

Challenges to Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Hearing-Impairment: Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the difficulties of people with hearing impairment to obtain jobs as perceived by the teachers who work with such population in Punjab, Pakistan. Employment is essential to economic independence, social integration, and self-esteem, but the hearing-impaired people face a lot of obstacles in the process of education-to-work transition. Such obstacles are poor vocational training, lack of educational readiness, communication challenges, lack of technological assistance, and unsupportive work policies. The research design was a quantitative descriptive study where data were collected using a structured 40 items questionnaire to 115 teachers in Lahore, Kasur, Sialkot and Sargodha sampled through multistage random sampling. There were descriptive and inferential statistics involving t-tests and ANOVA to find out relationships between perceptions and teacher demographics. The findings indicated that there were a lot of differences in perception depending on educational qualification, teaching experience, age, experience with hearing-impaired students, but not with professional qualifications. Despite the positive attitudes towards hearing-impaired people commonly expressed by the teachers, the gaps that were found to be critical were linked to the relevance of the vocational programs, educational preparedness, and institutional assistance. The results support the necessity of an inclusive policy, the updating of training programs, and the increased access to the assistive technologies to better the employment prospects of hearing-impaired people.

Keywords: *Individuals with Hearing-Impairment, Employment Barriers, Teacher Perception, Vocational Training, Educational Preparedness, Assistive Technology.*

INTRODUCTION

An essential component of adult identity is employment. Work is a chance to make money, but it's also a chance to make friends, learn new things, and feel competent, proud, and accomplished. It helps people to find a sense of purpose, provides them something to do with their time, gives their day structure, and creates social networks. To cope with the increasing demand of employment in every sector of diverse industries, many countries are strongly focusing on acquiring people skills especially among the youth through educational training. This can clearly be seen with the increasing rates of students' participation in higher career educations including disabled youth through special education. Realizing contribution of

young of disabled groups to the development of the industry, giving career guidance and trainings to this special group is crucially importance. (Abbas et al., 2019; Willis, 2025; Leach, 2025).

Lack of work participation might have a broad impact on individuals. People with disabilities continue to have a lower level of work participation than the population at large despite multiple efforts to increase their participation rate. (Desalegn & Worku, 2016). United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is dedicated to supporting an inclusive workplace that enables people with disabilities to start working and advance their careers on an equal footing with others, as well as to guaranteeing equal access to job opportunities. (Garramiola-Bilbao & Rodríguez-Álvarez, 2016). We know that the barriers towards entering the labor market for people with disabilities vary depending on the type of disability. Some groups face extreme difficulties to overcome (e.g., people with psychiatric disorders), while others are facing fewer difficulties (e.g., people with hearing impairment) (Willis, 2025; Abbas et al., 2019)

The inspiration that illuminates "The path of education for students" comes from teachers. Teachers inspire kids to be creative and pique their interest. In addition to using textbooks, educators impart knowledge to pupils based on their own experiences and continue to be motivated to help them navigate the challenges of life. Teachers serve as role models for students, identifying their interests and goals, abilities and aptitudes, integrating those interests and aptitudes, assisting them in the subject selection, providing career advice, and informing you of job requirements. (Arif et al., 2024; Alit et al., 2025).

There is no denying a teacher's impact on their students' life. Young people are the country's future; they must fulfill important responsibilities in a variety of fields and contribute to society in some way. The person who has the biggest influence on kids' life is their teacher. The teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing can address all of the issues above and support improvement in student performance, using knowledge specific to the learning needs of students with hearing loss. (Adam et al., 2025).

Hearing impairment is a major disability globally and is more frequent in developing countries. Hearing is sometimes called the social sense because it plays a fundamental role in interacting and relating with people and the social environment (Alit et al., 2025; Arif et al., 2024). Globally, the prevalence of hearing loss continues to rise, with disproportionate effects observed in low- and middle-income countries, where medical services, educational provisions, and employment pathways for individuals with disabilities often remain inadequate. Among all disabilities, hearing impairment is particularly unique due to its silent, often invisible nature. Unlike visual or physical disabilities that may receive immediate attention, hearing loss tends to go unnoticed, resulting in long-term exclusion, particularly in communication-intensive environments.

Hearing has often been referred to as the "social sense" because of its fundamental role in fostering human interaction. It enables individuals to form relationships, engage in education, develop language skills, and integrate into society. Consequently, the absence or limitation of auditory perception can severely hinder one's social development, emotional wellbeing, and ability to fully participate in community life. The problems of people with hearing impairments in such countries as Pakistan (where the level of awareness of disability issues is low, and resources are limited) are even more acute (Arif et al., 2024; Alit et al., 2025).

Pakistan has an estimated population of 5.035 million people with disabilities (PWDs) and an increasing demand is placed on inclusive education and job access. Worryingly, the disability population is rising at an annual rate of 2.65 which is higher than the national population growth rate of 2.03. Most of PWDs in the country are entirely dependent on their families and approximately 70% of them have to survive on their families. The rates of literacy among PWDs are dismal (around 28 percent) and employment rates are even lower (14 percent of disabled people are in either the private or the public workforce) (Abbas et al., 2019; Willis, 2025).

The international discourse on inclusive education and inclusive employment has gained momentum in the recent years, with international conventions, local laws, and the promotion of the idea by civil society. Even with these beneficial developments, people who are hard of hearing still have to deal with a lot of problems before they can get an equal opportunity to work. These barriers still persist at the institutional, social, educational, and economic levels, suggesting that inclusiveness rhetoric and practice are not aligned.

The viewpoint of teachers provides us, the somewhat insight on the distance between the educational readiness and the job opportunities of people with hearing impairment. The views of teachers can aid us to fill the gap and align educational strategies with the existing job market to increase the employability of people with hearing-impairment.

The teachers are essential in the context of setting the employment preparedness of the individuals with hearing-impairment. Their view therefore provides us with a critical insight into the educational, social and emotional, technological and structural obstacles and issues that hinder the process of education-employment transition. Realizing these barriers, we will be able to determine the areas of emphasis that require even greater assistance and will be capable of elaborating the practical strategy to increase the employment rate of the people with hearing-impairment. This study will discuss these issues as seen through the eyes of teachers who are important in equipping hearing-impaired students to be employed.

Objectives of Study

1. To unfold the perspectives of teachers about the causes of unemployment among individuals with hearing impaired.
2. To identify the specific challenges and barriers to employment opportunities faced by individuals with hearing-impairment.
3. To examine the role of vocational training programs in preparing individuals with hearing-impairment for the workplace
4. To examine whether teachers' perceptions regarding employment challenges of individuals with hearing-impairment differ significantly across demographic variables such as gender, age, educational qualifications, and teaching experience.

Research Questions

1. What specific challenges and barriers do individuals with hearing-impairment face in securing employment, as identified by teachers?
2. What areas do individuals with hearing-impairment need the most support in to access better employment opportunities, as perceived by teachers?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of current workplace accommodations and support systems for individuals with hearing impairment?
4. What are the differences in teachers' perceptions regarding employment challenges of individuals with hearing-impairment across demographic variables such as gender, age, educational qualifications, and teaching experience?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The fact of employment is commonly believed to be one of the foundations of individual identity, social belonging and economic self-sufficiency. Employment beyond offering a path to financial stability gives individuals a purpose, organization and provides them with a sense of belonging in their communities. It is an important way for individuals to express themselves and interact with others, and it determines how society perceives them and how they see themselves as well. Not only is work necessary for survival, but

it is also an important and natural part of being human (Dostal, 2025). Arif et al. (2024) also support the latter by saying that a person's job affects how they see the world and how they see their place in it.

Although this is something that affects us all, it cannot be denied that persons with disabilities (PWDs) continue to confront significant systemic barriers to full engagement in the labour force. All of these obstacles are interlocking and include being physically enviable, being unfairly according hiring, not receiving any work or educational opportunities, and that people in society hold negative attitudes towards them (Abbas et al., 2019; Leach, 2025). Disability is not usually what keeps a person from working; it's usually the strict and unwelcoming culture at work that does.

People with hearing impairments (PWHIs) face especially difficult and not always fully understood problems when it comes to getting and keeping a job within the larger group of PWDs. They also include communication problems, social stigma, and a general lack of understanding on the part of employers. Almost two-thirds of people with hearing loss have serious problems with moving up in their careers and finding new jobs. This is usually due to unrealistic expectations of the job and the inability of the employers to make the necessary accommodations like the use of sign language interpreter or assistive listening devices (Garcia Morales et al., 2022; Goode, 2022).

This is one of the main barriers to inclusion because employers are not aware of deaf culture and communication requirements. According to Baker and Smith (2022), even though people with hearing-impairment may possess certain unique skills and perspectives, they are often ignored in the recruiting and advancing programs. The unwillingness to employ the person with hearing loss is often based on the misunderstanding of his/her productivity, flexibility, and communicative skills. These prejudices are the source of underemployment and professional segregation of PWHIs, the denial of the right to better-paid jobs or leadership (Elkins, 2025).

The effects of the background noise and unstructured communication conditions are one of the most urgent problems of the workplace of people with hearing loss. People with hearing impairments may find it especially challenging when engaging in verbal communication within the group setting, during meetings or in other noisy workplaces. Clynes (2024) emphasizes that people with hearing impairments tend to find ambient noises as a major barrier to effective communication, which further excludes them in working settings that mainly involve oral communication.

These barriers do not only affect the workplace. PWHIs who can't find work have lower self-esteem, don't fit in with others as well, and rely more on family or state support systems. Not having enough meaningful work opportunities makes social inequalities worse and goes against the larger goals of disability inclusion and empowerment. Employment is not only a socio-economic necessity, as Arif et al. (2024) emphasise, but also a significant means of identity formation and social recognition. Consequently, it is evident that the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals with hearing impairments can be significantly compromised due to their exclusion from the labour market.

As well, an increasingly strong corpus of research work exists that argues against many of the myths currently held about the high costs and complicatedness of employing people with impaired hearing in the workforce. Abbas et al. (2019) believe that the productivity of hearing-impaired employees can be equal or even higher than the productivity of hearing colleagues, provided that such works are made more approachable, i.e. by attaching the visual alarms, using captioned telephones, or making the communication protocols more flexible.

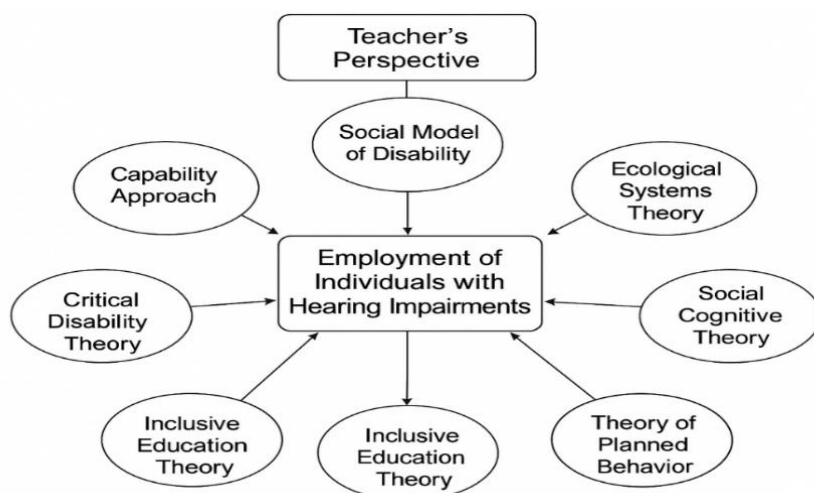
However, the change has been gradual and most institutions are not ready or willing to adopt inclusive practices. Although a legislative framework to safeguard the rights of PWDs is in place in most countries, it is not always enforced in a gentle yet thorough manner. The result of this inefficiency is that until today,

with the fields in which hearing-impaired people have the potential to effectively utilize their skills, they have to deal with high unemployment rates and employment instability.

It is in this context that a comprehensive set of policies addressing these issues, and with a focus on policy change, employer training, inclusive education and development of a robust career support system should be pursued. In this sense, the educational system has the responsibility not only to train students with hearing disabilities in academic skills, but also to train students vocationally according to market needs. Its faculty and staff should receive special training on the special needs of deaf students in order to help them establish an atmosphere of inclusion to prepare them for professional life.

In conclusion: the literature has described how, while employment constitutes a critical aspect of self-expression and social connectedness, individuals with hearing loss are often not afforded this potential because of attitudinal, communicative and systemic obstacles. There is, however, an accumulating body of case-based evidence to justify going further; the need is now to incorporate policies, employer consciousness and challenges surrounding education that shifts attention towards accessibility and equity. Under such a concerted effort only could we so expand our sphere of influence as to be in a position to give those with defective and impaired hearing the opportunities which they would require to enable them to make good their ground both socially and vocationally.

Theoretical Framework



Theoretical framework or conceptual framework is the core concept(s) that organizes and guides the research through linking new knowledge to existing knowledge. It is the link between the data and the concept along with the link between the concept and the theory. For the context of the current study that is the employment of people with hearing impairment from the perspective of teachers, a solid base is required. A number of well-established theories have been incorporated into this part: the Social Model of Disability, the Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner, the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura, the Capability Approach, the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Critical Disability Theory, and the Inclusive Education Theory. Collectively, these theories provide a broad spectrum through which the compounding factors that influence the employability of individuals with hearing-impairment in both educational and workforce settings can be comprehended.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The avenue of research employed in this study was quantitative research design and descriptive approach to help in the collection and analysis of numerical data in a systematic manner. Patterns and trends could be found about how teachers perceived the employment difficulties of people with hearing-impairment through this design.

Research Population

The target group comprised of 419 teachers that were employed in government special education institutions in Punjab, Pakistan. These educators interact with hearing-impaired children directly and they know about the difficulties these people can face in employment.

Sampling Technique

Participants were selected by a multistage random sampling procedure. First, Punjab (Lahore, Gujranwala, Sargodha) was randomly selected and four districts (Lahore, Kasur, Sialkot, Sargodha) were selected. The educational institutions in these districts would then be randomly picked and lastly, randomly invited were teachers in the selected institutions.

Sample

The sample size consisted of 115 teachers who were a proportion of 27 percent of the target group. The teachers were sampled proportionately in the districts according to the following: Lahore (66), Kasur (14), Sialkot (8), and Sargodha (27). This was an adequate sample size that gave good statistics to work with.

Research Tool

The self-constructed structured questionnaire was used to gather data by the 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic questions and 40 questions in eight sub-variables: general attitudes, perceived reasons behind unemployment, workplace problems, vocational training, educational readiness, technological assistance, social/emotional issues, policy/advocacy.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was also achieved by having the questionnaire reviewed by two specialists in the field of special education who will evaluate the questionnaire as being clear and relevant. Internal consistency was tested through a pilot study of 30 teachers and the Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.895 which is a good alpha.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to the sampled teachers both in the field and through the internet after receiving an approval to do so by the school management. The participants were informed about the study and assured anonymity and consent was given. Reviewing of completed questionnaires was done to check its completeness prior to analysis.

Data Analysis

The SPSS software was used in the analysis of data. Demographic characteristics and patterns of responses were described using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations). Differences between teacher groups were tested using inferential statistics (independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA). Consistency of the instrument was checked by reliability measures.

Through these analyses, there was a full understanding of the views of teachers on the employment barriers of individuals with hearing impairment.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the Demographic Analysis

Category	Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender			
	Male	40	34.8
	Female	75	65.2
Age			
	21-30 years	71	61.7
	31-40 years	29	25.2
	41-50 years	12	10.4
	51-60 years	3	2.6
Educational Qualification			
	BA/BSC	29	25.2
	MA/MSC	42	36.5
	MPHIL/PHD	44	48.3
Professional Qualification			
	SLT	45	39.1
	PGD	21	18.3
	Others	49	42.6
Teaching Experience			
	1-5 Years	70	60.9
	6-10 Years	30	26.1
	11-15 Years	13	11.3
	16-20 Years	2	1.7
Experience with HI			
	1-5 Years	76	66.1
	6-10 Years	24	20.9
	11-15 Years	13	11.3
	16-20 Years	2	1.7

Descriptive Statistics

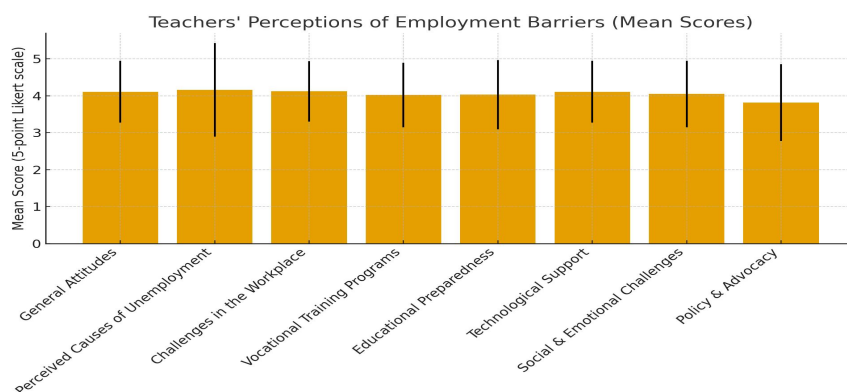
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Perceptions about Employment Barriers of Hearing-Impaired Individuals

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation
General Attitudes	4.11	0.84
Perceived Causes of Unemployment	4.16	1.27
Challenges in the Workplace	4.12	0.82
Vocational Training Programs	4.02	0.87
Educational Preparedness	4.03	0.94
Technological Support	4.11	0.84
Social & Emotional Challenges	4.05	0.9
Policy & Advocacy	3.82	1.04

The table shows that teachers generally hold positive perceptions toward the employment of individuals with hearing impairment. Most constructs scored above the mean value of 4 on the 5-point Likert scale,

reflecting agreement. The highest means were reported for perceived causes of unemployment ($M = 4.16$) and challenges in the workplace ($M = 4.12$), highlighting communication barriers, lack of awareness, and inadequate workplace support as critical concerns. Technological support ($M = 4.11$) and general attitudes ($M = 4.11$) were also strong, indicating teachers' recognition of the importance of assistive tools and positive societal perspectives. By contrast, policy and advocacy scored the lowest ($M = 3.82$), suggesting gaps in government action, funding, and policy awareness. Overall, results emphasize systemic barriers rather than personal limitations of hearing-impaired individuals.

Graphical Representation of the Main Constructs



The bar chart provides a clear visual comparison of mean scores across constructs. It shows that perceived causes of unemployment and workplace challenges stand out as the most critical barriers, while policy and advocacy lags behind, signaling weak institutional and governmental support. The fairly balanced scores across other constructs (vocational training, educational preparedness, technological support, and social/emotional challenges) indicate that multiple factors collectively hinder employment opportunities, requiring a multi-dimensional intervention strategy.

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Table 3: Independent t-Test Comparing Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions

Factors	Gender	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
General Attitude towards Individuals with Hearing-Impairment	Male	20.13	2.57	-1.18	113	0.239	0.24
	Female	20.75	2.74				
Perceived Causes of Unemployment	Male	21.10	7.37	0.52	113	0.603	0.09
	Female	20.60	2.82				
Challenges in the workplace	Male	20.40	2.90	-0.52	113	0.604	0.10
	Female	20.69	2.87				
Role of Vocational Training Program	Male	19.44	3.58	-1.95	111	0.053	0.37
	Female	20.53	2.32				
Educational Preparedness	Male	20.00	3.39	-0.36	113	0.715	0.07
	Female	20.23	3.03				
Technological Support	Male	20.03	3.17	-0.51	113	0.608	0.10

	Female	20.31	2.58				
Social and Emotional Challenges	Male	20.05	3.30	-0.47	112	0.638	0.09
	Female	20.32	2.77				
Policy and Advocacy	Male	18.42	4.37	-1.34	111	0.182	0.27
	Female	19.48	3.75				

This table studied the existence of gender-based differences in teachers' perceptions of workplace challenges concerning hearing-impaired individuals. The results show that there were no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in any of the areas studied: general attitudes, work challenges, vocational training, educational preparedness, and technological support. Though most areas of the domain were rated slightly higher by female teachers, the differences could not be gleaned to be large enough to be meaningful. This may suggest that male and female teachers hold similar views about the employment barriers facing hearing-impaired individuals.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA to Compare Teachers' Perceptions across Demographic Variables

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)	Effect Size (η^2)
Teacher Perception for Age Groups	Between Groups	7.243	3	2.414	5.620	0.001**	0.13
	Within Groups	47.607	111	0.429			
Teacher Perception for Educational Qualification	Between Groups	11.094	3	3.698	6.847	0.000**	0.16
	Within Groups	59.950	111	0.540			
Teacher Perception for Professional Qualification	Between Groups	2.070	3	0.690	0.835	0.478	0.02
	Within Groups	91.791	111	0.827			
Teacher Perception for Experience with Hearing-Impaired Students	Between Groups	45.834	3	15.278	81.157	0.000**	0.69
	Within Groups	20.896	111	0.188			
Teacher Perception for Years of Teaching Experience	Between Groups	35.519	3	11.840	42.320	0.000**	0.53
	Within Groups	31.055	111	0.280			

The table assesses differences in teachers' perceptions with respect to age, educational qualification, professional qualification, teaching experience, and experience with hearing-impaired students. The results showed an age difference ($p = 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.13$), educational qualification difference ($p = 0.000$, η^2

= 0.16), hearing-impaired experience difference ($p = 0.000$, $\eta^2 = 0.69$), and teaching experience difference ($p = 0.000$, $\eta^2 = 0.53$), thus indicating that these variables exert strong influence on teachers' views. However, there was no significant difference in respect to professional qualification ($p > 0.05$). This means that effective and supportive views are primarily shaped by classroom experience and the level of education attained, while professional training does not have any significant influence.

FINDINGS

Respondents agree on the barriers that the employment of people with hearing impairment confronts, especially the view that adequately facilitated the hearing-impaired person could carry out most of the jobs. Results from the descriptive statistical analysis (Table 2) indicated that the teachers were generally aware of the abilities of hearing-impaired individuals. However, the teachers were also quick to identify some very critical barriers: communication challenges, ill-informed employers, poor workplace policies, and limited availability of assistive technology. They also mentioned that vocational education was generally considered outdated and was not aligned with the demands of the job market and lacked emphasis on new technological skills. These career counseling programs, soft skills training, and teaching resources were all considered important barriers to education and career readiness. Social and emotional issues like isolation in the workplace and stress arising from peer misunderstanding were also mentioned as important concerns.

Independent sample t-test results as shown in Table 3 revealed that the gender differences in perception of teachers remained statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). The male and female teachers held similar viewpoints concerning attitudes, vocational training, workplace challenges, and technological support across all the domains. This infers that the perception of employment barriers is independent of gender.

One-way ANOVA for testing revealed significant differences in perception due to the age, academic qualifications, years of teaching experiences, and experiences with hearing-impaired students of teachers ($p < 0.05$). Among these factors, experience with hearing impaired students ($\eta^2 = 0.69$) and years of teaching experience ($\eta^2 = 0.53$) demonstrated the largest effect sizes, respectively, suggesting that direct professional experience and years of service appear to play a predominant role in the formulation of teachers' attitudes towards the problems of the hearing impaired. In the study above, they showed that professional certification did not have a significant effect ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that formal teacher certification is not sufficient to shift teachers' perspectives without hands-on experience.

In summary, these results indicate that even though teachers possess favorable attitudes regarding hearing-impaired individuals being successfully employed, some of the barriers were entrenched at system levels, including vocational training, workplace recommendations, and technical assistance.

DISCUSSIONS

This paper has addressed the multitude of reasons why people who are hard of hearing have difficulty securing and keeping jobs, as well as needs for job training and job-related accommodations, access to technology, access to a support system that is accessible, and attitude sociology. It has also examined the perceptions of the teachers and employers regarding these challenges and opportunities in Pakistani workforce. The results are in line with previous research and contribute to the constructing of a broader frame of the inter-connection of these variables and their consequence for employment among people with hearing-impairment.

The role and encounter with discrimination in work and the stigma associated with the deaf were of high importance. Those experts who have studied this issue in the past have emphasized that employers are reluctant to hire workers with hearing disabilities because of misconceptions about productivity and accommodations costs (Abbas et al., 2019; Leach, 2025).

This study supports the communication difficulties, the lack of access to the tools and the inadequacy of the workplace adjustments as the main job problems related to work of hearing-impaired employees. It's consistent with the fact that 30.7% of the employees with hearing disabilities were unable to obtain the necessary adjustments – a clear indication of systemic lapses (Noor et al., 2020). It is in line with the finding of the present study that the lack of sufficient access to assistive technologies, such as sign language interpreters and captioning services, remained a significant challenge (Kigotho, 2016). Without these supports, performance at work can decline, as can social isolation and possible discrimination as mediated by the manager (Leach, 2025; Abbas et al., 2019).

The importance of vocational training for elevating employment opportunities has also been focussed. Well-designed vocational programs that are in line with the market needs are critical in providing the individuals with hearing-impairment the essential skills to work (Zafar & Fazil, 2023). This study, however, evaluated that despite the desirable skills imparted in vocational programs, gaps are still present in curriculum development especially with regard to technology development. Environmental, institutional, and financial barriers have been cited as similar obstacles to providing access to training programs to specially-abled students. Unless there is a proper matching of vocational training with industry, people with hearing-impairment will continue to be disadvantaged in the labor market (Zafar & Fazil, 2023).

Another important area that was identified in the current and the previous studies was technological accessibility. One of the most important tools in the breaking of socialization and communication barriers by people with hearing-impairment is technology (Mealings et al., 2025). These results are supported in the current study with the results indicating that assistive technologies like hearing aids, communication applications and special workplace equipment are imperative in supporting people with hearing-impairment in educational and professional settings. Irrespective of these advantages, most workplaces and learning institutions continue to lack the ability to offer sufficient access to these resources, a factor that contributes to disparities (Noor et al., 2020; Kigotho, 2016). It has been common to emphasize the necessity of greater investment in the assistive technologies and educator and employer training to successfully implement the newest technologies (Mealings et al., 2025; Noor et al., 2020).

The issue of social and cultural stigma also came out as a major obstacle. There has been recognition of the prejudice of society that adds to the problems facing people with disabilities. This observation is corroborated in our study where it was observed that in hearing-impaired individuals, who often feel socially estranged, especially in their professional environment, it is possible that one feels threatened to be judged or misunderstood. It's a lack of communication that causes them to retreat from social life and consequently to have lower self-esteem and career options. In addition, stigma in the workplace generally leads to employees concealing their disability to avoid discrimination (Molahloe, 2020). These findings are postal service of value employer education and resolve against the stereotypes that just only promote diversity awareness (Molahloe, 2020).

One of the structural challenges that have been revealed in this research is poor execution of law structures and policies that are meant to accommodate disabled employees. In Pakistan, the Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance of 1981 obliges employers to hire individuals with disabilities at a 2% quota; nevertheless, the adherence rate is low because of the weak enforcement and awareness of any employers (Abbas et al., 2019). This research proves that despite the existence of legal provisions, employers are not cooperative since there is no awareness of disability rights. Strengthening the policy and providing employers with training related to the law and inclusive practice are two potential strategies for addressing these gaps (Abbas et al., 2019; Leach, 2025).

In addition, the paper underscores the role teachers and trainers could play in preparing hearing-impaired individuals to enter the workplace. Deaf and hard of hearing teachers are key to reducing such inequalities

in education and preparing individuals for their roles outside the school setting with life opportunities (Molahloe, 2023). As career guidance providers, teachers have roles as inclusive practitioners (Molahloe, 2023). However, this research shows that, the majority of the educators lack specialized education and materials, therefore they are not able to contribute to hearing-impaired learners in any of the ways (Molahloe, 2020). These professional development gaps are needed in improving the challenges of educational outcomes and work ICF Core Patterns of Univerdtyic preparedness (Molahloe, 2020).

In sum, the findings of this study add to the body of literature by representing an intricate perspective on a range of interconnected impediments people with hearing loss experience from the Pakistani job market. While vocational training, technical access, and social support are widely accepted concepts in other settings, the implementation of such an approach is likely to be challenging, as the present research acknowledges (Mealings et al., 2025; Zafar & Fazil, 2023; Noor et al., 2020). Although some progress has been made in this regard, there is a long way to go in aligning the training programmes with the market needs, increasing the access to assistive technology, and promoting a culture of inclusion in the workplace (Ayub, 2022).

It is crucial that vocational institutions, employers, policy-makers and teachers collaborate to address such challenges in subsequent years. At the same time, suggestions have been made for better alignment between vocational curricula and industry, greater investment in assistive technology, tougher enforcement of legislation around disability employment and the introduction of successful disability awareness training to employers (Abbas et al., 2019; Mealings et al., 2025). By the aid of these sections, Pakistan can create a more inclusive labor market known in which there is a fair opportunity for the hearing-impaired people to achieve and personalize.

CONCLUSION

This research paper identifies the great barriers that hearing-impaired people experience when seeking employment. Employer unpreparedness, discrimination in the workplace, lack of communication, and misperceptions about the capabilities of the hearing-impaired are the barriers, which restrict job opportunities despite the overall positive attitude of the teachers. Despite their necessity, vocational education programs lack both funds and orientation to industry requirements, making them unable to successfully enter the workforce. Inclusion depends on technological support that is inadequate and not well provided in most workplaces and educational institutions adding to the barriers of communication.

Social and emotional challenges also create barriers to hearing-impaired professionals, as there was little support at the workplace and policies to accommodate them. To enhance well-being and onboarding, teachers stressed peer support systems and extensive training in the workplace. The research study also reported ignorance among teachers about the policies in favour of hearing impaired employment citing poor policy advocacy and policy dissemination. To alleviate these concerns, then businesses, schools, and government must work together in an attempt to enhance disability integration, vocational education, technological access, and support of individuals within the workplace to bridge the employment gap between the hearing impaired.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institute organizational training initiatives to help sensitize the awareness of hearing impairment and foster enabling working conditions with the required accommodations such as sign language translators and assistive technology.
2. Restructure education and vocational programs to meet the present labor market requirements and incorporate computer technologies and teacher training on the special needs of hearing-impaired students.

3. Increase career counseling and mentoring initiatives to increase job placement and career development among hearing-impaired persons.
4. Invest more in vocational training and implement non-discriminatory employment practices, which can be monitored, and create awareness programs in the society to ensure acceptance and inclusion.

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