

## Article

## Investigating the Underlying Factors Behind the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters in Cebu

Engeline Rose Ayuda

Sarah Jane Baguio

Nina Zane Delos Reyes

Lindley Saladaga

Ann Frances Cabigon

Raymond Espina

Corresponding Author: engelinebayuda@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This study explores the various factors influencing the shortage of sign language interpreters (SLIs) and the quality of interpreting services as perceived by both SLIs and the deaf community. Through a series of structured surveys captured in eleven tables, we examined the impact of educational and training deficiencies, professionalization and regulatory frameworks, working conditions, and support networks on the availability and efficacy of SLIs. The study also delved into the specific challenges faced by interpreters and the deaf community, including issues related to compensation, job security, professional recognition, and the quality of interpreting in various settings. Statistical analysis revealed that while there are perceived influences of these factors on the problems encountered in interpreting, the correlations are not statistically significant, suggesting the complexity of these issues and highlighting the need for further research. This comprehensive analysis underscores the urgent need for systemic improvements and targeted interventions to enhance the professional environment for SLIs and improve access to quality interpreting services for the deaf community.

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**Keywords:** Sign language Interpreting, shortage of interpreters, deaf community perspectives

### Introduction

Sign language interpreters serve a vital role in bridging the communication gap between the deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals and the hearing world. These professionals are essential for ensuring equitable access to public services, education, and healthcare, thereby upholding the rights and dignity of the deaf community (Smith, 2019). The presence of qualified interpreters helps facilitate the social inclusion of deaf individuals and supports their full participation in societal activities (Johnson & Gray, 2020). Moreover, interpreters



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contribute to the economic empowerment of the deaf by enabling their engagement in the workforce (Thompson, 2021).

Despite their crucial role, many regions, including Cebu, face a significant shortage of trained sign language interpreters. The disparity between the number of available interpreters and the demand within the deaf community is stark. Factors contributing to this shortage include insufficient training programs, low awareness of interpreting as a professional career, and inadequate compensation and professional support for interpreters (Lee, 2022). Additionally, the high turnover rate among professionals due to burnout and job dissatisfaction exacerbates this shortage, with many leaving the field for more stable and less stressful career paths (Olsen, 2022). Furthermore, cultural stigmas and misconceptions about the deaf community often deter skilled linguists from pursuing careers in sign language interpreting, thereby reducing the pool of potential interpreters (Patel & Jones, 2021). There is also a lack of governmental and institutional support in terms of funding and policy frameworks which are crucial for the development and sustainability of interpreter services (Kumar, 2022).

The scarcity of interpreters leads to numerous challenges for the deaf community. Primarily, it results in limited access to crucial services and information. Many deaf individuals in Cebu report difficulties in receiving adequate healthcare, legal assistance, and education due to the absence of interpreters. This shortage not only infringes on their rights but also isolates them from participating fully in community and cultural activities (Chen, 2021). The lack of interpreters in emergency medical situations can lead to misdiagnoses or delayed treatment, severely impacting health outcomes for the deaf (Taylor & Simmonds, 2021). In the legal realm, the absence of competent interpreting can compromise the fairness of judicial proceedings and the ability of deaf individuals to advocate for their rights (Wallace & Morgan, 2022). Educationally, children and adults alike face barriers in learning and personal development due to insufficient communication support, thus hindering their academic progress and future employment opportunities (Foster & Johnson, 2021).

Researchers have approached this issue through various methodologies. Quantitative studies often involve surveys and data analysis to determine the ratio of interpreters to deaf individuals and assess the impact of this imbalance on service accessibility (Anderson & Clark, 2019). Qualitative research, on the other hand, includes interviews and focus groups with stakeholders to explore personal experiences and systemic barriers within the interpreting industry (White, 2020). Comparative studies also look at regions with successful

interpreter programs to identify effective strategies that could be implemented elsewhere (Kumar & Singh, 2019).

Despite the growing body of global research, there remains a notable gap in localized studies, particularly in Mandaue City. There is a lack of comprehensive data on the specific needs of the deaf community and the current state of interpreter availability in this locale. Additionally, little is known about the training and retention challenges specific to the region, which are crucial for developing targeted interventions. This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a detailed analysis of the current state of sign language interpreting in Mandaue City. The research will focus on quantifying demand versus supply, identifying barriers to training and professional development for interpreters, and exploring the impact of these factors on the deaf community's access to services. Ultimately, the study seeks to propose actionable strategies aimed at enhancing interpreter availability and quality in Mandaue City.

## Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research methodology to investigate the factors influencing the shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by both the interpreters and the deaf community in Mandaue City. Conducted at the City Social Welfare and Development Office, the research involved 44 participants, comprising 14 Sign Language Interpreters and 30 members of the Mandaue City Association of the Deaf. Data were collected using tailored survey questionnaires, which were divided into three sections: Demographic Profile, Factors Influencing the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters, and Problems and Challenges Encountered in the Area of Interpreting. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, they were reviewed by the researcher's adviser and statisticians. Responses were quantitatively analyzed using scales that measured agreement with the presented factors and challenges, with ratings ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" to identify the extent of influence or agreement on each item. This approach allowed for a systematic quantification of perceived influences and challenges related to the shortage of interpreters.

## Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 highlights various educational and training gaps contributing to the shortage of sign language interpreters (SLIs). The weighted mean (WM) scores reveal that all listed factors are perceived to significantly impact this shortage, with verbal descriptions ranging from moderate to high. The most critical issue identified is the limited availability of educational programs offering courses in sign language interpreting, with a high WM of 3.86, indicating a significant

perceived impact. Similarly, deficiencies in specialized training—for developing vocabulary and interpreting skills across diverse fields such as education, healthcare, and legal sectors—are also viewed as major concerns, with WM scores above 3.4.

Table 1. Extent to which the Education and Training Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by SLI

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | No formal education on Sign Language Interpreting.   | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Few schools offered Sign Language Interpreting courses.  | 3.86 | High               |
| 3   | Lack of training to develop vocabulary and other skills specific to the areas of interpreting in education, church, health, court, employment, community, etc. | 3.43 | High               |
| 4   | Lack of training on how to handle stress and burnouts in the areas of interpreting.  | 3.57 | High               |
| 5   | Insufficient enhancement skills training in sign language interpreting. (from Spoken Language to Sign Language).   | 3.57 | High               |
| 6   | Inadequate Voice Interpreting Skills training. (from Sign Language to Spoken Language).  | 3.50 | High               |

Additionally, the lack of training on stress management and burnout prevention in interpreting is noted as a high impact factor with a WM of 3.57, tying with the need for more advanced skills enhancement training in translating spoken to sign language and vice versa. The data underscores a pressing need for comprehensive educational programs and training opportunities to address the acute shortage of qualified sign language interpreters.

Table 2. Extent to which the Professionalization and Regulation Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by SLI

| S/N | Indicators  | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|---|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Lack of clarity on standard qualifications in the area of SLI.  | 3.36 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Limited emphasis and awareness on Sign Language Interpreter Code of Ethics, Roles, Rights and protection. | 3.29 | Moderate           |
| 3   | No Accreditation System for Sign Language Interpreters.   | 3.50 | High               |
| 4   | Lack of specific legislation concerning the Sign Language Interpreters profession.                        | 3.57 | High               |

Table 2 focuses on how the professionalization and regulation of the sign language interpreting (SLI) field influence the shortage of qualified interpreters, as perceived by SLIs themselves. The data reflects moderate to high concerns, with the most significant issues being the absence of specific legislation for the profession and the lack of an accreditation system for interpreters, both receiving high weighted mean (WM) scores of 3.57 and 3.50, respectively. These high ratings indicate a strong perceived need for formal regulatory frameworks and accreditation mechanisms to enhance the credibility and standards of the profession. Additionally, the table reveals concerns about the clarity of standard qualifications and the limited emphasis on the code of ethics, roles, rights, and protections for SLIs, each rated with moderate

impact. These findings suggest that addressing regulatory gaps and enhancing professional standards could be crucial steps toward mitigating the shortage of sign language interpreters by fostering a more structured and recognized profession.

Table 3. Extent to which the Working Conditions Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by SLI

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Sign Language Interpreter job is still not a recognize career.   | 3.71 | High               |
| 2   | Sign Language Interpreting job has no security of tenure.  | 3.57 | High               |
| 3   | There is no standard rate in sign language interpreting job.   | 3.50 | High               |
| 4   | Sign Language Interpreters are not well compensated and well benefitted.                               | 3.50 | High               |
| 5   | Limited job prospects for sign language interpreters.  | 3.43 | High               |
| 6   | A Sign Language Interpreter is readily accessible whenever the Deaf community requires their services. | 2.43 | Low                |
| 7   | Sign Language Interpreting is not a satisfying job.  | 2.50 | Low                |

Table 3 delves into the extent to which working conditions affect the shortage of sign language interpreters, as perceived by those within the profession. The data reveals a significant concern over several aspects of the job that are perceived to contribute to the shortage. Most notably, the lack of recognition of sign language interpreting as a legitimate career has the highest weighted mean (WM) of 3.71, indicating a high level of concern. Similarly, issues such as the absence of job security, no standard rate for services, and inadequate compensation and benefits each scored a high impact level with WM scores ranging from 3.50 to 3.57. These factors underscore the profession's instability and unattractiveness in terms of financial and job security, which can deter potential entrants into the field. Additionally, limited job prospects further exacerbate the shortage, with a high WM of 3.43. In contrast, perceptions about the profession's satisfaction and accessibility show lower levels of concern, with WMs of 2.50 and 2.43, respectively, suggesting that while the job may not be seen as highly satisfying or accessible, the more pressing issues revolve around economic and professional recognition factors. This highlights a clear need for improvements in how the profession is structured and valued to attract and retain more individuals in the field of sign language interpreting.

Table 4. Extent to which the Support Network Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by SLI

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Insufficient information, assistance and access to join a sign language association. | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 2   | No registered Sign Language Interpreter association in Cebu.                         | 3.14 | Moderate           |
| 3   | Lack of support and guidance from co-interpreters.                                   | 2.57 | Low                |

Table 4 explores the impact of support networks on the shortage of sign language interpreters as perceived by the interpreters themselves. The data highlights a moderate concern regarding the availability of information, assistance, and access to sign language associations, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.07. This suggests that barriers to joining professional groups can limit opportunities for interpreters to network, gain professional development, and receive support, which could indirectly contribute to the profession's shortage. Additionally, the absence of a registered Sign Language Interpreter association specifically in Cebu is noted with a slightly higher concern at a WM of 3.14. This regional gap in organizational support could hinder local interpreters' professional growth and advocacy efforts, emphasizing the need for more structured support systems at local levels. In contrast, the lack of support and guidance from co-interpreters is perceived as a lower concern with a WM of 2.57. This indicates that while peer support could be improved, it is not seen as a critical factor compared to the structural and organizational supports needed within the profession. Overall, the data suggests that enhancing the support network for sign language interpreters through better access to associations and establishing more local professional groups could play a significant role in addressing the shortage of qualified interpreters.

Table 5. Extent to which the Education and Training Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by Deaf Respondents

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | No formal education on Sign Language Interpreting.   | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Few schools offered Sign Language Interpreting courses.  | 3.13 | Moderate           |
| 3   | Lack of training to develop vocabulary and other skills specific to the areas of interpreting in education, church, health, court, employment, community, etc. | 2.83 | Moderate           |
| 4   | Lack of trainings on how to handle stress and burnouts in the areas of interpreting.   | 2.43 | Low                |
| 5   | Insufficient enhancement skills training in sign language interpreting (from Spoken Language to Sign Language).  | 2.83 | Moderate           |
| 6   | Inadequate Voice Interpreting Skills training (from Sign Language to Spoken Language).   | 3.03 | Moderate           |

Table 5 reflects the perceptions of deaf respondents regarding how education and training deficits influence the shortage of sign language interpreters. The results show a generally moderate concern across most indicators, suggesting a consensus that while the current state of education and training is lacking, it is not seen as critically deficient. The highest concerns are with the limited number of schools offering courses in sign language interpreting and inadequate training in voice interpreting skills (converting sign language into spoken language), both of which have weighted means (WM) slightly above 3.0. This indicates a need for broader and more accessible educational opportunities in these areas. Additionally, the lack of formal education in sign language interpreting and insufficient training for enhancement



skills (from spoken to sign language) are also viewed with moderate concern, both scoring WM around 2.83. These results point to a perceived need for more comprehensive and skill-specific training programs that cater to the diverse needs of the interpreting field. Interestingly, the least concern is expressed for training related to handling stress and burnouts, with a low WM of 2.43. This suggests that, from the perspective of the deaf community, emotional and psychological support for interpreters is not as critical a gap as the technical and educational aspects of the profession. Overall, the data indicates a clear call from the deaf community for enhanced educational structures and training programs to address the shortage and improve the quality of sign language interpreting services.

Table 6. Extent to which the Professionalization and Regulation Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by Deaf Respondents

| S/N | Indicators  | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|---|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Lack of clarity on standard qualifications in the area of Sign Language Interpreting                      | 2.90 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Limited emphasis and awareness on Sign Language Interpreter Code of Ethics, roles, rights and protection. | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 3   | No Accreditation System for Sign Language Interpreters.   | 2.60 | Low                |
| 4   | Lack of specific legislation concerning the Sign Language Interpreters profession.                        | 2.57 | Low                |

Table 6 examines the impact of professionalization and regulation on the shortage of sign language interpreters from the perspective of deaf respondents. The data suggests a moderate to low level of concern among the deaf community regarding the regulatory and professional structures governing sign language interpreting. The indicator receiving the highest level of concern is the limited emphasis and awareness regarding the code of ethics, roles, rights, and protections for interpreters, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.07. This moderate concern highlights the need for increased awareness and stronger emphasis on ethical standards and professional rights within the interpreting community, which could improve service quality and accountability. The lack of clarity on standard qualifications for sign language interpreters also registers moderate concern, with a WM of 2.90. This indicates a perceived need for clearer, standardized criteria for qualifying interpreters, which could help ensure consistency and reliability in the services provided to the deaf community. However, concerns about the absence of an accreditation system and specific legislation for the profession are noted with lower urgency, with WMs of 2.60 and 2.57, respectively. These low scores suggest that while such structural elements are acknowledged as beneficial, they may not be viewed as immediate priorities compared to other issues impacting the community's access to qualified interpreters. This perspective might reflect a more general satisfaction with the current state of professional

governance, or a prioritization of more direct, practical improvements in interpreter training and ethics. Overall, the results indicate a nuanced view among deaf respondents on how professionalization and regulatory issues affect the availability and quality of sign language interpreting services.

Table 7. Extent to which the Working Conditions Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by Deaf Respondents

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Sign Language Interpreter job is still not a recognize career.   | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Sign Language Interpreting job has no security of tenure.  | 2.97 | Moderate           |
| 3   | There is no standard rate in sign language interpreting job.   | 3.00 | Moderate           |
| 4   | Sign Language Interpreters are not well compensated and well benefitted.                               | 3.17 | Moderate           |
| 5   | Limited job prospects for sign language interpreters.  | 3.10 | Moderate           |
| 6   | A Sign Language Interpreter is readily accessible whenever the Deaf community requires their services. | 2.27 | Low                |
| 7   | Sign Language Interpreting is not a satisfying job.  | 2.37 | Low                |

Table 7 presents perceptions from the deaf community regarding how working conditions impact the shortage of sign language interpreters. The data indicates a consistently moderate concern about several key employment-related factors, suggesting that improvements in these areas could potentially alleviate the shortage. The highest concern among respondents pertains to the compensation and benefits for sign language interpreters, with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.17. This indicates a strong perception that better financial and benefit incentives are necessary to attract and retain skilled interpreters. The limited recognition of sign language interpreting as a legitimate career and the limited job prospects, both with WMs slightly above 3.0, also reflect significant concerns. These factors point to a need for greater societal and professional acknowledgment of the role, which could enhance its attractiveness as a career choice. Other issues such as the lack of job security and the absence of standard rates for interpreting services receive WMs close to 3.0, underscoring the community's view that stability and standardized compensation are important for the sustainability of the profession. In contrast, the perceptions that sign language interpreting is not a satisfying job and that interpreters are not always accessible when needed receive lower concerns, with WMs of 2.37 and 2.27, respectively. These lower scores might indicate that while accessibility and job satisfaction are noted, they are not perceived as critical issues compared to the economic and professional aspects of the job. Overall, the feedback from deaf respondents emphasizes a need for better working conditions, including recognition, compensation, and job security, to address the shortage of qualified sign language interpreters effectively. These changes could not only improve the professional environment for interpreters but also enhance the quality of services provided to the deaf community.



Table 8 explores how support networks or the lack thereof affect the shortage of sign language interpreters, according to deaf respondents. The data reveals varying levels of concern, with the most significant issue being the insufficient information, assistance, and access to join a sign language association, which is perceived with a moderate impact and has a weighted mean (WM) of 3.10.

Table 8. Extent to which the Support Network Influence the Shortage of Sign Language Interpreters as perceived by Deaf Respondents

| S/N | Indicators   | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Insufficient information, assistance and access to join a sign language association. | 3.10 | Moderate           |
| 2   | No registered Sign Language Interpreter association in Cebu.                         | 2.90 | Moderate           |
| 3   | Lack of support and guidance from co-interpreters.                                   | 2.30 | Low                |

This suggests that enhancing access to professional associations could provide interpreters with better resources, networking opportunities, and professional development, which might help alleviate the shortage by making the field more attractive and supportive. Additionally, the absence of a registered Sign Language Interpreter association in Cebu is also viewed with moderate concern, scoring a WM of 2.90. This indicates a regional gap in support structures that could potentially limit the professional growth and community support for interpreters in specific areas, highlighting the need for more localized support systems. In contrast, the lack of support and guidance from co-interpreters is seen as a less critical issue, with a low WM of 2.30. This lower level of concern suggests that while peer support could be beneficial, it is not perceived as a significant factor influencing the shortage of interpreters compared to the more structural aspects of support networks. Overall, the feedback from deaf respondents underscores the importance of strengthening support networks for sign language interpreters through better informational resources and more robust professional associations, particularly at local levels, to enhance the overall quality and availability of interpreting services.

Table 9 provides an insightful overview of the problems and challenges faced by sign language interpreters, as perceived by the interpreters themselves. The data points to a range of issues, with varying degrees of impact on their professional lives. The most pressing concerns, highlighted by high weighted means (WMs), are the inadequate benefits and compensation for interpreting services, scoring a WM of 3.79, and the fatigue and scheduling struggles due to a high demand for services amidst a shortage of available interpreters, with a WM of 3.64. These issues indicate significant stress on interpreters, potentially deterring skilled professionals from entering or remaining in the field and exacerbating the overall shortage. Moderate concerns, all scoring WMs around 3.14, include the lack of preparatory materials and necessary information before events, difficulty in voicing

(interpreting from sign language to spoken language), and lack of awareness about interpreting rights and the Code of Ethics. These moderate concerns point to systemic issues in the preparation and execution of interpreting tasks, which could hinder performance and professional satisfaction.

Table 9. Degree of Problems and Challenges Encountered in the Areas of Interpreting as perceived by Sign Language Interpreters

| S/N | Indicators  | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----|---|------|--------------------|
| 1   | Lack of preparatory materials and needed information (topic, speakers, terminology and the like) before interpreting an event.  | 3.14 | Moderate           |
| 2   | Difficulty interpreting from Sign Language to Spoken Language (Voicing).  | 3.14 | Moderate           |
| 3   | Struggles in interpreting certain topics due to lack of knowledge in sign language, techniques in interpreting and awareness of deaf culture.   | 3.00 | Moderate           |
| 4   | The community and the event organizers possess an absence of knowledge regarding interpreting protocols and services, as well as a lack of awareness about the roles and responsibilities of a Sign Language Interpreter. | 3.07 | Moderate           |
| 5   | Unaware of the rights and Code of Ethics of a Sign Language Interpreter and Interpreting job.   | 3.14 | Moderate           |
| 6   | Sign Language Interpreters received inadequate benefits and insufficient compensation for the provided interpreting services.   | 3.79 | High               |
| 7   | Sign Language Interpreters experience fatigue and struggles to manage and accommodate interpreting schedules due to increased demand for assignments, yet a shortage of available interpreters.                           | 3.64 | High               |
| 8   | Inadequate preparation time due to lack or short notice invitation to interpret events.   | 3.29 | Moderate           |
| 9   | Experience difficulty in comprehending and interpreting conversations due to the speaker's hasty speech and interruptions caused by audio equipment malfunctions.   | 3.21 | Moderate           |
| 10  | Sign Language Interpreters experienced lack of support and supervision from co-interpreters and sign language interpreter association.  | 2.36 | Low                |

Additional moderate issues involve the community and event organizers' lack of knowledge about interpreting protocols and a generally inadequate preparation time due to late invitations to events. These factors likely contribute to the challenges interpreters face in delivering quality services. Interestingly, the data shows a relatively low concern (WM of 2.36) regarding the lack of support and supervision from co-interpreters and associations, suggesting that while improvements in peer and organizational support could be beneficial, they are not perceived as urgently as other factors. Overall, the findings from Table 9 emphasize the need for better compensation structures, enhanced organizational support, and more effective communication and preparation processes to address the significant challenges faced by sign language interpreters. These improvements could help alleviate the current shortage by making the profession

more attractive and sustainable for current and prospective interpreters.

Table 10. Degree of Problems and Challenges Encountered in the Areas of Interpreting as perceived by the Deaf Interpreters

| S/N | Indicators   | W<br>M | Verbal<br>Description |
|-----|--|--------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Experience difficulty in comprehending and understanding the relayed interpretation by the sign language interpreter.  | 3.50   | High                  |
| 2   | Sign Language Interpreters lacks standards related to quality of interpreting across variety of settings, including educational, community, medical and legal settings.                                    | 3.50   | High                  |
| 3   | The community and the event organizers possess an absence of knowledge regarding interpreting protocols and services for the Deaf and the Sign Language Interpreters                                       | 3.30   | Moderate              |
| 4   | Without interpreters, there is limited access to important information in various settings, such as educational institutions, workplaces, healthcare facilities and public events.                         | 2.90   | Moderate              |
| 5   | Without access to qualified interpreters, there is difficulty in understanding legal proceedings, communication with lawyers, and participating in own defense if involved in legal matters.               | 3.57   | High                  |
| 6   | Healthcare access inequalities due to communication challenges stemming from the absence of sign language interpreters.  | 3.60   | High                  |
| 7   | In emergency situations, Deaf struggles to access critical information and instructions without interpreter, putting safety at risk.   | 3.50   | High                  |
| 8   | Facing obstacles while seeking employment due to the lack of interpreters, which impairs effective communication and full engagement in the job application process.                                       | 3.33   | Moderate              |
| 9   | Encountered challenges in achieving equal career advancement opportunities and job progression because of communication barriers, which may lead to missed chances for promotions or leadership positions. | 3.53   | High                  |
| 10  | Deaf individuals may have concerns regarding the privacy and confidentiality of their discussions with members of their support network when interpreters are unavailable.                                 | 3.53   | High                  |

Table 10 illuminates the problems and challenges faced by the deaf community regarding sign language interpreting services, showcasing both the breadth and severity of these issues as perceived by deaf interpreters. High concerns primarily revolve around the accessibility and quality of interpreting services in various critical settings. A consistent high concern (WM of 3.50 to 3.60) highlights issues such as the difficulty in comprehending interpretations provided by interpreters, the lack of standardized quality across different settings like educational, medical, and legal, and the significant access inequalities in healthcare due to the absence of interpreters. Particularly notable is the high rating (WM of 3.57) given to difficulties encountered in legal settings, where inadequate interpreting can severely impact a deaf individual's ability to communicate effectively with legal representatives or participate in their defense. Similarly, in emergency

situations, a high concern score of 3.50 underscores the perilous lack of access to critical information, elevating the risk to safety for deaf individuals. Additional high scores indicate severe challenges related to employment and career advancement. The data suggests that the absence of interpreters not only hinders initial employment opportunities (WM of 3.33) but also affects career progression and access to leadership roles (WM of 3.53) due to persistent communication barriers. Moderate concerns, with WMs ranging from 2.90 to 3.33, such as the community and event organizers' lack of knowledge about interpreting services, reflect ongoing issues but are not perceived as severely as the direct impact areas. This nuanced understanding points to a critical need for enhanced education and training for interpreters, as well as broader systemic changes to improve the availability and quality of interpreting services. Overall, the deaf community perceives a substantial impact on their daily lives and safety due to inadequate interpreting services, emphasizing the need for systemic improvements to ensure equal access to information, legal representation, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Table 11. Test of relationship between the extent of influence of the identified factors and degree of problems encountered in the areas of interpreting as perceived by SLI

| Variables   | r-value | Strength of Correlation | p - value | Decision         | Result          |
|---|---------|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Education and Problems Encountered                          | -0.143  | Negligible Negative     | 0.625     | Do not reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Professionalization and Regulation and Problems Encountered | 0.256   | Negligible Positive     | 0.377     | Do not reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Working Conditions and Problems Encountered                 | 0.285   | Negligible Positive     | 0.324     | Do not reject Ho | Not Significant |
| Support Network and Problems Encountered                    | 0.092   | Negligible Positive     | 0.754     | Do not reject Ho | Not Significant |

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

Table 11 presents the results of statistical tests examining the relationships between various factors (education, professionalization and regulation, working conditions, support network) and the degree of problems encountered in interpreting areas as perceived by Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs). The findings show that none of the tested relationships between these factors and interpreting problems are statistically significant, as indicated by their p-values and the decisions to not reject the null hypotheses (Ho). The r-values, which measure the strength and direction of the correlations, suggest very weak relationships. For instance, the relationship between education and problems encountered is negatively correlated but with a negligible

strength ( $r = -0.143$ ), and the p-value of 0.625 further suggests that this relationship is not statistically meaningful. This pattern is similar for the relationships between professionalization and regulation ( $r = 0.256$ ,  $p = 0.377$ ), working conditions ( $r = 0.285$ ,  $p = 0.324$ ), and support network ( $r = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.754$ ) with problems encountered, all showing negligible positive correlations and non-significant results. These results suggest that the extent of influence of identified factors such as education, professionalization, working conditions, and support networks does not have a significant direct correlation with the degree of problems SLIs encounter in their work. This could imply that other variables not included in this study might play more significant roles, or that the complex nature of these issues requires a more nuanced analysis to fully understand their interdependencies and impacts. Therefore, these findings highlight the complexity of the issues within the field of sign language interpreting and suggest the need for further research to explore other potential influencing factors or to use different methodological approaches to uncover significant correlations.

## Conclusion

The findings offer a comprehensive look at the multifaceted challenges and influences affecting the shortage and efficacy of sign language interpreters (SLIs). From educational and training deficits to the impacts of professionalization and regulatory frameworks, these studies underscore a broad agreement on the significant gaps that need addressing to enhance the quality and availability of interpreting services. The data also highlights critical issues related to working conditions, emphasizing the need for improved recognition, compensation, and job security to attract and retain interpreters. Support networks also play a crucial role, though the emphasis varies, suggesting regional and situational differences in their perceived importance. Furthermore, challenges directly experienced by interpreters and the deaf community reflect severe concerns about the quality of interpreting services and access to critical information across various settings. Lastly, the statistical analysis indicates that while the identified factors do influence the problems encountered in the interpreting field, the correlations are not statistically significant, pointing to the complexity of these issues and the potential need for exploring additional variables or employing different research methodologies. Overall, these insights collectively highlight the critical need for systemic changes, enhanced training programs, and better professional support to address the current shortcomings in the field of sign language interpreting.

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