.5   Significance Of The Study

The significance of the study developed when a gap was identified in studies on the hearing impaired, particularly in the academic field of clinical psychology. Firstly, the study intends to explore on the types of social cognitions (termed societal perceptions in the study) society holds towards the hearing impaired.

The second intent is to investigate the psychological consequences of such cognitions on the hearing impaired individual's functioning.

In psychology, there is a concept called self-fulfilling prophecy. Implicit in this concept is the supposition that people have a propensity to behave in the manner in which they [think or actually] are perceived (Darley & Gross, 1983; Biezans, Neuberg, Smith, Asher & Judice, 2001). The concept of „self-fulfilling prophecy" is one of the primary precipitating factors in the need to investigate the possibility of societal perceptions being influential on individuals" psychological status. In line with this term, it is likely that if the hearing perceive the hearing impaired in a negative manner, the hearing impaired might act out in consensus with these negative perceptions.

The study intends to identify a relationship between societal perceptions and livelihood of the hearing impaired. Thus, emphasis was placed on how society's perceptions towards the hearing impaired (whether negative or positive) affected their livelihood.

1.6   Delimitation of the study

It would have been worthwhile to have gathered information from deaf students and parents of deaf children in other schools for the deaf in Ghana. However, this study was restricted to only students and parents of deaf children attending Wa School for the Deaf in the Wa Municipality, Ghana. This is due to financial, time and other constraints.

1.7 Organization of Work

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction of the topic under investigation. The researcher also laid out background to the study, problem statement, aims and objectives of the study. Chapter two deals with literature review on the concept of hearing impairment, how hearing impaired people think hearing people perceive them, the psychological implications of these (perceived) societal perceptions on the hearing impaired and the effects of these perceptions on the livelihood of hearing impaired people. Chapter three presents various techniques and methods that were used in collecting data for study. Chapter four presents the results and data analysis, Chapter five deals with the discussions of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers review of theories and empirical studies on the concept of deafness or hearing impairment, how hearing impaired people are perceived, the psychological implications of these (perceived) societal perceptions on the hearing impaired and the effects of these perceptions on the livelihood of hearing impaired people.

2.1 The concept of deafness and Hearing impairment or hard of hearing

Deafness is the state of being unable to hear any sound, and the levels of deafness may vary from mild, to moderate, to severe and finally profound (Abdelaziz 2012). The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) defines deafness as the "audio logical condition of not hearing." The NAD's definition includes people with very limited hearing who cannot rely upon it for comfortable communication. Generally, Deafness is a disorder affecting the ability to hear. There are different forms of deafness and these include;

Hearing impairment refers to a condition in which individuals are fully or partially unable to detect or perceive at least some frequencies of sound which can typically be heard by members of their species (Sussman, 1973). Gregory and Hartley (1999) similarly define hearing impairment as a generic term, including both deaf and hard of hearing, which refers to persons with any type or degree of hearing loss that causes difficulty working in a traditional way. In humans, the term hearing impairment is usually reserved for people who have relative insensitivity to sound in the speech frequencies. In this study, the term

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hearing impairment or the concept of hearing impaired generally refers to individuals who are hard-of-hearing or completely deaf (unable to detect any frequency of sound).

2.1.1   Types of Hearing Impairment

Congenitally deafness; this refers to a person who is born deaf and has never heard any spoken language. This group of deaf people is fully dependant on sign language alone (Uganda National Association of the Deaf, 2011).

Prelingually deafness; this is a kind of deafness where a person is born hearing, but becomes deaf before mastering the language of the family at approximately the age of 4 years and below (Uganda National Association of the Deaf, 2011). Prelingual deafness is hearing impairment that is sustained prior to the acquisition of language, which can occur as a result of a congenital condition or through hearing loss in early infancy (Kral et al, 2010).

Post lingual deafness; Post-lingual deafness is hearing impairment that is sustained after the acquisition of language, which can occur as a result of disease, trauma, or as a side-effect of a medicine (Kral et al, 2010). Here a person is born hearing and looses the hearing after learning the spoken language of the community at approximately 10 years onwards. If given proper support they can be able to speak the language of the hearing community (Uganda National Association of the Deaf, 2011).

2.1.2 Causes of deafness

Birch (1975) as cited in Schulz and Turnbull (1984) opines that deafness is an extremely complex phenomenon and therefore to explain its influence on a person's development, the causes of deafness should be well understood. The two types of hearing loss are conductive and sensorineural hearing loss (Avoke, 1997).

Outlining how an individual hears to explain these types of hearing loss, Turnbull et al. (1995) teach that the ear consists of three parts: the outer, middle and inner ear. Sound goes into the outer ear, is changed to electrical impulses in the middle ear and is transmitted to the hearing center of the brain. For proper hearing to occur and to be effective, the outer ear (working as a radio receiver), the middle ear (working as a transmitter) and the inner ear (working as the microphone) must all work efficiently. According to them, hearing loss occurs when some part of the outer, inner or the middle ear is not functioning properly.

Classifying this phenomenon into the causes of hearing loss, Turnbull et al. (1995) have identified that any problem of the outer or middle ear when the inner ear is unaffected is called a conductive hearing loss. They further explain that the conductive hearing loss is caused by sound conduction and that when fluid collects behind the eardrum in the middle ear and it becomes infected, the result is an ear infection ensuing in conductive hearing loss. Conductive hearing loss occurs when the outer ear and or the middle ear is broken. In this case, sound is prevented from reaching the inner ear where the brain interprets it. Avoke (1997) supports this argument and explains that the basis of

conductive hearing loss is usually an obstruction of sound in the external ear (outer and middle ear) so that even though the inner ear is functional, sound does not reach it. In many cases, obstructions in the external canal and the middle ear could be wax, foreign bodies and inflammations such as otitis media or perforation of the eardrum. Avoke explains that surgical corrections may be useful in alleviating some of these problems that relate to conductive hearing loss.

Sensorineural hearing loss is due to insensitivity of the inner ear, the cochlea or impairment of function in the auditory nervous system. Commenting on this, Zapien (1998) explains that sensorineural hearing loss affects both loudness and fidelity of sound and makes it distorted. Turnbull et al. (1995) also explain that sensorineural hearing loss, sometimes called nerve deafness, is caused by a problem in the inner ear or the nerve pathway of the inner ear to the brain stem such that although the outer ear picks up sound signal and the middle ear transmits it to the inner ear, no reception takes place because the inner ear is damaged therefore no sound is heard. Damage to the auditory nerve and infections such as German measles and meningitis are heavily implicated as some of the causes of sensorineural deafness. A combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing losses could also occur and that is termed as *mixed hearing loss* (Avoke, 1997). Avoke believes that when hearing impairment occurs earlier in life, the child will have difficulties in developing the language of the hearing society.

2.2   Perception

Perception is a process through which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them (Gilbert, 2001). Though necessarily

based on incomplete and unverified (or unreliable) information, perception is 'the reality' that guides human behaviour in general (Gilbert, 2001). According to Lindsay & Donald (1997), perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize experiences to produce a meaningful interpretation of the world. In this study, the term perception generally refers to thoughts, judgments and opinions that one group (the general public and the hearing impaired) has towards the other (the hearing impaired).

2.2.1   Societal perception

Societal perception can be defined as the process of forming impressions of individuals at a societal level (Gilbert, 2001). The resulting impressions that we form are based on information available in the environment as well as our previous attitudes about relevant stimuli (Gilbert, 2001). Alternatively, Buckney (2001) defines societal perception as the manner in which humans think about each other and thus affecting the way in which they relate to each other.

2.2.2   Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment

Deafness is one of the major forms of disability in Ghana. However, in order of ranking among the various regions in Ghana, it is the fourth after visual, moving difficulty and learning disabilities (MESW, 2000). This makes them a minority within a minority. This creates a situation that easily leads to their needs being sidelined. In addition, their disability is not easily identified by others in the society because it is not physically visible. This is rightly noted by Ademokoya in his review of the school child with hearing disability and Nigerian Special Education, "those who suffer from deafness do not readily

get the sympathy and support from able bodied persons as those with blindness do (Ademokoya, 2008). Persons with disabilities in Ghana have been viewed with negative perceptions for a long time. Often, these perceptions have been formed as a result of superstitious beliefs and stigma attached to a particular disability. In the past, persons with disabilities were either offered as sacrifice to the gods or killed at birth. With the inception of Christianity and Western education, children with disabilities are no longer being killed (Avoke, 2002).

"Beliefs about deafness in African societies range from acceptance and protection to rejection, including considerations of infanticide. Some beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of people who are deaf. Some societies pity children who are deaf and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent. This type of belief in the lack of capability of deaf children may by itself impede access to education. In other cases, cultural practices may result in the deaf child being hidden from public view because of familial shame over having a "handicapped" child who may bring misfortune upon the family. Such beliefs can lead to abuse, neglect, and abandonment, and deaf children's potential to contribute to the development of African nations is dismissed" (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

Cultural perceptions of deafness in Ghana does not appear to have been researched into much and several attempts to get literature review of the perception on deafness in Ghana yielded few results. Okyere and Addo, (1989) on Deaf culture in Ghana, indicate some of

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the beliefs on causes of deafness as displeasure caused by the gods and other dead relatives as well as witch grandparents of the deaf. However, there are specific beliefs within communities that result in negative perceptions of the deaf. Personal experiences as a child before I could associate with deaf people, taught me some of these negative perceptions. Before my relations with the deaf and hard of hearing, the only thing I knew about them was that they were people who could not talk and hear and who will beat you to death if you hold a leaf close to your nose and fix your other thumb in one nose and make a waving gesture with the remaining four fingers. This gesture is known to be an insult to the deaf which tells them they are animals. And most children who come across them would perform this act which will bring the deaf chasing after them. What kind of socialisation is this that degrades others to the level of animals just because they are different? This kind of thinking develops with the growing child and without any socialisation with the deaf at all, the opinion throughout that child's mind is that these are useless people who only deserve the sympathy and charity of society. A relationship with the deaf will indicate that they are intelligent just as the hearing and even more so in certain abilities than hearing people. It is regrettable that most people find it difficult to associate with the deaf. Most of this difficulty arises from the fear of bringing forth deaf children just by associating with them. Most people I met find it either amazing or appalling, my association with deaf and hard of hearing. They are often quick to remark that I will give birth to a deaf child if I do not stop my association with them.

Cultural perceptions refer to a particular community's observation and analysis of certain worldly occurrences and developments in relation to that community's shared customs and doctrine (Ladd, 2003). The community's behaviours, values and beliefs thus depend

on and/or are affected by their cultural practices (Ladd, 2003). Beliefs about auditory impairment in African societies have been shown to provoke various reactions, ranging from denunciation to rejection, including considerations of infanticide. Some beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of people who are hearing impaired (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003). Some societies pity children who have auditory impairment and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003). Kiyaga and Moores (2003) further discovered that in other cases, cultural practices resulted in the hearing impaired child being hidden from public view because of familial shame over having a "handicapped" child who may bring misfortune upon the family. Such beliefs can lead to abuse, neglect, and abandonment, and hearing impaired children's potential to contribute to the development of African nations is dismissed (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

Cultural perceptions towards the hearing impaired in South Africa do not appear to have been researched much, and several attempts to get literature materials of societal perceptions towards hearing impairment in South Africa yielded few results as most literature was focused on the educational effects of hearing loss as opposed to congenital hearing impairment. Okyere and Addo, (1989) conducted a few studies on deaf culture in Southern African countries. The results indicated that some of the beliefs on the cause of hearing impairment were accounted to as displeasure caused by the gods and other dead relatives (ancestors) (Okyere & Addo, 1989).

Some believed that deaf women were infertile, and thus not to be interacted with sexually, as there were primarily perceived as an ancestral curse upon a family (Okyere & Addo, 1989). Such beliefs make the state of being deaf to be viewed as a curse (Okyere & Addo, 1989). These studies thus evident the fact that there has been a cultural misconception towards the causes of hearing impairment and people who are hearing impaired.

2.3   Psychological Perspectives on Hearing Impairment

There are numerous psychological theories with differing perspectives on the issue of how environmental surroundings impact on individuals'' psychological functioning. According to Bern's (1967) theory of Self-identification, people reason their self-judgment from the behaviour they observe from others and themselves. Thus, people infer their own attitudes in the same way they infer the attitudes of other people- by observing behaviour (Bern, 1967).

In line with this theory, Engelbrecht (1961) observed that the hearing impaired participants who partook in his study deduced their perceptions towards themselves, not only from opinions held by the general public, but also from self-observed behaviour. For example, those participants who saw themselves not attending school and unemployed reasoned that hearing loss meant that one was uneducable and unemployable (because of their impairment) as the hearing society thought (Engelbrecht, 1961).

Becker (1963) proposed another perspective in his approach known as the Labeling theory. The theory was prominent in the 1960s and 1970s. Labeling theory (synonymous to "identifying against") holds that deviance is not innate to an act, but instead focuses on the linguistic tendency of majorities to negatively label minorities or those seen as deviant from the norms (Becker, 1963). The theory is concerned with how the self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms (labels) used to describe or classify them, and is associated with the principal tenets of self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping.

Becker (1963) observed that societal labelling has a potent effect on how those who are assigned labels are perceived. It also affects how the labelled individual or group perceives himself and his relationship to society. The labels attached to them function as a form of social stigma (Becker, 1963).

Always inherent in the label is the attribution of some form of contamination or difference that marks the labelled person as different from others (Becker, 1963). Society mostly uses stigmatic labels towards individuals or groups as a means of controlling and/or limiting deviant behaviour: "If you proceed in this behavior, you will become a member of that group of people." Those who are assigned negative labels might be perceived as social rejects (Becker, 1963). Deviant labels are the sources of negative stereotypes, which tend to support society's disapproval of the behavior (Becker, 1963).

If deafness is viewed as a disability, then people who are deaf carry with them the stigma of "lacking" a typical human characteristic. As discussed earlier, a person who is stigmatized usually needs to see the stigma as positive in order to maintain high self-esteem. Therefore a person with a disability either needs to regard the disability as constituting a positive part of their identity or that the individual needs to disassociate themselves from the stigma of disability altogether (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 1999).

A third viewpoint from George Herbert Mead (1934) focuses on the internal processes of how the mind constructs one's self-image. In Mind, Self, and Society (1934), Mead showed how infants come to know persons first and only later come to know things. According to Mead, thought is both a social and pragmatic process, based on the model of two persons discussing how to solve a problem. Our self-image is, in fact, constructed of ideas about what we think others are thinking about us. Human behavior, Mead (1934) stated, is the result of meanings created by the social interaction of conversation, both real and imaginary. As aforementioned by Mead (1934), an individual's self-image is an ensemble of his/her ideas and beliefs about how other people perceive him/her. This theory implies that if an individual thinks other people perceive him negatively, then his self-image is most likely to rotate in the same direction, resulting in a negative self-perception.

2.3.1   Current Social Views on Hearing Impairment

The modern view of hearing impairment involves the recognition of hearing impaired people as a cultural minority. Sign Language is recognized and accepted as the natural language of hearing impaired people. This acceptance includes the acknowledgement that deaf community is in fact a sub-cultural group of wider world (D'Andrade, 2002 cited in Matlata, 2013).

This view involves the recognition of the hearing impaired as group of persons who share a common means of communication (Sign Language) and culture which provides the basis on which group cohesion and identity develop (D'Andrade, 2002 cited in Matlata, 2013).

D'Andrade (2002 cited in Matlata, 2013) states that to the general public, the word „deaf‟ simply refers to a person who cannot hear. However, total or partial (in) ability to hear has fundamental social and linguistic implications. It heavily influences relationships with other people, thus affecting the hearing impaired individual's ability to fully integrate him or herself into a hearing society.

The cultural and social aspects of being hearing-impaired cannot be ignored when working to secure human rights for deaf people. Hearing impaired people continuously create regional and national communities based on communication in sign language, and have a heritage of transnational interaction that has evolved over centuries. Nonetheless,

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deaf people's "communities" mainly consist of other hearing impaired individuals and a less than notable degree of hearing individuals.

2.4   Societal attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities

As described previously, cultural beliefs play an important role in how the family and society at large perceive and treats children with disabilities. A study conducted by Silker in Ghana, (2009) revealed that society, that is, family members and parents have negative attitudes towards their children with disabilities. Similarly Dearing *et al* (2006) mentioned that some children with disabilities in African families are perceived as a bad omen .and are thus have been excluded from mainstream society. If children with disabilities are enrolled school but their parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their education, it would have serious implications for their educational attainment. This is because parents may not be involved and provide their children with their educational needs to enable them to participate in education on equal basis as their counterparts without disabilities. Some parents may be compelled to hide their children with disabilities and deprive them of education (McFerrin, 2005 cited in Boadi, 2013).

It has been found that some parents and family members view children with disabilities as an economic burden and punishment (Miles and Hossain, 1999 cited in Boadi, 2013). For example, a study conducted in Pakistan by Iftikhar and Yasmeen (2009) cited in Boadi, (2013) on the stress of parents of deaf children revealed that 74% of the respondents saw their deaf children as an economic stressor and 66% were of the opinion that their deaf children were a burden to society as a whole. Respondents further

suggested that they have been constrained socially by the negative perception of society towards their deaf children, with 84% intimating that their worries have been aggravated by this phenomenon. Furthermore, the respondents revealed that the negative perception of society about the capability of their deaf children did not encourage them to enroll the children in school (Iftikhar and Yasmeen, 2009).

2.5   Parental attitude towards education of their children with disabilities

Studies have revealed that parents of children with disabilities have negative attitudes towards the education of their children with disabilities. This negative attitude is formed through the usual parental reaction towards having a child with disability. These include denial, grief, guilt, feeling of pessimism, withdrawal, and rejection (Obi,2004)

Negative perceptions towards their children's education may cause parents to make decisions that are likely to negatively affect the children's educational attainment. For example, some parents hide their children with disabilities at home due to the stigma associated with having a child with disability, thus depriving the children access to education (Miller, 2003).

In recent times, however, the negative attitude of parents towards educating their children with disabilities is changing. This is could be attributed to the awareness that social inclusion of children with disabilities makes them more useful to society, and so some parents now accept their children with disabilities as they are. These parents have

developed positive attitudes towards the education of their children with disabilities and are supporting them to achieve their full educational potentials (Maingi, 20004).

Such positive parental perception on education has strong impact on the academic achievement of children. (Seigner, 1983) emphasized that favorable perception and expectation of parents has a positive correlation with the children's grades in school. Success in academic performance is also influenced by children's perception about their parents' perception and expectation in their education. Eccles *et al* (2002) observed that children are usually able to discern whether parents have a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards their education. Doren *et al*. (2012) also asserted that children's affinity to a particular subject area is influenced by the perception and expectation of parents, which subsequently impacts on what children perceive about various carriers. Thus parental involvement, perception, and attitude towards education influence the career choice of their children.

Several factors, apart from disability, concurrently affect the educational perception and attitude of parents towards the education of their children with disabilities. The educational experience of parents is one of the major factors because it affects the way they see education. It is assumed that parents internalize positive educational values during schooling, which in many ways, affect their attitude towards their children's education. Lack of parental education may, however, limit their capacity to judge the prospects of their children's education (Davis, 2005). This viewpoint is contradicted by a

study conducted by Kasari *et al* (1999) which found that disability was the main predicator of parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

2.6   Effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

Livelihood according to Macmillan English Dictionary for advance learners (2002) refers to a means of making a living. It embraces a person's capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life.

Davis et al., (1997), presents significant livelihood challenges to the perception and production of spoken language. This, in turn, has potentially far-reaching consequences for interaction with hearing people, educational attainment and social-cognitive development, right to inheritance, access to public places of leisure and structures, access to jobs and the right to take informed decisions by themselves (Schick et al 2007).

2.6.1   Impact of deafness on educational achievement

Studies have shown that deaf children's reading develops at a slower rate and that they make approximately a third of the reading progress each school year when compared with their hearing peers (Kyle & Harris, 2010). As a result, the severity of their reading delay increases as they progress through schooling, culminating in the average deaf school leaver having a reading age equivalent to that of a 9-year-old hearing child (Conrad, 1979). Higher levels of reading achievement have been reported in some studies of deaf children with cochlear implants (Marschark et al, 2007) and also in studies with

selective populations of orally educated deaf children (Daneman et al, 1995). The main reason that deaf children experience such severe problems with learning to read is that written English is essentially derived from spoken English, to which deaf children typically have limited access. This can adversely affect the development of both 'bottom up' skills involved in reading, such as phonological and syntactical knowledge, and also 'top down' skills such as vocabulary, language and world knowledge (King & Quigley, 1985).

Deaf children are frequently reported to have weaker phonological skills in comparison with hearing peers, both in terms of phonological awareness and phonological coding (Harris & Beech, 1998). Despite lower levels of ability, there is some evidence that phonological skills are predictive of reading achievement in deaf children (Campbell & Wright, 1988). Phonic-based interventions have had some success in improving reading levels of poor deaf readers (Trezek & Malmegren, 2005). These findings fit in with other recent evidence indicating that, for deaf and hearing children alike, phonological knowledge of the written language is essential if they are to become competent readers (Mayer, 2008). This phonological knowledge relies on the development of phonological representations that Leybaert (2005) argued are mainly based on visual (lip-reading, Cued Speech, finger-spelling and alphabetic script) rather than acoustic phonology.

As described previously, cultural beliefs play an important role in how the family and society at large perceive and treats children with disabilities. A study conducted by Silker in Ghana, (2009) revealed that society, that is, family members and parents have negative attitudes towards their children with disabilities. Similarly Dearing *et al* (2006)

mentioned that some children with disabilities in African families are perceived as bad omen and are thus have been excluded from mainstream society. If children with disabilities are enrolled school but their parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their education, it would have serious implications for their educational attainment. This is because parents may not be involved and provide their children with their educational needs to enable them to participate in education on equal basis as their counterparts without disabilities. Some parents may be compelled to hide their children with disabilities and deprive them of education (McFerrin, 2005 cited in Boadi, 2016).

It has been found that some parents and family members view children with disabilities as an economic burden and punishment (Miles and Hossain, 1999 cited in Boadi, 2016). For example, a study conducted in Pakistan by Iftikhar and Yasmeen (2009 cited in Boadi, 2016) on the stress of parents of deaf children revealed that 74% of the respondents saw their deaf children as an economic stressor and 66% were of the opinion that their deaf children were a burden to society as a whole. Respondents further suggested that they have been constrained socially by the negative perception of society towards their deaf children, with 84% intimating that their worries have been aggravated by this phenomenon. Furthermore, the respondents revealed that the negative perception of society about the capability of their deaf children did not encourage them to enroll the children in school (Iftikhar and Yasmeen, 2009 cited in Boadi, 2016).

Unfortunately, the consequences of poor literacy are that, many deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers (Gregory et al, 1998); deaf adults are four times more likely to be unemployed and, of those working, are three times more likely than hearing adults to be earning a lower wage (RNID, 2002 cited in Boadi, 2016).

2.6.2 Impact of deafness on mental health

Poor communication has consequences for emotional learning and mental wellbeing (Crocker & Edwards, 2004; Hindley, 2000). Deaf people who communicate poorly in the hearing world are more likely to be socially isolated (Bain et al, 2004), are at greater risk for psychological distress (Marschark, 1993) and have a greater overall prevalence of mental illness than the general population (Crocker et al, 2004). Marschark (1993) notes that many social-emotional problems of deaf children and adults are rooted in early socialization and intertwined with impairments in hearing and language competence. While there is nothing inherent in a hearing deficit that causes social immaturity or inadequacy, there is evidence indicating that deaf children are relatively passive and less socially mature than their hearing peers (Carney et al, 1998;. This can often be related to distortions of parent–child interaction, limited early communication, reduced access to incidental learning and deprivation of social experiences (Hindley, 2000). As described previously, deaf children of hearing parents have been shown to demonstrate significant delays in recognizing and labelling emotional states in themselves and others (abilities subsumed under the term Theory of Mind). Hindley (2004) stresses the importance of encouraging early conversation about thoughts and feelings to develop children's

awareness of people's thoughts (metacognition). Because many deaf children miss out on these kinds of conversation and are vulnerable to delays in metacognition, Theory of Mind development and emotional functioning, this will put them at risk for emotional/social and behavioural problems in later life.

Some approaches have been developed to address emotional wellbeing, including the PATHS curriculum (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) and the innovative 'Life and Deaf' project. PATHS seek to develop deaf children's emotional literacy by teaching emotional vocabulary, social skills and improving self-confidence in problem-solving social situation issues. PATHS was evaluated by Greenberg and Kusche (1998) using primary-aged deaf schoolchildren and found to have lasting benefits. Another programme, 'Life and Deaf ', was developed by UK speech and language therapists to encourage children to explore their identity through poetry in written English and BSL and aims in addition to develop their communication skills and self-esteem, although no formal evaluation has to date been carried out.

2.6.3   Impact of deafness on unemployment

Unemployment could mean the failure of an economy to fully utilize all available resources at its disposal to produce goods and services. And for a resource to be employed in an economy, there are standards to meet for the type and kind of employment needed. Human beings from child birth are given training formally and informally through skills and vocational training making them capable of getting employed and making a meaningful livelihood in future or at adulthood.

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Human resource development in the fields of related sciences and technology is very essential for national development. A country that has expertise in these disciplines and applies them in the productive sectors of its economy can achieve a great deal of economic and social prosperity for her citizens. The system of education that has the potential of making the country achieve middle income status, in the view of the researcher, is vocational and technical education. These are distinguished by Kwame (2009) as technical education, a type of education designed at upper secondary and lower tertiary levels to prepare middle level personnel, such as technical and middle management staff, and at the university level, to prepare engineers and technologists for higher management positions. Technical education, therefore, includes secondary education, science, technical studies and related skills training.

However, problems like unemployment and begging in the streets on the part of some deaf people after schooling makes it appear that the type of education, especially vocational education, which some of the   deaf students receive still have a long way to go. This means that the necessary infrastructure and tools needed for the vocational and technical education should be provided for Schools for the Deaf. Motivated teachers should as well be encouraged to take up appointment in these schools, so as to create the needed environment and training for the deaf students. The application of knowledge and skills gained through formal education especially vocational education by the deaf pupils is to help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school, thereby reducing poverty and dependency among the deaf which leads to begging frustration and mockery, (Kwame 2009).

According to Kwame (2009), there are a number of factors that are considered in searching for jobs in an economy. These include; the skills level, the educational level and most of it all availability of information. He, however, added that the deaf individuals lack information on job seeking as they do not have any knowledge of the various public, private concerns and establishments to which individuals could apply for jobs. The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has generally placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs which do not depend mainly on spoken language skills. He again reiterates the fact that another impediment to the acquisition of a gainful employment is as a result of issues that arise out of the scarcity and mal-distribution of job opportunities, as well as the lack of adequate skills in the commercial and technical fields. It is also worthy to note, that, there are discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices which make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work even though they may have the necessary skills required for that job.

In a real sense, deaf people living in Ghana are a silent minority within the socio-economic and political environment to making a livelihood. The majority is made up of those who can hear. According to Penilla and Tarlor (2012), for deaf people, living in a world where one's language is known by few and understood by even fewer, influences how deaf people view themselves. In that sense, to categorize how deaf people view themselves is too big a label to put on people, who are individuals with various, educational, economic, social, political, and deafness levels.

Relating to Penilla and Tarlor one will realise that when speakers of a minority group come together, apart from the majority, they feel a certain sense of freedom to be able to speak (or sign) as fast as they want, and to converse, using idioms in their native language. Throughout the country Special Schools are established (for instance WADEAF), to empower the deaf people to contribute to environmentally sound sustainable development through their occupations and other areas of their live.

2.6.4   Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

People who are born deaf experience much discrimination and lack of understanding in society at large, whether they communicate using spoken or sign language (Higgins, 1980). This may be attributed to negative attitudes towards people who have communication difficulties (Morgan, Herman & Woll, 2002) as well as the fact that profoundly deaf signers have considerable difficulty in communicating with hearing people (Bench, 1992).

Speech that is of limited intelligibility has consequences for deaf children's interactions with others. Roberts and Rickards (1994) showed that deaf children in mainstream schooling were more likely to have hearing friends than those in specialist schooling, and that children with less severe hearing loss had more hearing friends than children with more severe hearing loss. However, placing a child who is deaf in a mainstream setting does not ensure that the child will be integrated (Antia & Kreimeyer, 1992). Among the reasons given for social segregation in integrated preschool settings were the low communicative competences of children who were deaf or hard of hearing (Nunes et al,

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2001) and their limited understanding of how others think and feel (Bat-Chava et al, 2005). Hearing children who were friends with deaf peers reported friendships to involve prosocial functions (Nunes et al., 2001). Where communication is perceived as presenting an obstacle to friendship, deaf children are likely to be neglected (although not necessarily disliked) by their peers, and to feel correspondingly isolated (Nunes et al., 2001).

Easy communication between deaf and hearing children is important for friendships and also for successful learning in class. Stinson and Antia (1999) highlight barriers to classroom participation for deaf children. They include: fast rate of discussion; rapid turn-taking; frequent changes of topic; inclusion of many speakers in discussions; and instances where several students speak concurrently leading to unmanageable levels of noise. Overcoming these barriers requires skilled and sensitive management. Despite in-service training for teachers in mainstream schools who have deaf children in their class, there is no evaluation of whether this is adequate (Powers, 2002). Indeed, deaf students have reported that mainstream teachers lack deaf awareness (NDCS, 2001).

Many of the skills deaf children need to interact successfully with hearing peers are language based. In addition to speech intelligibility issues referred to above, prelingually deaf children and adults typically display poor mastery of English vocabulary and syntax and find learning the rules of social communication challenging (Crocker & Edwards, 2004). As most hearing people cannot sign, this frequently leads to the emergence of a 'shared handicap of communication' between deaf and hearing partners (Bouvet, 1990),

causing both to be unsure and ineffective at communicating with each other. Common pragmatic difficulties identified by researchers include: failure by deaf children and adults to clarify misunderstandings, solve disagreements or lead conversations (Stinson et al, 1996); inability to ask questions (Lederberg & Everhart, 2000; Nicholas & Geers, 2003) and difficulties explaining that they do not understand or in seeking clarification (Bench, 1992).

A compounding factor is that deaf children are not always made aware of the lack of clarity of their own communication. Often, a hearing parent or teacher will fail to signal the ineffectiveness of a message or may themselves repair it for the child (Beazley, 1992; Brackett, 1983; Wood et al., 1986), thereby denying deaf children the chance to develop the effectiveness of their interactions or take responsibility for their own communication. Reduced exposure to naturalistic, meaningful conversations (Akamatsu & Musselman, 1998) and difficulty accessing incidental learning account for why these patterns of difficulties develop. Reduced quality and quantity of interactions means fewer opportunities for these behaviours to be modelled and fewer opportunities for the deaf child to apply the behaviours in natural settings (Jeanes et al., 2000).

Traditionally, speech and language therapy with deaf clients has focused on improving auditory perception, speech reading, speech production, vocal characteristics and understanding and use of language (spoken and, more recently, sign languages) (Carney & Moeller, 1998). Less consideration has been given to the everyday communication experiences of deaf children. Bench (1992) points out that, despite the large literature on

the limited pragmatic abilities of many deaf people, little of it relates to intervention directed at functional communication skills. In their review of treatment efficacy in children with hearing loss, Carney and Moeller (1998) mention no studies that focus on either functional communication skills or social interaction. Given the potential implications of a deaf person's inability to interact with the hearing world, the need to develop therapy techniques to address this area becomes apparent.

2.7   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is presented through the use of three different perspectives which are: the Ecological Systems Theory, the Social Perception Theory, and the World Health Organization International Classification of Functioning Model (ICF Model): Disability and Health. These perspectives all apply different approaches relevant to the intention of this study, with most enabling some understanding of the importance of the surrounding environment in the functioning of an individual.

2.7.1   Ecological Systems Theory

According to the theory of Ecological Systems, people do not exist separately from their environments. This perspective recognises that environmental events and conditions outside any immediate setting containing a person can have a profound influence on behaviour and development within that setting (Brofenbrenner, 1979). The Ecological System Theory, first developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, recognises that children's development is influenced by the interactions that they have over time with the people, objects and symbols in their immediate environment. This perspective suggests that

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healthy development and effective functioning depends on the match between the needs and resources of a child or family and the demands, supports and resources offered by the surrounding environment (Connard & Novick, 1996). The Ecological Systems Theory holds that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems, and it identifies five environmental systems:

- *Microsystem:* This denotes the setting in which the individual lives. These contexts include the individual's family, peers, school, and neighborhood. It is in the microsystem that the most direct interactions with social agents occur; e.g. with parents and peers. The individual is not a passive recipient of experiences in these settings, but someone who helps to construct the settings.

- *Mesosystem:* Refers to relations between microsystems or connections between contexts. Examples are the relation of family experiences to school experiences, school experiences to church experiences, and family experiences to peer experiences. For instance, children whose parents have abused them may experience difficulty in developing positive relations with figures of authority such as teachers.

- *Exosystem:* Includes connections between and interrelatedness of a social setting, in which the individual does not have an active role, and the individual's immediate context. For example, a husband and child's environment at home may be influenced by a mother's experiences at work. The mother might receive a promotion that requires more travel, which might increase conflict with the husband and alters patterns of interaction with the child.

- *Macrosystem:* Expresses the culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include developing and industrialized countries, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

- *Chronosystem:* Describe the patterning of environmental occurrences and transitions over the life course, as well as socio-historical circumstances. For example, a divorce is one transition. Researchers have found that the negative effects of divorce on children often peak in the first year after the divorce. By the second year after the divorce, family interaction is less chaotic and more stable. As an example of socio-historical circumstances, consider how the opportunities for women to pursue a career have increased during the last thirty years.

This theory was used by researchers to probe into the way deaf children understand the world around them (Sheridan, 2001). It was found that deaf children's interaction with their environment differed from that of their hearing counterparts.

Their interactions were of a minimal nature and, did not necessarily provide the most opportune environmental experiences needed for a fully nurtured and holistic up-bringing (Sheridan, 2001). Persons with disabilities, including the deaf and hard of hearing's fulfillment as individuals is largely dependent on their relationship with those around them, set within an overall context which officially acknowledges their rights (Coleridge, 1993).

Figure 2.1: Five Systems of the Ecological System Theory
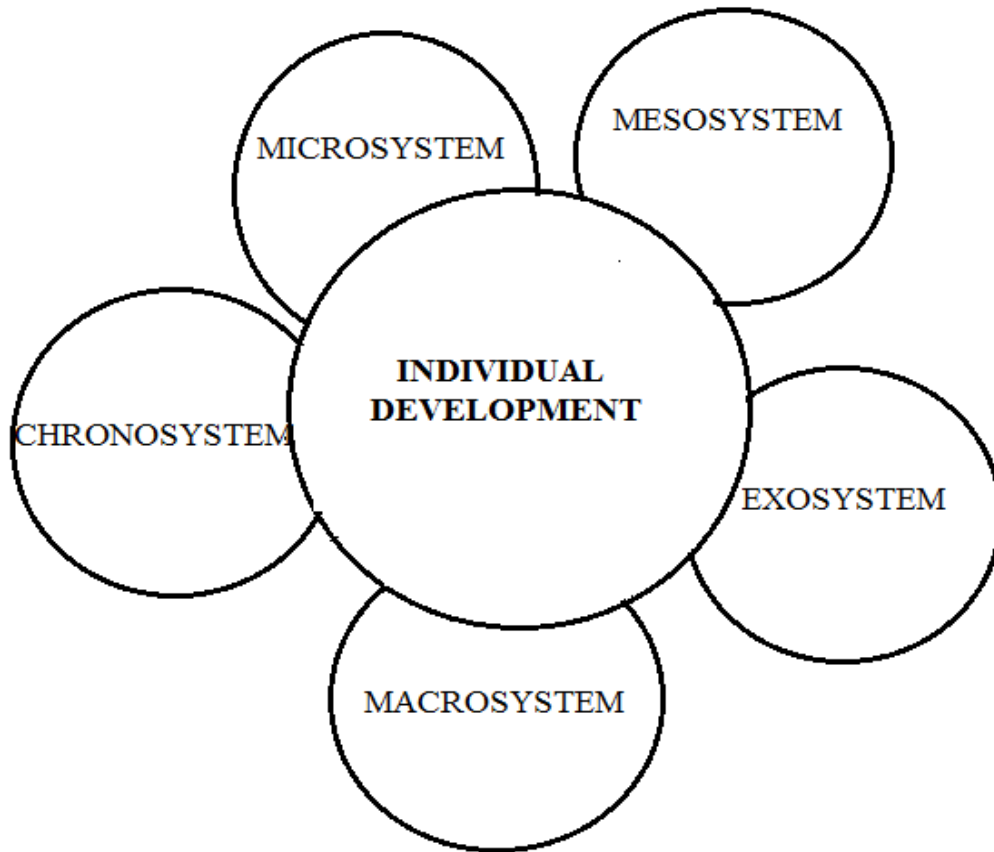
Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework for the study adapted from Matlala (2013)

Although most hearing impaired children are born into hearing families, a majority of these families reported little to no prior interaction with deaf people (Centre for Deaf Studies, 2001).

Thus, these families reported challenges in terms of communication barriers and familial and social interaction. Such environments, as Sheridan (2001) states, do not provide the most optimal opportunity for a hearing impaired child's development.

2.7.2 Social Perception Theory

Social perception is the process of forming impressions of individuals at a social level (Gilbert, 2001). The resulting impressions that we form are based on information available in the environment, our previous attitudes about relevant stimuli, and our current mood.

Social Perception Theory is a social psychology perspective that states that people obtain self-understanding from making inferences from their behaviour and events surrounding their behavior (Bern, 1969). According to this theory, humans tend to operate under certain biases when forming impression of other individuals. For example, we are more like to perceive a physically appealing person as being good (i.e. possessing desirable personality traits such as kindness, sociability, intelligence) than a less attractive person (Gilbert, 2001).

Another social perception bias we tend to make is called in-group bias or in-group favoritism. In other words, we tend to favor members of our in-group over those we perceive as out-group members. This is known as the *Halo Effect* (Buckney, 2001). This probability explains why people from homogeneous groups are likely to form unfavourable perceptions of people from heterogeneous groups. There are evident barriers (mainly linguistic) affecting interactions between the hearing and the hearing impaired communities.

In accordance with the Social Perception theory, the probable hypothesis would be that one group is likely to make prejudiced/biased perceptions about the other group mainly on the basis of their differences. Also, the prejudice or biased perceptions formed would be of a negative nature, as both these groups are unfamiliar with the traditions and cultures of the other (they are not homogenous groups).

2.7.3 The International Classification of Functioning (ICF Model): Disability and Health

The ICF Model of Disability and Health has an inclusive view of the subject of disability. It is WHO"s framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels (WHO, 2001). This model has focused on disabled individual's impairments and has described the complications they experience in their lives in terms of those impairments. It combines both the medical and social models of disability to bring to the fore issues of disability. Traditionally, the medical model sees disability as a limitation in capacity of the disabled person to participate in the mainstream of society. The social model primarily states the significance of the social environment in the disabled individual's personal development (WHO, 2001).

Thus, in addition to acknowledging disability as a medical issue, it acknowledges the environmental and social factors that impact on medical conditions to bring about disability. Environmental factors such as individual prejudice, inaccessibility to public places and information among others are taken into consideration in this model. This theory was used by researchers to probe into the way deaf children understand the world

around them (Sheridan, 2001). It was found that deaf children's interaction with their environment differed from that of their hearing counterparts. Their interactions were of a minimal nature and, did not necessarily provide the most opportune environmental experiences needed for a fully nurtured and holistic up-bringing (Sheridan, 2001).

Persons with disabilities, including the deaf and hard of hearing's fulfillment as individuals is largely dependent on their relationship with those around them, set within an overall context which officially acknowledges their rights (Coleridge, 1993).

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, thus seeks to achieve a synthesis in order to provide a coherent view of the different perspectives of health from a biological, individual and social perspective (WHO, 2002). This model indicates that medical diagnoses, societal values and norms in concert with other environmental factors influence the health of individuals.

2.7.4   Current Governmental Approach toward the Hearing Impaired

On a positive note, the South African government has made an effort in trying to assist the deaf in accessing certain governmental services. The government executed a programme known as South African Sign Language (interpreters) in the Health Care System (SASLHC) (DeafSA, 2008).

The aim of SASL interpreters in Health Care is to lower language barriers and equalize access. This project is based in Public Health and commenced in 2004 working with

those who are congenitally deaf or who acquired hearing loss at childhood, and whose first language is SASL (DeafSA, 2008). The project aims, via professional SASL interpreter services, to extend the right of access to health care for Deaf people in Cape Town (DeafSA, 2008).

Although this may be regarded as a good attempt by the government, the question still remains; "What about hearing impaired individuals in the rest of the country?"

2.8   Conceptual Framework

The education of children with special needs is a shared responsibility of parents and professionals. This framework explains the interrelated factors that influence the education of deaf children, laying emphasis on parents. The framework shows that positive attitude on the part of parent's favors school and social integration of children with special needs (United Nation, Education and Scientific Culture [UNESCO] (1994). It further shows that strong parental support, for example, can help a deaf child to become a well-educated person, who will not dependent on the family.

Additionally, it suggests that, like any child, deaf children can be independent with the necessary support, resources, and access to quality education. That is, if deaf children have well trained and qualified teachers, who can communicate effectively in sign language with them, their academic performance will improve. Finally, is that deaf child can be productive if counseling services are given to the parents and members in the community to change their attitude towards deaf education.

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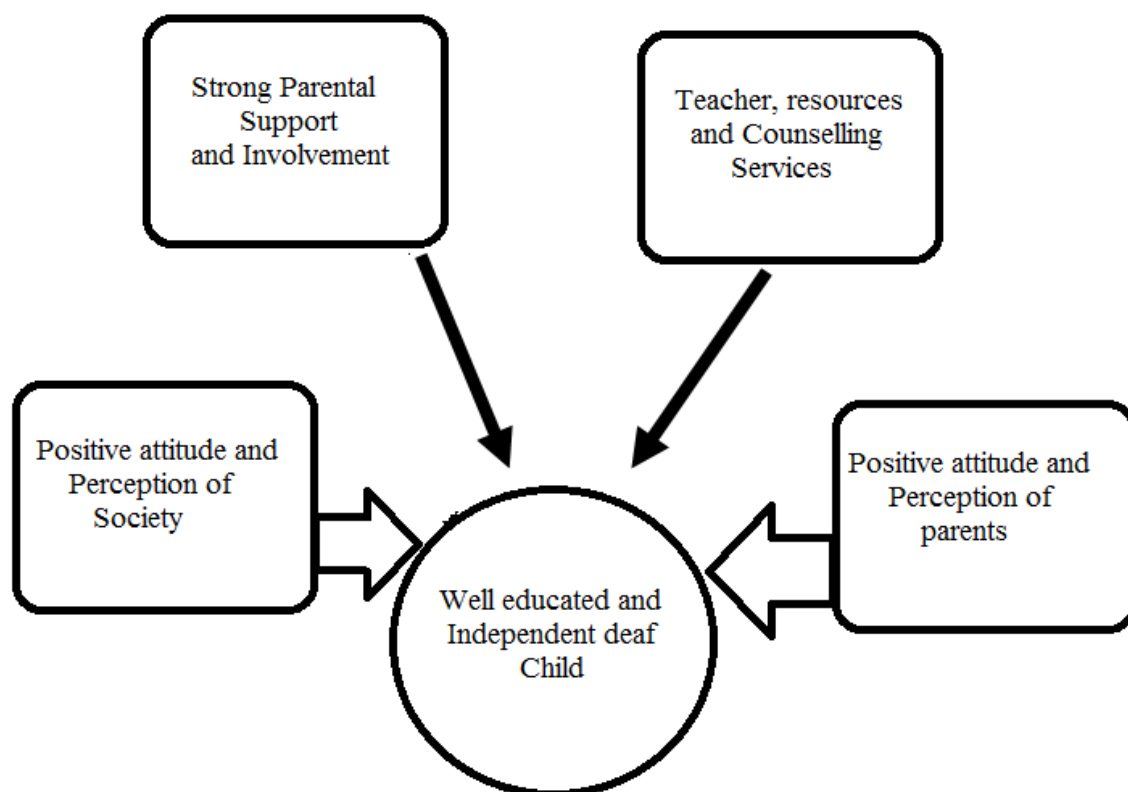
Figure 2.2: **Conceptual framework for the study Adapted From Boadi (2016)**

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter describes the various methods that were used in collecting data for the study , the research design, the population for the study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments, procedure for data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability.

3.1   Study Design

A descriptive cross sectional research design was employed for this research. A cross sectional study involves the analysis of data collected from a population or a representative subset at one specific point in time (Creswell, 2005). This study involves collecting data in a defined time and among specific group of people and thus falls under the category of cross sectional study.

3.2   Population and sample

The target population for this study was 100. It consisted of all the 100 parents of Wa school for the Deaf in Ghana. That is, all parents whose wards are enrolled in Wa School for the deaf at the time of the study were included in the study. The sample size of the study was eighty consisting of 80 parents made up of fifty males and thirty females.

3.3   Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents for the study. The reason for the adoption of this sampling technique was that the size of the population would not allow every parent to participate in the study. The researcher uses a subjective method to decide what needs to be known and set out to find people who were willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge and experience. Respondents were selected after a P.T.A meeting.

3.4   Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The study was quantitative using a questionnaire for the parents and an interview for the students whose parents have been selected. The questionnaire was divided into four sections to elicit demographic information, Psychological Perspectives on Hearing Impairment, Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment and Effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

Alongside the questionnaire, a semi structured interview was designed for the students to elicit their views on their experience with the hearing populace.

3.5   Data Management and Analysis

Data were coded and entered into a computer using statistical package for social science. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were generated and used to explain and interpret the data. Cross tabulations were also computed to examine differences across subgroups.

3.6   Reliability and validity of instruments

Seidu (2006) explained that, the reliability of a research instrument is the consistency with which the instrument produces similar result given the same conditions on different occasions. In other words, reliability is the degree of a research instrument (a test, a questionnaire, an interview schedule or an observation scheme) to measure a subject or a variable at different occasions and consistently give the same or similar results.

Seidu (2006) referred to validity as the result of the test and not the test itself. It is the use to which the result will be put to. As a result, a test or questionnaires can be highly valid for one purpose but not for another. After the instruments were designed they were reviewed critically to determine mistakes.

3.7   Limitations of the study

Despite the usefulness of the findings of the study, it has several limitations. First, the findings of this study depend on the honesty of the respondents. It is known that when collecting data with questionnaires, some individuals would agree more on socially desirable answers and disagree with socially undesirable answers rather than truly expressing their feeling and opinions (Adrian, 1986). Moreover, the small sample size, coupled with the non-probability method of sampling technique used in the study, limited the reliability and the generalization of the study. Also, there was lack of adequate finance to carry out the study in all deaf schools in the country and so the researcher limited herself to one school, which also limited the ability to generalize the findings. Finally, the researcher could have used qualitative method instead of quantitative.

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Qualitative methods would have helped to get parents one on one through interview to solicit in-depth information.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.0   Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze and discuss the results of the study with the aid of questionnaires.

The chapter is made up of five (5) sections. The first section talks about the demographic characteristics, religion and occupation of the respondents. The second section reviews the Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment. The third section examines the psychological perspectives on hearing impairment and the fourth section finally identifies the effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

4.1   Responses received

In all 100 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Out of 100 questionnaires given to respondents, 80 were received representing an overall response rate of 80.0%.

4.2   Demographic information of respondents

In order to achieve the objectives of the study data was collected on the background characteristics of the respondents. The demographic characteristics of respondents used in the study included gender, level of education and religion.

4.2.1   Gender of respondents

Table 4.1 shows the gender of the respondents sample for the study. Out of the responses obtained from the field, 50 respondents, representing 71.4% were female, and the remaining 30 respondents, representing 28.6% were male. The skewed result in favour of female may be attributed to men leaving the care and wellbeing of disabled children for women.

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	50	62.5
Male	30	37.5
Total	**80**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

4.2.2   Educational level of respondent

Since the focus of the study was to explore the psychological perspectives on hearing impairment and the effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf), it was important to find out the level of education of the respondents. From the figure below, it was found that, majority of the respondents were illiterates constituting 50.0%, this was followed by Basic Education constituting 25.0% and Secondary and Tertiary level parents also constitutes 12.5% each respectively. The result clearly shows that, most of the respondents selected were illiterates. However, the low percentage of Secondary and Tertiary holders indicates that there were few literates parents having their wards in the school.

Figure 4.1   Educational level of respondents
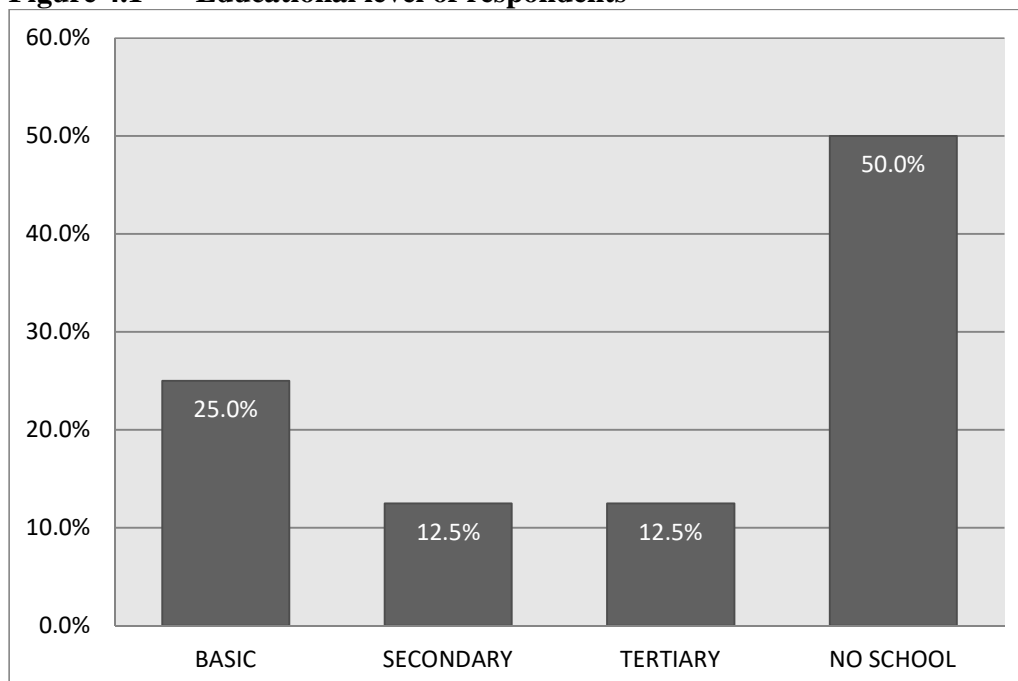
Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

4.2.3   Religious background of respondents

From table 4.3, majority of respondents (42.5%) were Traditionalists. Also 26 of the respondents (representing 32.5%) were Muslims, and 25.0% of respondents Christians. This indicates that majority of respondents were African Traditional Religion believers who perceived the deafness to be caused by anger of the gods, curse, misfortune among others. This affirms Avoke (2002) observation that, perceptions have been formed as a result of superstitious beliefs and stigma attached to a particular disability and that in the past, persons with disabilities were either offered as sacrifice to the gods or killed at birth. With the inception of Christianity and Western education, children with disabilities are no longer being killed.

Table 4.2: Religious background of respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	20	25.0
Islam	26	32.5
African Traditional Religion	34	42.5
Total	80	100

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

4.3   Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment

Cultural perceptions on hearing impairment or deafness is discussed on, community perception on hearing impairment (community reaction towards deaf children, parental attitude towards their deaf children), beliefs and cultural practices

4.3.1   Perception of community towards the deaf

From table 4.3 below, it could be seen that 75.0% of the respondents held the view that community member react negatively to the education of deaf children; only 25.0 % of the respondents were satisfied with community attitudes towards deaf children. Also, majority of respondents believed that some parents (68.7%) have negative attitudes towards their deaf children.

Sympathizing and have pity for the deaf received mixed reaction from respondents. 62.5 % of responses indicated, the community have no sympathy and 68.7% agreed that, the deaf is pitied and seen as a burden to the community.

Table 4.3:   Perception of community towards the deaf

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Community reacts positively to deaf children		
Agree	20	25.0
disagree	60	75.0
The deaf is satisfied with community reaction to education	25	31.3
Agree	55	68.7
disagree		
Some parents have negative attitudes towards education of deaf children		
Agree	55	68.7
disagree	25	31.3
Deaf people and children readily get sympathy and support from able bodied persons as those with blindness do	30	37.5
Agree	50	62.5
disagree		
Societies pity children who are deaf and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent		
Agree	55	68.7
disagree	25	31.3

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

In most Ghanaian communities, people believe in reincarnation and as a result, there is a high tendency among people to believe that some families broke some laws or customs for which they should be punished by the gods of the land or ancestral spirits. For example, in the Kassena Nankana district in northern Ghana, children who are born with

any form of disability are believed to have been sent by spirits to bring harm to the family.

Among some cultures, disability is perceived as a result of witchcraft, sorcery, juju and magic. Due to these beliefs, assets in some traditional communities are viewed with mixed feelings.

Sommers (1994) cited in Obi (2004) mentioned that some parents openly reject their children with disabilities and treat them without any affection; they neglect their interest and belittle their achievements.

4.3.2 Cultural beliefs on hearing impairment

Since the focus was on cultural beliefs on hearing impairment, from table 4.4 below, 75.0% of respondents agreed that deafness is caused by displeasure of gods and ancestor. 87.5% agreed that, the deaf suffers isolation and marginalization from hearing people. With these beliefs and effects on the deaf, the state of deafness is viewed as a curse (81.3%).

Table 4.4:   Cultural beliefs on hearing impairment

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Deafness is believed to be caused by displeasure of the gods and other dead relatives such as grandparents of the deaf Agree disagree	 60 20	 75.0 25.0
Beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of people who are hearing impaired Agree disagree	 70 10	 87.5 12.5
Beliefs about deafness make the state of being deaf to be viewed as a curse Agree disagree	 65 15	 81.3 18.7

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

Literature supports this when Okyere and Addo, (1989) on Deaf culture in Ghana, indicate some of the beliefs on causes of deafness as displeasure caused by the gods and other dead relatives as well as witch grandparents of the deaf. Beliefs about auditory impairment in African societies have been shown to provoke various reactions, ranging from denunciation to rejection, including considerations of infanticide. Some beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of

people who are hearing impaired (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003). Some societies pity children who have auditory impairment and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

4.4   Psychological and current social Perspectives on Hearing Impairment

This section discusses stigma and stigmatic means of controlling deviant behavior of the deaf, effects of perception on self image, education and the modern view of hearing impairment.

From table 4.5 blow, 75.0% of respondents agreed that, stigmatic labels are used towards the deaf to control or limit their behavior and that, deaf people carry the stigma of lacking human characteristics (72.5%). 87.5% of respondents indicated that, self-image of the deaf is negatively affected where as 71.3% agreed that hearing loss means one is uneducable and unemployable.

On modern view of hearing impairment, 81.3% of respondents agreed that, the deaf constitute a minority group within society. This recognition goes a long way to affect the deaf socially, emotionally and physically.

Table 4.5:   Psychological and current social Perspectives on Hearing Impairment

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Society uses stigmatic labels towards individuals or groups as a means of controlling and/or limiting deviant behavior Agree disagree	 60 20	 75.0 25.0
People who are deaf carry with them the stigma of "lacking" a typical human characteristic Agree disagree	 58 22	 72.5 27.5
Society perceiving the deaf negatively affects their self-image resulting in a negative self-perception. Agree disagree	 70 10	 87.5 12.5
Hearing loss means that one is uneducable and unemployable Agree disagree	 57 23	 71.3 28.7
The modern view of hearing impairment involves the recognition of hearing impaired people as a cultural minority Agree disagree	 65 15	 81.3 18.7

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

From Literature, Becker (1963) observed that societal labeling has a potent effect on how those who are assigned labels are perceived. It also affects how the labeled individual or group perceives himself and his relationship to society. The labels attached to them function as a form of social stigma. Engelbrecht, (1961) also observed that, the deaf saw

themselves not attending school and unemployed reasoned that hearing loss meant that one was uneducable and unemployable (because of their impairment) as the hearing society thought.

4.5 Societal and parental attitudes towards the education of deaf children

Table 4.6: Societal and parental attitudes towards the education of deaf children

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Deaf children need exclusive attention to maximize their potentials in school Agree disagree	60 20	75.0 25.0
Deaf children can actively participate in classroom as their hearing peers Agree disagree	58 22	72.5 27.5
More attention should paid to the education hearing children than deaf children Agree disagree	70 10	87.5 12.5
Deaf children should be educated only in special schools Agree disagree	57 23	71.3 28.7
Deaf children should only be taught vocational courses Agree disagree	65 15	81.3 18.7
Deaf children cannot perform well academic even if teachers are fluent in the sign language Agree disagree	58 22	72.5 27.5
Hearing children can perform better than deaf children Agree disagree	70 10	87.5 12.5

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

As shown in Table 4.6 above, respondents' perception of academic performance of deaf children was not all that positive, which contradicts their earlier somewhat progressive views on deaf education. It can be seen from the responses that majority of the respondents agreed on all the statements, indicating that they thought deaf children's academic performance is lower than their hearing counterparts. For example, 87.5 percent thought hearing children perform academically better than deaf children and 71.3 percent thought deaf children should be taught only vocational courses.

4.6   Effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

The effects of perception on the livelihood of the hearing impaired is discussed under the following; Impact of deafness on educational achievement, Impact of deafness on mental health, Impact of deafness on unemployment and Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

4.6.1: Impact of deafness on educational achievement

On educational achievement from table 4.6 below, 87.5% of respondents indicated that, Deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers. With this indication, 93.8% indicated that, deaf adults are likely to be unemployed as compared to their hearing counterparts. 68.8% of respondents agreed that parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their deaf children education and may not be involved and provide their deaf children with their educational needs (75.0%).

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It has been found that some parents and family members view children with disabilities as an economic burden and punishment (Miles and Hossain, 1999), and from the above observation, one will agree with Dearing *et al* (2006) position when they mentioned that some children with disabilities in African families are perceived as bad omen and are thus have been excluded from mainstream society. If children with disabilities are enrolled school but their parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their education, it would have serious implications for their educational attainment. This is because parents may not be involved and provide their children with their educational needs to enable them to participate in education on equal basis as their counterparts without disabilities. Some parents may be compelled to hide their children with disabilities and deprive them of education (McFerrin, 2005).

Unfortunately, the consequences of poor literacy are that, many deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers (Gregory et al, 1998); deaf adults are four times more likely to be unemployed and, of those working, are three times more likely than hearing adults to be earning a lower wage (RNID, 2002).

Table 4.7: **Impact of deafness on educational achievement**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers		
Agree	70	87.5
disagree	10	12.5
Deaf adults are likely to be unemployed		
Agree	75	93.8
disagree	5	6.2
Parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their deaf children education.		
Agree	55	68.8
disagree	25	31.2
Parents may not be involved and provide their deaf children with their educational needs.		
Agree	60	75.0
disagree	20	25.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

4.6.2 Impact of deafness on mental health

This part analysis the status of the hearing impaired in society that goes to affect their mental health. Communication and social groupings are discussed.

Table 4.8:   Impact of deafness on mental health

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Poor communication in the hearing world leads to social isolation		
Agree	66	82.5
disagree	14	17.5
Deaf people in Ghana are a silent minority within the socio-economic and political environment to making a livelihood	70	87.5
Agree	10	12.5
disagree		

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

Respondents feel that, poor communication in the hearing world leads to isolation with a percentage score of 82.5%. 87,5% of respondents also agreed to the fact that, Deaf people in Ghana are a silent minority within the socio-economic and political environment to making a livelihood. These two parameters will lead to total isolation hence, result in mental health problems as the deaf keep thinking if they are not human beings.

Crocker & Edwards, (2004); Hindley, (2000) affirms this when they stated that, poor communication has consequences for emotional learning and mental wellbeing and to Bain et al, (2004), deaf people who communicate poorly in the hearing world are more likely to be socially isolated, are at greater risk for psychological distress (Marschark, 1993) and have a greater overall prevalence of mental illness than the general population (Crocker et al, 2004).

4.6.3   Impact of deafness on unemployment

Impact of deafness on unemployment discusses lack of information, communication handicap, discrimination and vocational training.

Table 4.9:   Impact of deafness on unemployment

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
The deaf lack information on job seeking Agree disagree	 75 5	 93.8 6.2
The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs Agree disagree	 75 5	 93.8 6.2
Discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work Agree disagree	 70 10	 87.5 12.5
Vocational education for the deaf could help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school Agree disagree	 80 0	 100 0.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

From table 4.8 above, lack of information on job seeking and communication handicap have being identified by many respondents as some of the major causes of unemployment for the deaf with a percentage score of 93.8% respectively. A percentage score of 87.5%

was associated to discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices that make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work. However, all respondents (100%) agreed to the notion that Vocational education for the deaf could help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school.

Kwame (2009) confirmed this in literature when he stated that, there are a number of factors that are considered in searching for jobs in an economy. These include; the skills level, the educational level and most of it all availability of information. He, however, added that the deaf individuals lack information on job seeking as they do not have any knowledge of the various public, private concerns and establishments to which individuals could apply for jobs. The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has generally placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs which do not depend mainly on spoken language skills. He however concluded that, the application of knowledge and skills gained through formal education especially vocational education by the deaf pupils will help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school, thereby reducing poverty and dependency among the deaf which leads to begging frustration and mockery.

4.6.4   Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

Most respondents (87.5%) from table 4.9 agreed that, the deaf experience much discrimination in society, whether they communicate using spoken or sign language. 81.3% of respondents indicated that, most hearing people inability to sign leads to a shared handicap of communication between the deaf and their hearing partners. Deaf

children are not always made aware of the lack of clarity of their own communication had a percentage score of 93.8% and 81.3% of respondents indicated that, less consideration has been given to the everyday communication experiences of deaf children.

Table 4.10:   Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
The deaf experience much discrimination in society, whether they communicate using spoken or sign language	70	87.5
Agree	10	12.5
disagree		
As most hearing people cannot sign, this frequently leads to a shared handicap of communication' between deaf and hearing partners		
Agree	65	81.3
disagree	15	18.7
Deaf children are not always made aware of the lack of clarity of their own communication		
Agree	75	93.8
disagree	5	6.2
Less consideration has been given to the everyday communication experiences of deaf children		
Agree	65	81.3
disagree	15	18.7

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July, 2013

The above observation is an indication that, deaf people will suffer isolation in their livelihood as most hearing people lack the ability to sign. Literature supports this when

Nunes et al (2001) stated, among the reasons given for social segregation in integrated preschool settings were the low communicative competences of children who were deaf or hard of hearing and their limited understanding of how others think and feel (Bat-Chava et al, 2005).

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter highlights the major findings of the study. The findings are outlined in direct response to the objectives. Recommendations have been provided to curtail the effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf).

5.1   Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment

It was discovered that community member react negatively to the education of deaf children. 75.0% of the respondents held the view and even majority of respondents believed that some parents (68.7%) have negative attitudes towards their deaf children. Also, the community has sympathy and pity for the deaf.

In most Ghanaian communities, people believe in reincarnation and as a result, there is a high tendency among people to believe that some families broke some laws or customs for which they should be punished by the gods of the land or ancestral spirits and among some cultures, disability is perceived as a result of witchcraft, sorcery, juju and magic. Due to these beliefs, assets in some traditional communities are viewed with mixed feelings. Sommers (1994) cited in Obi (2004) mentioned that some parents openly reject their children with disabilities and treat them without any affection; they neglect their interest and belittle their achievements.

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5.2   Cultural beliefs on hearing impairment

It is also discovered that, cultural beliefs on hearing impairment dominates the African society and for that matter Ghana, 75.0% of respondents agreed that deafness is caused by displeasure of gods and ancestor. 87.5% agreed that, the deaf suffers isolation and marginalization from hearing people. With these beliefs and effects on the deaf, the state of deafness is viewed as a curse (81.3%).

Literature supports this when Okyere and Addo, (1989) on Deaf culture in Ghana, indicate some of the beliefs on causes of deafness as displeasure caused by the gods and other dead relatives as well as witch grandparents of the deaf. Beliefs about auditory impairment in African societies have been shown to provoke various reactions, ranging from denunciation to rejection, including considerations of infanticide. Some beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of people who are hearing impaired (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003). Some societies pity children who have auditory impairment and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

5.3   Psychological and current social Perspectives on Hearing Impairment

On psychological and current social perspective on hearing impairment, it was found that, stigmatic labels are used towards the deaf to control or limit their behavior and that, deaf people carry the stigma of lacking human characteristics (72.5%). Respondents (87.5%) indicated that, self-image of the deaf is also negatively affected with a gross effect on their education and employment since the deaf constitute a minority group within society.

From Literature, Becker (1963) observed that societal labeling has a potent effect on how those who are assigned labels are perceived. It also affects how the labeled individual or group perceives himself and his relationship to society. The labels attached to them function as a form of social stigma. Engelbrecht, (1961) also observed that, the deaf saw themselves not attending school and unemployed reasoned that hearing loss meant that one was uneducable and unemployable (because of their impairment) as the hearing society thought.

5.4   Effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

Findings from the effects of perception on the livelihood of the hearing impaired is discussed under the following; Impact of deafness on educational achievement, Impact of deafness on mental health, Impact of deafness on unemployment and Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

5.4.1: Impact of deafness on educational achievement

On educational achievement, 87.5% of respondents indicated that, deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers hence, are unemployed as compared to their hearing counterparts. It was again found that, 68.8% of respondents agreed that parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their deaf children education and may not be involved and provide their deaf children with their educational needs.

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It has been found that some parents and family members view children with disabilities as an economic burden and punishment (Miles and Hossain, 1999), and from the above observation, one will agree with Dearing *et al* (2006) position when they mentioned that some children with disabilities in African families are perceived as bad omen and are thus have been excluded from mainstream society. If children with disabilities are enrolled school but their parents hold unfavorable or negative perception about their education, it would have serious implications for their educational attainment. This is because parents may not be involved and provide their children with their educational needs to enable them to participate in education on equal basis as their counterparts without disabilities. Some parents may be compelled to hide their children with disabilities and deprive them of education (McFerrin, 2005).

5.4.2: Impact of deafness on mental health

It was further discovered that, poor communication in the hearing world leads to the isolation of the hearing impaired with a percentage score of 82.5% and that deaf people in Ghana are a silent minority within the socio-economic and political environment to making a livelihood (87,5%).

On the effects of these two on the mental health of the deaf, Crocker & Edwards, (2004); Hindley, (2000) affirms this when they stated that, poor communication has consequences for emotional learning and mental wellbeing and to Bain et al, (2004), deaf people who communicate poorly in the hearing world are more likely to be socially isolated, are at greater risk for psychological distress (Marschark, 1993) and have a

greater overall prevalence of mental illness than the general population (Crocker et al, 2004).

5.4.3: Impact of deafness on unemployment

Findings on the effect of deafness on unemployment indicated that, From lack of information on job seeking and communication handicap have being identified by many as some of the major causes of unemployment for the deaf with a percentage score of 93.8% respectively. A percentage score of 87.5% was associated to discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices that make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work. However, all respondents (100%) agreed to the notion that Vocational education for the deaf could help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school.

Kwame (2009) confirmed this in literature when he stated that, there are a number of factors that are considered in searching for jobs in an economy. These include; the skills level, the educational level and most of it all availability of information. He, however, added that the deaf individuals lack information on job seeking as they do not have any knowledge of the various public, private concerns and establishments to which individuals could apply for jobs. The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has generally placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs which do not depend mainly on spoken language skills. He however concluded that, the application of knowledge and skills gained through formal education especially vocational education by the deaf pupils will help them become independent through self-employment or

employment in an existing industry after school, thereby reducing poverty and dependency among the deaf which leads to begging frustration and mockery.

5.4.4: Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

Lastly, it was discovered that, the deaf experience much discrimination in society, whether they communicate using spoken or sign language (87.5%) and that most hearing people inability to sign leads to a shared handicap of communication between the deaf and their hearing partners with less consideration given to the everyday communication experiences of deaf children.

From the above observation it is clear that, deaf people will suffer isolation in their livelihood as most hearing people lack the ability to sign. Literature supports this when Nunes et al (2001) stated, among the reasons given for social segregation in integrated preschool settings were the low communicative competences of children who were deaf or hard of hearing and their limited understanding of how others think and feel (Bat-Chava et al, 2005).

5.5   Recommendations

Societal beliefs about disability play an important role in determining the way the family and society at large perceive disability and the kind of attitude they demonstrate towards education of children with disabilities. The findings as reported by the parents in this study suggest unsatisfactory societal attitude towards the hearing impaired and the education of deaf children which goes a long way to affect their livelihood. Members of the society must therefore be sensitized about the benefits and essence of educating

children with disabilities including those who are deaf. The sensitization drive could take place in churches and mosques, in the form of public symposia, and in the media. There should also be education on the causes of hearing impairments and other disabilities in children and the need to send them to school to learn a vocation so that they can develop their potentials and talents to also contribute to nation building.

Another significant factor which could lead to successful outcomes in the education of deaf children is the issue of collaboration among parents and teachers. The findings show the need for more collaboration, thus, parents should endeavor to attend PTA meetings often and regularly visit their children in the school.

Parents of deaf children and their children should be educated and supported by the government by providing them with special support services. These support services could include amplification devices for their children and sign language interpreters to enable the children interact with their teachers. Parents should also learn the sign language to increase interaction with their children to build their confidence and belongingness.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that perceptions on the hearing impaired, emotions, negative or positive, found within the family and community are central to the development of the individual. For most Deaf and Hard of Hearing, however, experiences around the individual such as isolation, stigmatization, stress, depression and grief is what shapes

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their emotions from the very beginning. Culture and other external societal forces also influence the development of emotions. Unfortunately for them, the society in which they live also reinforces the already negative emotions built at home and the community by creating an unfriendly environment that produces fear, inferiority complexes, anger and learned helplessness for most of them. Such living conditions do not empower individuals´ right from the onset of their life.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student conducting a research on the topic: **PERCEPTION ON DEAF EDUCATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THEIR LIVELIHOOD.**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

These questions seeks to find out the problem(s) that you are having in making a meaningful livelihood with the skills acquired from the formal training provided for you at WADEAF and the challenge(s) that you are having in the studies of vocational skills. Please respond to the questions were appropriate. Your answers will be treated as secret.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please, for each of the items below tick -- or cross the box -- the boxes responding to your preferred response. For items without choice, write down your own response at the space provided.

SCALES:

Agree	1	Yes	1	Male	1
Disagree	2	No	2	Female	2

SECTION A:

Background Information Of Respondents

1.   Gender of the parent.
a). Male   b). Female

2.   Religion
a). Christian   b). Moslem   c). Traditional religion
d). Other (specify………)

3.   Level of education
a). Basic   b). Secondary   c). Tertiary
d). None

4.   Occupation
a). Trading   b). Farming   c). Teaching
d). Other (specify……….)

5.   Were your child born deaf?
a). Yes   b). No   c). Don't know

SECTION B

Cultural Perceptions on Hearing Impairment

6.   The community reacts positively towards deaf children
        a). Agree   b). Disagree

7.   Are you satisfied with the community reaction towards education for the deaf?
        a). Satisfied   b). Not satisfied

8.   Why? ....

9.   Deafness is believed to be caused by displeasure of the gods and other dead relatives as well as witch grandparents of the deaf.
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

10.   Beliefs have the unfortunate effect of increasing the likelihood of isolation and marginalization of people who are hearing impaired
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

11.   Beliefs about auditory impairment in African societies have various reactions, ranging from denunciation to rejection, including considerations of infanticide
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

12.   Deaf people and children do not readily get the sympathy and support from able bodied persons as those with blindness do.
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

13.   Societies pity children who are deaf and see them as burdens, dependent on their families and lacking the ability to be independent
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

14.   Cultural practices may result in the deaf child being hidden from public view because of familial shame over having a "handicapped" child who may bring misfortune upon the family
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

15.   Beliefs about deafness make the state of being deaf to be viewed as a curse
        a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

SECTION C

Psychological and current social implications on Hearing Impairment

16. Society mostly uses stigmatic labels towards individuals or groups as a means of controlling and/or limiting deviant behavior
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

17. People who are deaf carry with them the stigma of "lacking" a typical human characteristic
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

18. If an individual thinks other people perceive him negatively, then his self-image is most likely to rotate in the same direction, resulting in a negative self-perception.
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

19. Hearing loss means that one is uneducable and unemployable
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

20   The modern view of hearing impairment involves the recognition of hearing impaired people as a cultural minority
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

21   The hearing impaired is recognized as group of persons who share a common means of communication
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

22   Deafness heavily influences relationships with other people, thus affecting the hearing impaired individual's ability to fully integrate himself or herself into a hearing society
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

SECTION D

Societal and parental attitudes towards the education of deaf children

23. More attention should be paid to the education of hearing children than deaf children.
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

24.   Deaf children should be educated only in special schools.
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

25. Deaf children should only be taught vocational courses.
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

26. Deaf with disabilities are slow learners.
     a).   Agreed   b). Disagreed

27. Deaf children cannot perform well academic even if teachers are fluent in the sign language.
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

28. Hearing children can perform better.
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

SECTION E
Effects of societal perceptions on the livelihood of the Hearing Impaired (Deaf)

D1: Impact of deafness on educational achievement

29. Deaf children leave school with fewer qualifications than their hearing peers
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

30 Deaf adults are four times more likely to be unemployed and, of those working, are three times more likely than hearing adults to be earning a lower wage
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

D2: Impact of deafness on mental health

31. Deaf people who communicate poorly in the hearing world are more likely to be socially isolated
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

32. The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has generally placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

33. Discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work even though they may have the necessary skills required for that job.
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

34. Deaf people living in Ghana are a silent minority within the socio-economic and political environment to making a livelihood. The majority is made up of those who can hear
    a). Agreed   b). Disagreed

D3: Impact of deafness on unemployment

35. The deaf individuals lack information on job seeking as they do not have any knowledge of the various public, private concerns and establishments to which individuals could apply for jobs

a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

36.　The communication handicap of the hearing impaired has generally placed limits to their choice of occupation or jobs
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

37.　There are discriminatory and other inefficient forms of employment practices which make it difficult for the hearing impaired to compete favourably in the world of work
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

38.　Vocational education by the deaf can help them become independent through self-employment or employment in an existing industry after school
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

D4:　Impact of deafness on communication with hearing people

39.　People who are born deaf experience much discrimination and lack of understanding in society at large, whether they communicate using spoken or sign language
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

40.　As most hearing people cannot sign, this frequently leads to the emergence of a 'shared handicap of communication' between deaf and hearing partners
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

41.　Deaf children and adults always fail to clarify misunderstandings, solve disagreements or lead conversations
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

42.　Deaf children are not always made aware of the lack of clarity of their own communication
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

43.　Less consideration has been given to the everyday communication experiences of deaf children
a).　　Agreed　　　b). Disagreed

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions For Deaf Students