



## WORKPLACE CHALLENGES AND INCLUSION OF GRADUATE EMPLOYEES WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Despite increasing efforts to promote workplace inclusivity, employees with hearing impairment continue to face barriers that limit their participation and professional growth. This study investigated the workplace challenges and inclusion of graduate employees with hearing impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted, and purposive sampling was used to select five workplaces with employees who had hearing loss. A total of 33 respondents participated, reflecting the limited size of this specialised subgroup within the workforce. Data were collected using the Workplace Experience of Employees with Hearing Impairment Questionnaire (WEEHIQ) and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that employees with hearing impairment encounter significant socio-emotional difficulties due to communication barriers ( $X = 2.56$ ), frequent workplace violence, such as derogatory remarks and discrimination ( $X = 2.71$ ), and incentive deprivation, including unequal access to benefits and promotions ( $X = 2.66$ ). These challenges were also found to affect their productivity and overall work performance ( $X = 2.74$ ). The study concludes that systemic obstacles persist in workplaces, hindering inclusivity and equal opportunities for employees with hearing impairment. It recommends that governments and employers adopt disability-inclusive policies, provide assistive resources, and enforce workplace regulations to reduce discrimination and support equal participation.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, hearing impairment, graduate employee, workplace challenges.

### INTRODUCTION

The sense of hearing is critical for communicating, engaging within an environment, independence and performing activities of daily living (Shaw, 2021). The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 5% of the world's population experiences disabling hearing loss, which underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the challenges faced by this group (WHO, 2021). Persons with hearing impairment have long struggled to secure and retain competitive employment globally. Hearing impairment has historically been equated with the inability to work or live independently, and persons with hearing impairment were viewed as objects of pity (Ubani et al., 2022). Even with a job, persons with hearing impairment are often underemployed and work in industry or services; they rarely work as managers or professionals (Domagała-Zyśk, 2014). Fresh graduates often encounter a series of obstacles that span various aspects of their work. These challenges include but are not limited to adapting to a new work environment, developing relevant skills, establishing a professional network, and effectively managing work-life balance. Navigating these challenges successfully is pivotal for ensuring a smooth and fulfilling transition into the workforce. Research has shown that persons with hearing impairment generally experience more



unemployment, are often underemployed and have lower incomes than the hearing population (The Papworth Trust, 2018)

Jang et al. (2014) noted that individuals with hearing impairment are often faced with limited opportunities to access the job market and are typically rendered unemployed or accommodated into temporary, low-income jobs. Jansson et al. (2015) suggested that low levels of employment amongst individuals with disability are largely due to unfamiliarity and lack of experience amongst employers. Osborn (2019) reported that approximately 1 out of 15 individuals experience difficulty hearing, and further reported that between 2017-2018, persons with disability were grossly under-represented in the workforce. As per this report, only 1.3% of the working disabled population were employed in top management level positions, and 1.3% were employed at a professionally qualified level. According to a study by Saad, et al., (2023), employers commented that persons with disabilities are unable to work in teams and are unable to produce quality work as compared to people without disabilities.

## Theoretical Framework of the Study

### Social model of disability

The social model of disability was developed over 50 years ago by people with disability. the model holds that although have impairments, the oppression, exclusion and discrimination people with impairments face is not an unavoidable consequence of having an impairment, but is as a result of the way society is run and organised. Carson (2009) posited that people with impairments are disabled by the fact that they are excluded from participation within the mainstream of society as a result of physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers. These barriers prevent them from gaining equal access to information, education, employment, public transport, housing and social/recreational opportunities. The definition of the social model of disability was first proposed by the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation in 1976 and is defined as follows:

**Impairment:** lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body.

**Disability:** the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities.

Although the phrase “social model of disability” was coined in 1983 by Mike Oliver, an academic and activist with disability, the idea behind the concept can be traced back to the Independent Living (IL) movement in the 1960s. As a concept, it found expression in the 1970s in the United Kingdom (UK), at a conference where disability was described as: “the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities. Disability is a particular form of social oppression”.

Importantly, the social – or human rights – model of disability is embedded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and is described in ‘Preamble, e’, which says that:

“Recognising that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

The Social Model posits that the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, as well as the discrimination they encounter, primarily stem from societal constructs rather than the disabilities themselves (Shakespeare, 2013). For instance, this perspective asserts that an individual with communication disabilities is marginalised due to society's limited capacity to accept and utilise alternative means of communication. Consequently, disability is seen as an outcome of restricted interactions between disabled individuals and the broader population, compounded by society's failure



to accommodate those with impairments. Consequently, the remedy for disability lies in reshaping society (Chitereka, 2010). The Social Model has proven effective in driving change within the disability sector, facilitating the inclusion of disabled individuals into society and the open job market (Watermeyer, 2013). However, as it became the emblem of the disability revolution, the Social Model oversimplified impairment as something that could be rectified merely by creating an inclusive society (Watermeyer, 2013), overlooking the impact of impairment on daily life. Despite its shortcomings, research indicates that this perspective has had a positive influence on employment opportunities for people with disabilities (Goss, et al., 2000).

## METHOD

### Research design

The research was conducted using a survey research design. The survey research design is the collection of quantifiable data from a population for description on identification verifications that may point to causal relationships. This research design was adopted because it involved the collection of information, then assessing and generalising the information gathered from a fraction of the research population.

### Sample and sampling technique

The study employed purposive sampling techniques to select five workplaces in Oyo State, Nigeria. These workplaces were purposively chosen based on the presence of employees with hearing impairment, as they represent the specific population of interest for the study. Within the selected workplaces, the study adopted a total enumeration sampling technique, involving the inclusion of all available and willing employees with hearing loss. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage of the target group within each organisation. A total of 33 respondents participated in the study. Although the number of respondents is relatively small, this is justified by the fact that individuals with hearing impairment constitute a naturally limited and specialised subgroup within the general workforce. Given the hard-to-reach nature of this population, total enumeration was the most appropriate method to ensure inclusiveness, maximise data reliability, and capture the diverse experiences of the entire accessible population.

### Research instrument

The research adopted the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The instrument is titled: Workplace Experience of Employees with Hearing Impairment Questionnaire (WEEHIQ). The questionnaire was divided into five (5) sections (Section A-E). Section A consist of information on demographics of the respondents, section B consists of questions on the socio-emotional challenges facing employees with hearing impairment in their workplace, section C consist of questions on the type of violence faced by employees with hearing impairment in their workplace, section D consists of questions on the kind of incentive deprivation that employees with hearing impairment face in their workplace, and section E consist of questions on how the challenges encountered by persons with hearing impairment in their workplace affects their productivity. A four-point Likert scale will be used to obtain the response from the respondents in sections B, C, D and E. The scale is measured as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

### Validity and reliability of the instrument

The research instrument was validated by two experts in the field of special education. Their inputs and corrections were applied to meet the criteria of content validity. The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using internal consistency reliability. The items were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the resulting value indicated high internal consistency, confirming that the questionnaire is reliable for measuring workplace challenges faced by employees with hearing impairment.



## Method of data analysis

Quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and simple percentages, to provide answers to the research questions.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study is outlined below

**Research question 1:** What are some socio-emotional challenges encountered by employees with hearing impairment in workplaces due to their communication disability?

**Table 1.** Showing frequency distribution of the socio-emotional challenges.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.Dev.
1	I feel well understood and supported by my coworkers and superiors in my workplace regarding my hearing impairment.	7 21.2%	9 27.3%	4 12.1%	13 39.4%	2.30	1.212
2	My workplace provides a conducive environment that helps me perform my duties effectively.	9 27.3%	9 27.3%	6 18.2%	9 27.3%	2.55	1.175
3	I am often excluded from social activities in my workplace.	8 24.2%	12 36.4%	5 15.2%	8 24.2%	2.61	1.116
4	I am comfortable disclosing my hearing impairment to my colleagues and superiors in the workplace	2 6.1%	18 54.5%	4 12.1%	9 27.3%	2.39	.966
5	The communication barriers caused by my hearing impairment have led to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of my ideas or instructions at work.	12 36.4%	10 30.3%	3 9.1%	8 24.2%	2.79	1.193
6	I feel that I am treated fairly in terms of workload, responsibilities, and promotions, despite my hearing impairment	7 21.2%	9 27.3%	8 24.2%	9 27.3%	2.42	1.119
7	I have access to resources for coping with stress or emotional difficulties related to my hearing impairment in the workplace	9 27.3%	18 54.5%	2 6.1%	4 12.1%	2.97	.918
8	I believe that my career advancement opportunities are limited due to my hearing impairment.	11 33.3%	18 57.6%	1 3.0%	2 6.1%	3.18	.769
9	I feel that my mental and emotional well-being is negatively impacted by the socio-emotional challenges related to my hearing impairment at work.	2 6.1%	10 30.3%	1 3.0%	20 60.6%	1.82	1.074
10	My hearing impairment leads to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of instructions, affecting my ability to complete tasks efficiently	6 18.2%	13 39.4%	7 21.2%	7 21.2%	2.55	1.034

Weighted mean = 2.56

Threshold 2.50

Keys: SA (4) – Strongly Agree, A (3) – Agree, SD (2) – Strongly Disagree, D (1) – Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - Mean, Std- Standard deviation

Table 1 showed the frequency distribution of the socio-emotional challenges encountered by employees with hearing impairment in workplaces due to their communication disability. The data was analysed using the descriptive statistics that showed a weighted mean of 2.56, indicating a moderate agreement with the challenges faced. The highest mean score (3.18) highlights limited career advancement due to hearing impairment. Communication barriers scored 2.79, while access to stress coping resources scored 2.97, suggesting uneven support availability. Social exclusion had a mean of 2.61. Lower scores were noted for feeling understood by coworkers (2.30) and comfort in disclosing impairment (2.39), pointing to a lack of psychological safety. The lowest score (1.82)



related to mental and emotional well-being suggests either low perceived impact or reluctance to report. This affirms that employees with hearing impairment face socio-emotional challenges in career growth, communication, inclusion, and support.

**Research question 2:** What sorts of violence do employees with hearing impairment encounter in the workplace?

**Table 2.** Showing frequency distribution of the sorts of violence.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.Dev.
1	I do experience derogatory comments, insults, or offensive language related to my hearing impairment at work	9 27.3%	24 72.7%	-	-	3.27	.452
2	I sometimes feel some of my coworkers abuse my privacy in my workplace	11 33.3%	13 39.4%	4 12.1%	5 15.2%	2.91	1.042
3	I do experience physical aggression or harm in the workplace	4 12.1%	13 39.4%	7 21.2%	9 27.3%	2.36	1.025
4	I have encountered unfair treatment, discrimination, or bias in employment decisions (e.g., hiring, promotions) because of my hearing impairment	10 30.3%	6 18.2%	9 27.3%	8 24.2%	2.55	1.175
5	I do experience subtle, unintentional acts or comments that are insensitive or discriminatory based on my hearing impairment	14 42.4%	7 21.2%	8 24.2%	4 12.1%	2.94	1.088
6	I do experience threats and intimidation from my colleagues in my workplace	7 21.2%	11 33.3%	10 30.3%	5 15.2%	2.61	.998
7	I am often the target of offensive jokes or pranks related to my hearing impairment in the workplace	4 12.1%	15 45.5%	10 30.3%	4 12.1%	2.58	.867
8	I get into arguments with my colleagues and supervisors due to misunderstandings arising from communication difficulties in the workplace	6 18.2%	13 39.4%	8 24.2%	6 18.2%	2.58	1.001
9	I do experience retaliation or negative consequences for reporting incidents of violence or discrimination in my workplace	7 21.2%	13 39.4%	9 27.3%	4 12.1%	2.70	.951
10	I do receive verbal threats or aggressive language from my colleagues and superiors	7 21.2%	10 30.3%	10 30.3%	6 18.2%	2.55	1.034

Weighted mean = 2.71

Threshold 2.50

Keys: SA (4) – Strongly Agree, A (3) – Agree, SD (2) – Strongly Disagree, D (1) – Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - Mean, Std- Standard deviation

Table 2 showed the frequency distribution of the sorts of violence that employees with hearing impairment encounter in the workplace. The data was analysed using the descriptive statistics that showed a weighted mean of 2.71, indicating a moderate exposure to workplace violence among employees with hearing impairment. The highest mean score (3.27) revealed that derogatory comments and offensive language were the most prevalent. High mean scores were also recorded for subtle discrimination (2.94) and invasion of privacy (2.91), indicating covert discrimination. Retaliation for reporting incidents (2.70) and threats or intimidation (2.61) suggested institutional or peer pressure. Moderate scores for offensive jokes/pranks (2.58) and arguments from communication barriers (2.58) showed that communication issues could escalate conflicts. Physical aggression had the lowest score (2.36), showing it is rare compared to verbal, emotional, and systemic violence. Overall, the data showed regular exposure to verbal abuse, subtle discrimination, limited psychological safety, and insufficient institutional protection.

**Research Question 3:** What sorts of incentive deprivation do employees with hearing impairment encounter in the workplace?




**Table 3.** Showing frequency distribution of the sorts of incentive deprivation.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.Dev.
1	I receive the same financial incentives and bonuses as my colleagues without a hearing impairment for the same level of performance.	8 24.2%	8 24.2%	6 18.2%	11 33.3%	2.39	1.197
2	My workplace provides fair opportunities for career advancement and promotions, regardless of my hearing impairment.	9 27.3%	8 24.2%	10 30.3%	6 18.2%	2.61	1.088
3	I believe that I enjoy equal access to professional development and training opportunities, even though I have a hearing impairment.	9 27.3%	11 33.3%	6 18.2%	7 21.2%	2.67	1.109
4	I believe that my hearing impairment influences my chances of receiving special recognitions, awards, or bonuses.	3 9.1%	17 51.5%	8 24.2%	5 15.2%	2.55	.869
5	I have had to make personal financial sacrifices due to a lack of equal access to workplace incentives or benefits related to my hearing impairment.	13 39.4%	9 27.3%	6 18.2%	5 15.2%	2.91	1.100
6	My workplace actively addresses and mitigates any disparities in incentives and benefits for employees with hearing impairment.	10 30.3	10 30.3%	8 24.2%	5 15.2%	2.76	1.062
7	My colleagues and superiors show understanding and support when it comes to my participation in incentive programs, given my hearing impairment.	13 39.4%	17 51.5%	1 3.0%	2 6.1%	3.24	.792
8	I feel that my performance evaluations and feedback are influenced by my hearing impairment, affecting my eligibility for incentives.	16 48.5%	15 45.5%	1 3.0%	1 3.0%	3.39	.704
9	My workplace actively promotes diversity and inclusion, ensuring that employees with hearing impairment have equal access to all incentive programs and benefits.	5 15.2%	10 30.3%	1 3.0%	17 51.5%	2.09	1.208
10	I am confident that my workplace values my skills and contributions, and this is reflected in my productivity and job satisfaction.	2 6.1%	11 33.3%	6 18.2%	14 42.4%	2.03	1.015

Weighted mean: 2.66

Threshold: 2.50

Keys: SA (4) – Strongly Agree, A (3) – Agree, SD (2) – Strongly Disagree, D (1) – Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - Mean, Std- Standard deviation

Table 3 showed a frequency distribution of the sorts of incentive deprivation that employees with hearing impairment encounter in the workplace. The data was analyzed using the descriptive statistics that showed a weighted mean of 2.66, indicating a moderate level of agreement that incentive deprivation is experienced by employees with hearing impairment. The highest mean score (3.39) showed that performance evaluations and feedback are influenced by hearing impairment. This is followed by support from colleagues and superiors in incentive programs (Mean = 3.24) and personal financial sacrifices due to lack of access to incentives (Mean = 2.91). Other notable scores include workplace mitigation of disparities (Mean = 2.76), access to professional development (Mean = 2.67), career advancement opportunities (Mean = 2.61), and influence on recognitions (Mean = 2.55). The lowest mean scores were observed in financial incentive equality (Mean = 2.39), promotion of diversity and inclusion (Mean = 2.09), and confidence in workplace value of skills and contributions (Mean = 2.03). This indicates that despite some support, employees with hearing impairment still face incentive deprivation.

**Research question 4:** How do challenges encountered by employees with hearing impairment in the workplace affect their productivity?


**Table 4.** Showing the frequency distribution of the challenges encountered.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.Dev.
1	The lack of sufficient support and understanding from my colleagues negatively affects my productivity	8 24.2%	10 30.3%	5 15.2%	10 30.3%	2.48	1.176
2	My bosses don't usually delegate assignments to me.	9 27.3%	11 33.3%	8 24.2%	5 15.2%	2.73	1.039
3	The lack of sufficient support from the management in addressing challenges faced by employees with hearing impairment affects their overall productivity.	6 18.2%	11 33.3%	8 24.2%	5 15.2%	2.45	1.063
4	I do not receive the same salary structure as my hearing colleagues due to my hearing impairment	4 12.1%	16 48.5%	8 24.2%	5 15.2%	2.58	.902
5	My salary is lower than that of my coworkers.	13 39.4%	11 33.3%	5 15.2%	4 12.1%	3.00	1.031
6	The workplace challenges related to my hearing impairment harm my overall job performance and productivity.	11 33.3%	13 39.4%	6 18.2%	3 9.1%	2.97	.951
7	I find it difficult to participate actively in meetings, discussions and group activities	12 36.4%	18 54.5%	1 3.0%	2 6.1%	3.21	.781
8	I feel that my hearing impairment is considered when setting performance goals and expectations in my workplace.	19 57.6%	13 39.4%	1 3.0%	-	3.55	.564
9	I often find it difficult to communicate effectively with colleagues and superiors due to my hearing impairment, which hinders my work productivity	6 18.2%	11 33.3%	1 3.0%	15 45.5%	2.24	1.226
10	I often find my workload very stressful	3 9.1%	11 33.3%	7 21.2%	12 36.4%	2.15	1.034

Weighted mean = 2.74

Threshold: 2.50

Keys: SA (4) – Strongly Agree, A (3) – Agree, SD (2) – Strongly Disagree, D (1) – Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - Mean, Std- Standard deviation.

Table 4 showed the frequency distribution of challenges encountered by employees with hearing impairment and their impact on productivity. The overall weighted mean was 2.74, which is above the threshold of 2.50, the overall weighted mean was 2.74 which indicated a moderate agreement that challenges faced by employees with hearing impairment affect their productivity. The highest mean score (3.55) showed that hearing impairment is considered when setting performance goals. This was followed by difficulty in participating in group activities (Mean = 3.21) and the impact of workplace challenges on job performance (Mean = 2.97). Other high scores included lower salary than coworkers (Mean = 3.00), lack of task delegation (Mean = 2.73), and unequal salary structure (Mean = 2.58). Lower scores were recorded for insufficient colleague support (Mean = 2.48), insufficient management support (Mean = 2.45), communication difficulties (Mean = 2.24), and work-related stress (Mean = 2.15). The findings showed that despite some accommodations, challenges still affect productivity.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATION

Research question one examined some socio-emotional challenges experienced by employees with hearing impairment in workplaces due to their communication disability. The findings reveal that the weighted mean surpasses the standard mean, indicating that such socio-emotional challenges are high for employees with hearing impairment in workplaces due to their communication disability. This aligns with the study of Shan, et al. (2020), which showed that individuals with hearing impairment were more likely to be unemployed than those without hearing impairment. Further, Dammyer, et al. (2019), Pierre, et al. (2012), as well as Svinndal, et al. (2018), discovered that while hearing



impairment is more prevalent among men, unemployment inequity is higher among women, highlighting a heightened need for employers to provide sick leaves, disability pensions, and sickness benefits.

Research question two on the sorts of violence encountered by employees with hearing impairment in the workplace, the findings demonstrate that the weighted mean exceeds the standard mean. This indicates that the rates of violence faced by employees with hearing impairment in the workplace are high, with all the identified factors being forms of violence encountered. Danermark, (2004) concluded that employees with hearing impairments form a vulnerable group within the workforce and face more demanding working conditions compared to colleagues with normal hearing. World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021) and Punch, (2016) attribute this vulnerability to a combination of barriers, including discrimination and lack of support for individuals with hearing impairment.

From research question three on the types of incentive deprivation experienced by employees with hearing impairment in the workplace, findings show that the weighted mean is greater than the standard mean. This signifies that incentive deprivation among such employees is high, and all the factors identified are forms of incentive deprivation encountered. These results agree with Peterson, (2005), who argued that physical disabilities often lead to limited or entirely restricted career development opportunities. Past workplace restrictions contribute to decreased social and vocational opportunities, and globally, people with disabilities routinely face neglect regarding their rights to training, employment, and career advancement. Gupta, et al. (2022) observed that challenges in employment among persons with hearing impairment extend beyond hearing loss alone. Studies have also noted wage disparities between hearing and hearing-impaired employees, workplace discrimination, lack of accessibility, and inadequate accommodation.

Research question four considered how challenges encountered by employees with hearing impairment in the workplace affect their productivity. Findings show that the weighted mean is higher than the standard mean, meaning the impact of these challenges on productivity is significant. This is consistent with Dammeyer et al. (2019), who identified negative consequences of hearing impairment on physical, mental, and psychological health and well-being. Uchida, et al. (2019) found that communication difficulties linked to hearing impairment have adverse effects on quality of life, such as social isolation, loneliness, depression, stress, and cognitive decline. Additionally, hearing impairment has been associated with lower educational attainment and decreased workplace participation among individuals with hearing impairment (Granberg, 2021).

This study examined the workplace challenges of graduate employees with hearing impairment in Oyo State. The findings revealed that such employees encounter considerable socio-emotional difficulties, including communication barriers, limited opportunities for career advancement, and experiences of social exclusion. They are also subjected to different forms of workplace violence, such as derogatory remarks, subtle discrimination, invasion of privacy, and unfair treatment in employment decisions. In addition, the study established that employees with hearing impairment are often deprived of incentives, ranging from unequal access to financial benefits to limited opportunities for training and promotion. These challenges were found to significantly affect their productivity, reducing their job satisfaction and overall contribution to organisational goals. The study, therefore, concludes that although efforts are being made to promote workplace inclusivity, employees with hearing impairment continue to face systemic obstacles that restrict their professional development and economic empowerment.

It is recommended that the government strengthen disability-inclusive labour policies and ensure their strict enforcement in organisations, while also conducting periodic audits to guarantee compliance with disability rights laws. Employers, on their part, should adopt inclusive workplace policies that eliminate discrimination, provide equal access to incentives, and address communication barriers through the provision of sign language interpreters, captioning services, and assistive technologies. There is also a need for regular training of employers, managers, and co-workers on disability





awareness and effective communication with employees who have hearing impairment, alongside the provision of mentorship and professional development opportunities for such employees.

Organisations should establish support services such as counselling and psychological assistance to help employees cope with socio-emotional challenges, while also instituting grievance redress mechanisms to protect them from workplace violence and unfair practices. Ensuring that employees with hearing impairment have equal access to financial incentives, promotions, and welfare benefits is crucial to improving their job satisfaction and productivity. By adopting these measures, both policymakers and organisations can create a more inclusive and supportive work environment where employees with hearing impairment are empowered to thrive and contribute meaningfully to national development.

### **Ethics and Conflict of Interest**

The authors of the study acted in accordance with ethical rules in all processes of the research. There are no individuals or financial relationships that could be perceived as potential conflicts of interest related to this study.

### **Author Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the research.

### **Data availability**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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