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The experiences of hearing young-adults growing up in deaf-parented families in Gauteng.

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Abstract

This study explores and describes the experiences of hearing children growing up in Deaf Parented families in Gauteng. The specific objectives of the study were to explore the delegation of different roles including South African Sign Language interpreting in the family; the influence of having Deaf parents in occupational choices of hearing adult-children of Deaf parents; the availability of support services to CODAs and their perceptions of their parents in terms of disability. A purposive sampling strategy in conjunction with snowball sampling was used to identify and recruit participants. Two males and eight females between the ages of 21 and 40 years, with different occupations were recruited for this study. A qualitative design, embedded within the constructivism and interpretivism framework was used in this study. Data were collected through semi structured; open ended and in-depth interview questions were used to obtain data for the study. A pilot study was conducted prior to commencing with the main study. Thematic content analysis was employed to describe themes qualitatively. The following themes emerged from the study. Participants reported to have developed a bicultural identity; however, they primarily identify themselves as CODAs regardless of their racial identity. Participants expressed frustrations with the interpreter role and female children reported to have interpreted for their parents more than their male counterparts. Seven participants are currently employed as SASL interpreters. The study highlights that there are mixed emotions regarding interactions with the extended family members. The study identifies a strong need for support services for Deaf parented families. Lastly; participants viewed Deafness as a cultural minority, and not a disability. Findings revealed a need for audiologists to clearly define their role in Deaf parented families, and to also adopt emic view of Deafness and family system perspective model.

Keywords: CODAs, Emic vs. Etic, Identity formation, SASL interpreting, disability, role of audiologist, Family systems perspective