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BA(Hons) Product Design

Word Counts (2453)

This paper will focus on the barriers that Deaf people have faced over the years, and are still facing today. The research will look at how areas of inclusivity and access have improved, whilst also looking at areas where hearing superiority has reared its ugly head and at times shows arrogance as a barrier to change. My three keywords are ***Discrimination***, ***Deaf*** and ***CODA*** which means Children Of Deaf Adults.

It is hoped that by the end of the paper, the reader will be able to see the issues and barriers that Deaf people face on a daily basis. There have been improvements, but not by all and certainly not by the most eligible. This paper will focus on the changes needed and the changes already proposed.

Discrimination

Discrimination is seen as “treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their skin colour, sex, sexuality, disability etc.” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). It has been more highlighted due the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010. “The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.” (EOC, 2021). Despite the introduction of this Act, the feedback of many is that Deaf people are being left behind and excluded - even within disability generally,

with the Paralympics taking a big part of media coverage and exposure in comparison to any Deaf sports or competitions. For example, on the website SLfirst the sportswriter Peter Hughes says, "...despite my past attempts, I am still saddened that Paralympics didn't want to embrace Deaflympic athletes to be amongst their equals at the Commonwealth Games." (SLfirst, 2014). This underlines the fact that the Deaflympic are seen as a lesser competition to the Paralympics. Wheelchair athletics in particular has been given a great deal of exposure and media coverage which leads to advertising and sponsorship (REF).

As research suggests, this exclusion can begin as early as childhood. Following a study by SLfirst (2015), In which children were asked about their experience to access to sport, the following statements were made;

- They can find making friends difficult at new clubs
- Communicating with hearing people can be hard especially with their coaches
- They don't always understand what is going on or what is expected of them
- They enjoy learning new skills when playing sport and being challenged

However, according to ndcs.org.uk it talks about the rights of people within the UK and the reasonable adjustments that all settings should make; "Public services have to make simple changes to what they do if this would help disabled children." For example, in rugby, the referee will need to raise their hand up when blowing the

whistle or tap on the deaf player's back (depending on proximity). Therefore, if all reasonable adjustments were made and all services thought about the rights and needs of deaf people then this may not be such an issue for the deaf children of today.

According to the International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (ICSD), there had been discussions in the 1990's that the international Olympic committee (IOC) had considered combining the Paralympic and the Deaflympic games together as one big Paralympics. It was mooted that it would be beneficial for all disabled people to participate together and also benefit the economic structure of disabled sport..

It would also satisfy the International Olympic Committee's request that the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (CISS) join the International Coordination Committee of World Sport, the predecessor of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), in order for IPC to become a member of the Olympic family (ICSD, 2004)

However, this never materialised and due to issues over funding and how the money would be split. (ICSD.org)

A big question is; how is empowerment of Deaf people influenced by different kinds of sports organisations?

"Empowerment can be defined as experiencing control over decisions in one's life. Empowerment occurs on three levels: individual, group (through identity and group feeling), and society (through political influence).."(ICSD, 2004)

For example, the Wales Deaf Rugby Union (WDRU) which was set up by Swansea and Newport Deaf club in 1995 (walesdeafrugby.co.uk), is a way in which deaf sportsmen have empowered themselves through sport. The first Deaflympics games, known as the International Silent Games, was held in 1924 in Paris. (deaflympics.com). According to Deaflympics.com, the 'Silent Games' were the first ever for any group of people with disabilities. Furthermore, it was the second created after the modern-day Olympic games.

According to Rehabil (p.g.430, 2019);

In recent years, there have been many noticeable attempts to prevent individuals with disabilities from being separated from society and living an isolated life. One of the most important and effective ways is organising competitive sporting events adapted for these individuals.

This suggests that sport is a good way of empowering Deaf people as they are able to do sports and activities that may have been previously inaccessible.

Deaf

There have been many changes for the term of the word Deaf. For example, Deaf-muted, Silent, Deaf/deaf, Deaf-Muted, Deaf and Dumb, Hearing-Impaired just to name a few. Of course, due to modern political correctness and some downright awful terms (Deaf & Dumb being one) most of these terms are not used anymore because they are offensive toward the deaf-community. Additionally, many meanings are untrue and give a false impression of the deaf community, as 'Silent' seems to suggest that Deaf people are quiet which isn't true, as many people who have met a

deaf person will know - they are the opposite! However, some deaf people are more concerned with these terms and the deaf culture in general; “We use the lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – British Sign Language (BSL) – and a culture.” (NAD, 2021).

According to a University Distinguished Professor at North-eastern University,

A disability is a limitation of function because of an impairment. Deaf people are limited in some functions because of an impairment of hearing. Therefore, Deaf people have a disability (Sign Language Studies, p.g.356, 2002).

However, some Deaf people do not see themselves as disabled and do not like to be placed into a category and some can class this as being discriminatory, despite the obvious impairment which is why the classification of disability occurs.

This is usually found within Deaf families where the Deaf culture is very prominent and important. An example of this is where mouth movement is seen as almost disrespecting the Deaf community, “Children who are brought up in Deaf culture are often trained to limit their mouth movement” and speaking behaviour is thought of as ‘undignified’ and sometimes can be interpreted as making fun of other Deaf people”

(Reading for Diversity and Social Justice, p.g.347, 2000). This can lead to some who are able to speak well due to learning at a younger age in school changing their values to fit within the deaf community; “Even though some Deaf people can hear some speech, and some speak well themselves, speaking is not considered usual or acceptable behaviour within the cultural group.” (Reading for Diversity and Social Justice, p.g.349, 2000). On the other hand, a study by Harley Ford and Sarah Kent (2013, pp. 29-51) shows that there are Deaf people who think it is important to have an equal relationship between the hearing and deaf world. “...The findings show that Deaf young people value sign bilingualism for accessing both the ‘Deaf World’ and the ‘Hearing World’.”

CODA

The terminology of the word CODA means Children of Deaf Adults. However, it is apparent that not all CODAs learn sign language as fluently as others, which can make communication with their parents a totally different experience. “Some CODAs have parents that restrict how much sign language their child learns which really limits the child in how they can communicate their feelings to their parents. Most CODAs learn sign language, some learn enough to act as a communication bridge between the Deaf and the hearing world.” (CODA: Children of Deaf Adult, 2013).

All children wish to do best by their parents, however in a CODA world it seems that girls are more likely than boys to assume the role of interpreters for their parents which may, in some part, explain the dominance of female adult interpreters.

“Female children tended to assume the role of interpreter more often than the male children. Also, it appeared as though the older children shifted the responsibility for interpreting to younger siblings.” (Moroe and Victor, 2018, p.365)

“This experience can have a wide range of both positive and negative impacts on CODA's individual lived experiences” (CODA UK & Ireland, 2021)

There are positives of assuming an interpreter role at a young age, such as language development, feeling of having an important role in the family. However, the negatives can be societal attitudes or a doctor may feel uncomfortable relaying personal information to a child. Other issues are struggling to find their own identity, and feelings of belonging and struggling to associate with social groups.

CODAs can often feel very different from their hearing peers as they have a fundamentally different lived experience. This can influence their individual identity meaning that they feel that a big part of their identity is Deaf, while the other half is hearing. They can feel like they are stuck in the middle never fully belonging to either the Deaf or Hearing world. (CODA UK & Ireland, 2021)

When I was younger, I didn't understand why most of my family couldn't sign.

At family parties and events, I would be asked to interpret so my parents could join in with the communication. Other family members would avoid talking to my parents because it was difficult, they would tell me things instead. (CODA UK & Ireland, 2021)

The other side of the coin, so to speak, is the problem for deaf parents of hearing children. That many of the children may try to take advantage of the fact their parents can't hear. For example, playing loud music or being awake at night in their room till late. Once hearing the footsteps of deaf parents across the landing, then hopping back into bed so they are none the wiser (Berke, 2020).

As mentioned above, Deaf sport has evolved over the years with participation varying from wholly deaf sports such as the Deaflympics, to attempts to integrate into the Paralympics - which have so far been unsuccessful. The overall culture and attitudes have changed overtime, such as the Deaflympics, which used to be called "The Silent Games" because people assume that Deaf people are quiet just because they are Deaf. However, this is not the case and many deaf people are not quiet at all. Information and awareness of deafness has improved dramatically over the years and especially since BSL became a recognised language by the UK government in 2003. (British Deaf Association Sign Language Week, 2020)

Many terms used by the 'hearing world' such as Deaf-muted, Deaf and dumb, hearing-impaired are seen to be offensive terms to people in the 'Deaf world'. Some Deaf people also view themselves in the 'hearing-world' and have more hearing friends than deaf friends whilst others who are 'Deaf' and not 'deaf' are predominantly involved with Deaf people. Whereas, other people view themselves as neither in Deaf-world or hearing world - but a combination of both.(NAD, 2021)

Being a CODA can be a big challenge as the children have a responsibility as well as the Deaf parent. Some children are limited in how much they can sign due to the culture of the deaf world (CODA: Children of Deaf Adult, 2013). It does seem, from the research, that more girls tend to do the interpreting for the parents instead of the boys which is more clearly shown in the dominance of female adult interpreting.(Moroe and Andrade, 2018, p.365). It is positive that children are developing a new language as BSL but the negative about it is the social attitude towards the child being an interpreter for the Deaf adult. In many settings, such as hospitals or GP surgeries, often doctors can relay ultra-sensitive information directly

to the child who is then expected to interpret this information to the Deaf adult (CODA UK & Ireland, 2021). This can not only affect the child at time of processing the information, but also these can leave a lasting memory on the CODA which they should not be subjected to, especially with the BSL bill being introduced into NHS settings meaning that all means of communication should be explored and available (CODA UK & Ireland, 2021).

Overall, there has been lots of movement forwards to create more inclusivity for the Deaf population, however, it is clear from the studies that there is still some way to go, not only nationally, but globally. The biggest challenge is being able to change people's attitudes into inclusion and this then could invoke more smoother movements for change amongst society and enable the Deaf community to access things such as BSL interpreter.

Product Design

There are a lot of challenges that Deaf people need to face in the product design world, and it is here where I feel that attitudes and designers need to change and be more innovative to allow for more inclusion to the Deaf community and the disabled population as a whole.

Looking at the research of authors who have focused on product design and the challenges that various designers face, it is clear that the role of whether one is an elite designer, a grassroots activist, a design educator, or a bureaucratic or corporate decision maker, Ezio Manzini (2015) challenges us all to rethink the role of design and that of the 'designers' in contemporary society. According to Fry (2008), "Design

Futuring defines redirective practice as a critical new paradigm for design-a way of engaging design and sustainability as they are implicated in and essential to our very survival. Broad. Accessible. Timely.” This suggests that designing in the future is a way of designing ‘for all’ and thus should be inclusive of all communities and populations, including the Deaf that is not only of high quality but sustainable to last the rigours of daily life and future culture trends and changes.

In the sports world Deaf athletes are discriminated against even in relation to other disabilities. How can product designers ensure that sport is inclusive for Deaf athletes?

Where is your wheelchair: designing for Deaf athletes?

Being Deaf in a hearing world: Is the Product design world ready to accept the need for change?

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