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# A Comparative Analysis of Deaf Entrepreneurs in China and the United States

Wei Wu  
Gallaudet University

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## **THE HONORS PROGRAM**

**A Comparative Analysis of Deaf Entrepreneurs in China and the United States**  
*An Honors Capstone Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation  
with University Honors*

**By: Wei Wu**

***Director: Qi Wang, PhD***

***Reader: Jeffery Miller, PhD***

***Honors Director: Jennifer L. Nelson, PhD***

***Honors Assistant Director: Kirk VanGilder, PhD***

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## **Abstract**

This paper compares the challenges that Deaf business people face in the US and China. The goal is to understand the experience of Deaf people in each country and to see what each country can learn from the other. To understand the experience of Deaf people in these countries, I will first look at the history of disability in each country and the challenges Deaf people face with gaining employment or becoming entrepreneurs. Then, I compare the cultural attitudes of each country towards Deaf people and the policy frameworks each country uses to create opportunities for Deaf people. Finally, this paper ends with some recommendations for how both China and the US can improve outcomes for Deaf people, including publishing national data on Deaf employment, examining programs to provide equal access in communication and education, and policy innovations in each country that can benefit Deaf people.

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## Introduction

Deaf people across the globe face comparable obstacles to obtaining substantial employment and entrepreneurial prospects. Worldwide, Deaf employees often have a limited prospect for careers as their work is in positions that demand only basic skills like routine and predictable jobs. Instead, in many cases, they are steered into being the “chiefs” or trainers in the area of Deaf empowerment, which can be meaningful career moves. Nevertheless, it might close their eyes to loftier career prospects (Atkins, 2011; Kelly et al., 2016). For example, in the USA, Deaf people were often excluded from gainful employment in the early 20th century and had restricted access to public education until 1972, when disability rights movements emerged (Atkins, 2011).

In both countries, Deaf people exist, and they are constantly faced with similar economic discrimination that causes joblessness and unemployment. Typically, Deaf people are often expected to seek positions that require no, little, or even moderate skills. And then there are instructors inside the Deaf community (Atkins, 2011; Kelly et al., 2016). The word "Deaf" is capitalized here to emphasize those people who belong to Deaf culture. This culture is distinguished from others by belonging to minority linguistic and cultural groups. This term represents a cultural identity instead of focusing on the disability itself. The experience of Deaf people in China is different and the Deaf community does not have the same cohesion as in the United States. Although though "Deaf" with the capital "D" is not how the Deaf Chinese community would refer to themselves in English, I employ it here to show the uniformity of

Deaf people globally and the culture that has been rising with disability pursuit movements, which mainly embraces this.

Similarly, in the case of China, even though some attempts were initiated by the missionaries to enhance special education opportunities for Deaf people, not much was achieved before the enactment of the National People's Congress Compulsory Education Law in 1986 (Kritzer, 2011). To learn more about this area of study, this project investigates the situation of Deaf Entrepreneurs in China and the United States to discern their experiences in starting and running their businesses. Its findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by enhancing our understanding of the experiences of this marginalized group and provide recommendations to policymakers on how to come up with practical policies and solutions to make things better for them.

The entrepreneurship prospects for Deaf individuals were often restricted due to the innocent guidance provided by parents, teachers, and counsellors (Demartino, Murthy, & Atkins, 2023). This misguided belief has led to persistent cases of unemployment and underemployment within the Deaf community, a common struggle shared by both American and Chinese Deaf people (Dauncey, 2012; Jasniak, Baierl, & Halberstadt, 2020). According to Murthy et al. (2022), people who are Deaf or hard of hearing in China are frequently directed towards occupations that do not entirely capitalize on their abilities or educational attainments. In the United States, the Deaf people often face limited capitation, and that is why they may have to depend on Social Security Disability Income. This can be attributed to the 70% of the Deaf people who are without jobs or underemployed (Dammeyer et al., 2019). Thus, Deaf

people in both countries need increased opportunities for successful employment. Both the US and China took policy actions to enhance access.

In the US, the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 was introduced which prohibited discrimination and promoted inclusion of all persons with disability (Francisco et al., 2020; Weber, 2017). This improved even further with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (McMahon et al., 2020). The ADA was a groundbreaking disability policy designed to provide access to people with disabilities to most parts of society. In contrast, China has focused on vocational training initiatives and skill enhancement programs which has facilitated avenues for employment among individuals with hearing impairments, particularly in diverse areas such as the business industry (Jones, Ni, & Wang, 2021). However, China still has a lot to improve on as studies show that numerous Deaf individuals who have completed their undergraduate education continue to encounter limited employment opportunities and inadequate accommodation in public spaces (Kelly et al., 2016).

According to recent statistical data, there has been some increase in the proportion of Deaf individuals who have attained professional positions in their respective fields in the US (Atkins, 2017). In the current decade, 15% of the US Deaf population has achieved such career advancements, indicating a positive trend when compared to the 9.8% in 2011 (Weber, 2017). On the other hand, there remain a notable disparity in employment rates between persons who are Deaf and those who are hearing, with a substantial gap of 22.5% seen in 2017 in the US (Garberoglio et al., 2019). However, when it comes to Deaf people owning businesses, there seems to be an improvement. In the USA, the expansion of Deaf-owned companies is



noticeable, demonstrating the tenacity and achievement of Deaf company owners across a range of industries (Atkins, 2017; Weber, 2017).

Notably, the statistical data pertaining to China presents a divergent perspective, indicating that close to 8% of Deaf individuals as opposed to 15% in the US have managed to attain professional positions (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). The Chinese government has tried to implement affirmative action programs such as vocational training, and the 1.5% employment quota system (Wang, 2019). However, some studies claim that the political exclusion experienced by individuals with disabilities in China has resulted in an absence of their unique perspectives in the decision-making processes (ESCAP, 2017) forcing many of them into self-employment. As a result, in the recent years, China has seen a rise in the number of entrepreneurs within the Deaf community (Kelly al., 2016), However, the actual statistics regarding the extent of this rise in China were not found during the literature review process, indicating a gap in available information. Nonetheless, these individuals have successfully tapped into emerging opportunities in the private sector to earn a living for themselves (Demartino, Murthy, & Atkins, 2023).

The data on the 22.5% employment gap between Deaf and hearing individuals in the United States in 2017 published by Garberoglio et al. (2019) impressed me on a much deeper level. This data implies that the growth in professional careers and business ventures among Deaf people helps to make up for the shortcomings in employment, despite the fact that it is lower than that of people who can hear. With regard to the Chinese situation, through the course of the literature review, it can be seen that there has been an increase in the

entrepreneurship of the Deaf community, but the figures concerning the extent of such a rise derive from books instead of specific statistical data. Thus, the absence of pertinent data on the role of Deaf entrepreneurship in China is an illustration of a loophole or gap in data for Deaf people in China (Wang, 2019). Nevertheless, the research by Wang (2019) has revealed that the Chinese government has been taking the initiative to sponsor vocational training as well as job quotas for individuals with disabilities, and this job quota includes signers as well.

Today, Deaf business owners run everything from car repair shops, restaurants, beauty parlors, bakeries, law firms, and even medical clinics (Weber, 2017). The report (2017) highlights the rise of Deaf entrepreneurs; however, the exact measure of the number of those Deaf entrepreneurs is not just visible within the lack of statistics so far. Uncovering the various factors leading to this start-up trend, like the influence of government laws, socio-economic status, and cultural patterns, will provide extensive insights into Deaf people's experiences and challenges when making a venture in China.

### **Research Objectives**

The broad objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the entrepreneurial experiences of Deaf persons in China and the United States. To achieve this, the below specific objectives and research questions were used.

1. Identify tactics and best practices used by prosperous Deaf entrepreneurs in China and the United States to get over obstacles like stigma, lack of funding, and communication problems.
2. Explore key differences between Chinese and American government policies and programs that aid and encourage Deaf entrepreneurs, and to assess the impact of these differences on their entrepreneurial pursuits.
3. Investigate how each country's cultural and social environment influences Deaf people's entrepreneurial experiences, particularly in terms of access to resources, training, and education to improve things in the future for Deaf persons.
4. Develop recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders in China and the United States to address communication, funding, education, and cultural awareness issues and foster a more supportive environment for Deaf entrepreneurs to inhibit discrimination.

### **Research Questions**

- I. What strategies and best practices are employed by successful Deaf entrepreneurs in China and the United States to overcome challenges related to communication, capital, and stigma?
- II. What are the key differences in government support and policies for Deaf entrepreneurs in China and the United States, and how do these differences impact their entrepreneurial journeys?

- III. How does the cultural and societal context in each country influence the entrepreneurial experiences of Deaf individuals, particularly regarding their access to education, training, and resources?
- IV. What recommendations are made to policymakers and stakeholders in China and the United States to help address the issues of communication, funding, education, and cultural awareness issues and foster a more supportive environment for Deaf entrepreneurs to inhibit discrimination?

An appreciation of how entrepreneurship has influenced the economic independence of the Deaf population appears to be among the key issues that must be looked into. Realizing their challenges and the measures they use to overcome them is thus essential. The office-worker-like self as enterprise' dominant narrative raises the expectations of self-reliance of these not-so-different entrepreneurs; however, it still brings specific issues to Deaf entrepreneurs. The problems of this group of entrepreneurs, such as the difficulties they might face working in China, will also be addressed. In addition to that, the policies and measures the government has developed to support Deaf people in business will also be discussed in the paper. We will, after that, review such issues in light of the US scenario to allow for a comparison of Deaf entrepreneurs in the two countries.

## **Literature Review**

The literature was reviewed independently for China and the US on key areas such as: challenges faced by Deaf entrepreneurs, government support and policies in each country, and the prevailing cultural attitudes that enhance or impede the growth of Deaf entrepreneurship in them. Reflecting the cultural differences between the two countries, this literature review is organized in a way that more reflects traditional thinking and analysis in China. Based on my personal experience, Chinese thinking is more context driven. That is, we are more likely to analyze each situation uniquely and independently. Western-style thinking is more likely to look for patterns and organize things in a more linear way. While both ways of thinking have value, I follow the Chinese-style thinking in this literature review.

### **Challenges Faced by Deaf Entrepreneurs in China**

The economic empowerment of Deaf individuals is significantly influenced by entrepreneurship, which can provide a job and money in a country that may not have enough accessible opportunities for Deaf people (Lin, Zhang, & Yang, 2018). Nevertheless, Deaf people still face obstacles as entrepreneurs. Throughout history, individuals with disabilities have often been regarded as lacking the ability to develop or manage their own businesses (Atkins, 2011), and the same is true in China. In China, for example, these difficulties have worsened due to the prevailing narrative of "self as enterprise," which places significant emphasis on self-reliance (Dauncey, 2012), which is going to work and earning money to support ones-self and the family. While the concept of self-as-enterprise is part of the cultural

nature of China, a socioeconomic way of thinking is very important because this kind of thinking appreciates individual independence a lot. From this stance, it is highly emphasized that one must take personal initiative and consistently focus on striving for self-sufficiency in order to succeed or feel fulfilled. A few Deaf people will be fortunate enough to assume this societal burden. Many Deaf people, however, continue to be excluded for a variety of reasons we will discuss later. For some Deaf people, entrepreneurship offers a path to employment.

The exclusion from the workforce is the basis of urgent inequality, especially in comparison with the hearing. This rift makes things even harder for Deaf people, and the gap between them and their hearing counterparts is widening. Very few Deaf people can compete equally with all. This hampers their progress and success (Zhang, 2009). This is because mainstream education in China encourages people without disabilities to learn new skills, pursue education, and exhibit entrepreneurial qualities from a young age, but the same support is not fully implemented for those who require specialized education, such as Deaf people (Atkins, 2011). For example, practical skills and vocational training have not been given enough emphasis in the Chinese educational system, causing Deaf students to lag behind for future employment as independent contractors or business owners (Worrell & Taber, 2009).

The business knowledge and abilities that are taken for granted by nondisabled people have also been hampered by China's lack of inclusive educational and training programs designed specifically for Deaf people. Due to the lack of access to specialized education or training, many Deaf entrepreneurs are unable to develop the crucial skills required to run a successful firm, other companies, or other options (Atkins, 2011). Existing programs

frequently lack the necessary funding or may not adequately meet the unique needs of Deaf entrepreneurs. For example, although courts provide interpreters in instances involving defendants who are Deaf, the sort of sign language employed (e.g., CSL or signed Chinese) and quality criteria are often not well established. This has severely impacted the quality of communication between China's Deaf residents and public services.

Similarly, running a business requires effective communication, which has proved difficult for Deaf business owners in China. This is because prospective clients, partners, and workers do not speak Chinese sign language (Jasniak et al., 2020) and, in my experience, many Deaf Chinese experience language deprivation. This language barrier has been reported to cause misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and lost business opportunities (Kritzer, 2011). In most instances, when a Deaf entrepreneur attempts to engage with a hearing business partner, this discrimination might manifest negatively in real life (Atkins, 2011). Some of the struggles Deaf people in China experience may also be seen in the USA in their Deaf population.

### **Challenges Encountered by Deaf Entrepreneurs in the USA**

Like China, in the USA, a considerable number of the Deaf community encounters issues with capitalism. Although there are technically laws to prevent discrimination, Deaf people are often excluded from society. This means that frequently have a dependence on Social Security Disability Insurance as a means to achieve financial stability (Bagenstos, 2000). This can be attributed to the significant proportion of 70% of Deaf individuals who

experience either unemployment or underemployment (Dammeyer et al., 2019). Most of them are unable to meet their basic needs without supplementary financial aid. Deaf individuals who have obtained college degrees face a high unemployment rate, with almost 50% of them remaining jobless (Kelly et al., 2016). This is despite the existence of legislation that safeguards their legal rights and ensures equal opportunities for employment in positions for which they possess the necessary qualifications.

Reports by Weber (2017) revealed a wide range of business models within the rising “Deaf economy.” The term “deaf economy” refers to the economic activities, markets, and businesses networks that are created by or cater specifically to the needs and preferences of the Deaf and hard of hearing community (Xu, 2014). This includes products and services designed to be accessible, such as sign language interpretation services, hearing aids, and visual alert systems. It also encompasses businesses owned by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those that actively employ Deaf people and engage with the Deaf community in a culturally respectful way. The deaf economy not only supports economic inclusion and accessibility but also fosters a sense of community and identity among Deaf individuals.

Within the Deaf economy, startup funding frequently comes from personal savings, and most companies are private enterprises. Two common reasons these people decide to start their own business are the "desire to be their own bosses" and the "wish to earn more money" (Pressman, 1999). However, most Deaf people still find challenges when it comes to creating a business plan, identifying financial sources, marketing, and advertising their businesses (Atkins, 2011). Additionally, it is often difficult to convince hearing people that Deaf people can operate successful businesses and interact with hearing clients in an effective manner. Deaf people also may have unique mentors in their careers. Pressman (1999) identified



mentors and influential role models at various phases of career development. In the early phases of a profession, family and teachers are crucial, but "friends" also became important, especially when it came to starting new businesses (Pressman, 1999). While Deaf people in the USA and China have challenges in moving forward with entrepreneurship, these are greatly affected by government support and policies regarding Deaf and Disabled people in China and the USA.

### **Government Support and Policies Supporting Disabled in China**

To understand the impact of government policies for Deaf people in China, we need to understand the historical development of these policies. The policies supporting Deaf people were developed as a part of policies towards people with disabilities generally. I'll briefly summarize the key eras and how they impacted policy development.

During the Maoist Era (1949–1976), a time synonymous with the Maoist regime, an array of reforms were introduced across various sectors including education (CDPF, 2012a). Prior to the revolution, education for the Deaf was predominantly facilitated by Western missionaries. However, the revolution led to a noticeable absence of specialized services for the Deaf community amidst its tumult. A central aim of the revolution was to elevate the economic status of workers, influencing the development of educational policies for individuals with disabilities (CDPF, 2008b). The revolutionary climate hindered the operations of Western missionaries, resulting in a decline in Deaf education and training. The period

culminated in the Great Chinese Famine, which brought significant social and economic hardships to the nation.

Post-Maoist Era (1976 onwards): Following Mao's leadership, China underwent economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping, known as the "Opening Up" or "Reform and Opening-Up" policy (Jones et al., 2021). This era was instrumental in laying the foundation for the transition towards market-oriented policies and modernization (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Emerging from the Great Chinese Famine, the leadership prioritized enhancing the overall quality of life for its citizens. Although this initiative aimed at societal improvement, it did not specifically target the needs of individuals with disabilities. Although there would be no clear proof of direct policies that aimed at providing vocational training and job opportunities to Deaf people during that time, the transformations in the economic sector could have indirectly affected the chances of persons with disabilities having equal access to employable skills and employment.

1970s: Detente Diplomacy and Vocational Rehabilitation: Because the 1970s were a decade of harmonization policies between the United States and China, in many spheres (such as culture and business), the relationship between them gradually improved (Wang, 2019). Transitioning to the US, this phase witnessed the establishment and operation of joint rehabilitation programs, namely the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (CDPF, 2008a). China's experience with both the diplomacy of US-China detente and vocational rehabilitation initiatives might not allow us to prove a direct relationship, but the exchange of skills and ideas could have shaped the country's idea of social welfare. The detente diplomacy and

vocational rehabilitation initiatives of the 1970s, through the exchange of skills and ideas between the United States and China, potentially influenced China's approach to social welfare, including the support and inclusion of Deaf people. This period likely contributed to the enhancement of vocational and rehabilitation programs in China, offering Deaf individuals better opportunities for employment and social integration.

2000s: Economic Reforms and Global Integration: The Tiananmen Square of the late '80s is the stage on which China's economic reforms, which prevented the occurrence of uprisings and promoted globalization, took place (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Initiatives such as the bid for the 2008 Olympics signaled China's desire to engage with the international community (Deng & Harris, 2008). Another long-term impact of globalization on the environment is the problem of waste management. Unlike the case before, the current mode of production generates unprecedented amounts of waste (Worrall & Taber, 2009). These economic reforms most probably had effects on vocational training and the provision of work opportunities for the disabled too, with the Deaf community being included (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Global integration might have resulted in the implementation of international best practices on the grounds of inclusiveness and employment.

### **Government Support and Policies Supporting Disabled Entrepreneurs in the USA**

The USA developed extensive legislation supporting people with disabilities starting in the 1970s. The overriding goal of these laws was to provide access to people with disabilities

in education and in infrastructure so they could potentially become productive members of society.

1970s: Rehabilitation Act: As per Atkins (2011), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 denoted sweeping legislation with the basic idea of outlawing discrimination among disabled people in the programs that receive federal financing. As well as that, it set up the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to ensure that vocational rehabilitation programs were in place (Francisco et al., 2020). The era of the World Wars also brought noteworthy developments in terms of training and employment systems for individuals with disabilities, including the Deaf community (Kim et al., 2019). Vocational rehabilitation programs provide support to individuals with disabilities, including job training and search assistance. They aim to help these individuals enter or return to work by offering various supports tailored to their specific needs for successful employment (Kelly et al., 2016). A greater number of vocational rehabilitation service agencies sprung up. These organizations offered job training, search assistance, and several other supports to help people with disabilities either enter or return to work.

1990s: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) is one of the most brilliantly sophisticated pieces of disability rights legislation, signed into law in 1990. The ADA was designed to abolish discrimination and inequality for people with disabilities in all the public spheres, namely employment, transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications (Francisco et al., 2020). Section 501 of the ADA alone focuses on employment discrimination, which is related to the providing of reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with special needs and developing an equal environment in the workplace (McMahon et al., 2020). After the ADA,

employment protections for Deaf people got speeded up remarkably by requiring equal access and accommodation measures to be fully included in the labor force.

Early 2000s: Workforce Investment Act (WIA): The main point of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 was to establish better workforce development systems as well as bring job, education, training, and support service opportunities closer for Americans, including disabled persons. The integration of vocational rehabilitation services under WIA was consistent with workforce development programs' prioritization of employment among the disabled as well as skill development (McMahon et al., 2020). Furthermore, vocational training and job opportunities for the Deaf were increased through partnerships between vocational rehabilitation agencies and other workforce development stakeholders. The bill also promotes the job readiness training of Deaf individuals.

21st Century Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that went into effect in 2014 replaced the WIA and maintained the focus on the enhancement of workforce system delivery and full employment accessibility for people with impairments (Demartino et al., 2023). WIOA aimed at competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities as a priority. That is to say, to have great collaboration between vocational rehabilitation agencies, employers, and other stakeholders that would increase employment outcomes (Kelly et al., 2016). It is the brainchild behind personalized employment tactics, in addition to skills development and the provision of various support services that are seen to be best suited to individuals of all kinds, which includes the population of the Deaf, in creating long-term gainful employment opportunities.

## **Cultural Attitudes towards Disabilities and Entrepreneurship in China**

Shifting back to China, it is important to understand that even as policies for disabilities developed, cultural attitudes still shape the experience of Deaf people. Education guidelines published in 1994 urged schools to include children with disabilities into regular classes, where they would study together with other students with fewer difficulties (Jones et al., 2021). However, this approach was not met favorably by local educators who assumed that it's going to be impossible for these learners. The integration of Deaf students in the classroom means that the number of residential Deaf schools in China is declining. Even with a decrease in the quantity of residential Deaf schools, there has not been a corresponding decrease in the accessibility of interpreters for Deaf students who are integrated into mainstream educational settings (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Additionally, sign language accommodations have been conspicuously lacking in these initiatives. The impact of this is that Deaf students may have more access to their hearing counterparts, but they still face significant barriers in communication.

In China, there is also the demand for the Deaf persons to pass “gaokao”, which is a demanding national examination, before many Chinese students can proceed with their education (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). The difference between Deaf and hearing Chinese students taking the gaokao is that Deaf people have fewer slots available to them at higher education levels. This presents a significant barrier for the majority of Deaf people, rendering higher education mostly inaccessible. Consequently, a considerable number of hearing-

impaired students are steered towards pursuing higher vocational education within 25 specialized institutions for special education (Jones et al., 2021). However, the range of available academic disciplines in these institutions is restricted to fields such as computer applications, animation, and diverse practical skills. Significantly, Deaf students do not have access to topics such as social sciences, mathematics, economics, and entrepreneurship that they so need to maneuver the business world.

A quota system policy has been implemented by the Chinese government, compelling both public and private enterprises to reserve a minimum of 1.5% of job positions for individuals with disabilities (Zhang, 2009). Even though this quota system has helped to reduce the official unemployment rate for people with disabilities living in cities to 9.9%, its implementation has also given rise to more serious issues that cannot be overlooked (Zhang, 2009). The quota system brings a strong focus on sheltered employment. For example, reports show that a large number of these Deaf persons employed under this quota system are often assigned low-status or unskilled positions (ESCAP, 2017). Additionally, most of them receive minimum wage and have limited chances to grow in their careers (Harrison-Obi, 2019). In other instances, some are even paid the minimum wage but are essentially told not to come to work (Hashemi, Kuper, & Wickenden, 2017). Therefore, these people are confined to unfulfilling roles, which significantly undermines their self-esteem and motivation despite being capable of more meaningful and productive employment. This affects not just their

sense of self-worth but also the cycle of dismal expectations that Deaf workers have in gainful employment (ESCAP, 2017).

### **Cultural Attitudes towards Disabilities and Entrepreneurship in the US**

The economic difficulties experienced in recent years have presented professionals who assist individuals with hearing impairments with further obstacles in their efforts to secure meaningful employment (Atkins, 2011). Small firms, namely those with a workforce of fewer than 500 individuals, have emerged as a substantial catalyst for the expansion of employment opportunities inside the United States. This trend emphasizes the value of exploring entrepreneurship as a solution to meet the work needs of individuals who are Deaf (Demartino, Murthy, & Atkins, 2023).

Over the past decade, studies have demonstrated that Deaf individuals are actively engaging in entrepreneurship and owning businesses (Garberoglio et al., 2019). Given such significant events as the International Deaf Nation Expos in Las Vegas, 2010 and 2012, a rise of Deaf community can be witnessed. These expos attract the attention of thousands of persons, and feature a lot of businesses owned by these individuals. An array of products ranging from Deaf films, fashion accessories and sign language dictionaries filled over 300 booths at DNWE. Additionally, more than 70 workshops were held on a variety of subjects, including entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, Deaf telephony, and cross-cultural interactions which are all good for business.



According to Atkins (2013) Deaf entrepreneurs utilize a combination of networks that are tailored specifically to the Deaf community as well as broader networks to enhance the growth and reach of their company. The capacity to develop and sustain robust connections is widely seen as a valued resource. Previous professional experience in a relevant domain also holds considerable significance, as it offers valuable perspectives and serves as a foundation for achieving favorable outcomes. Deaf entrepreneurs frequently engage in business ventures that correspond with their own interests, hence emphasizing the significance of passion in the establishment of successful firms (Jammaers & Zanoni, 2020). However, the disenfranchised nature of the Deaf community can present additional challenges in terms of acquiring financial resources (Demartino, Murthy, & Atkins, 2023). Although there exist initiatives that try to promote entrepreneurship and small company ownership throughout marginalized communities in the US, there is a limited number of programs specifically designed to cater to the distinctive requirements of those who are Deaf. The availability of resources and mentorship is widely acknowledged as crucial, since those who have had mentors have always regarded them as important in their pursuit of entrepreneurship (Díaz-Cintas & Massidda, 2019).

Cultural attitudes often shape a country's approach to providing equitable opportunities for people with disabilities. Another way that shapes equitable opportunities for Deaf people is the policy framework. Next, I'll discuss China's policy framework.

## **Analysis of Legal & Policy Frameworks for Entrepreneurship in China**

China has implemented a comprehensive legal framework aimed at safeguarding and advancing the rights of those with disabilities, including those who are Deaf and engaged in entrepreneurial activities (Zhang, 2009). Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the current disparity between policy formulation and its execution in order to effectively translate these legislative measures into actual improvements in the quality of life for those with disabilities. The legal framework pertaining to individuals with disabilities in China are largely enshrined in the Constitution which was enacted in 1982 and subsequently revised on various occasions, the latest amendment being that of 2004 (Zhang, 2009). The Chinese Constitution provides broad safeguards for those who have disabilities.

Similarly, “the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons,” enacted in 1991 and subsequently revised in 2000, encompasses a comprehensive range of provisions pertaining to various aspects concerning disabled individuals. These provisions encompass areas such as rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural participation, social welfare, accessibility, and legal accountability. The amendment enacted in the year 2000 incorporated components pertaining to financial assistance, healthcare services, rehabilitation programs, and employment initiatives (Zhang, 2009) which can be leveraged by a Deaf entrepreneur to seek additional support for their business ventures.

Another policy that has really helped is the “Rules on the Employment of Disabled Persons” (2007) which aims to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities and establish measures to prevent discriminatory practices based on disability (Zhang, 2009). This is complemented with the Employment Promotion Law of 2007 which also has provisions aimed at preventing discrimination against those with impairments. The Chinese government

also enforces a job quota of 1.5% for those who are abled differently, with specific quotas determined by provincial authorities (Stein, 2010). Additionally, the 12th Five Year National Programme on Disability, implemented from 2011 to 2015, was a significant initiative aimed at addressing issues related to disability within the country (Hashemi et al., 2017). One of the primary objectives was to generate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, aiming to reach a target of one million jobs. According to the Regulations on Construction of Accessible Environment put in effect in 2012, local governments in China are required to construct public facilities that are inclusive of people with disabilities (Zhang, 2009).

These policies at the local level are strengthened by policies at the international level. For example, the UNPRPD is a joint venture between ILO, UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF (Wanhong, 2023) that has been actively engaged in the provision of Disability Equality Training (DET) sessions all over local areas in China (Harrison-Obi, 2019). The goal of these trainings is to promote collaboration between able-bodied people and people with disabilities (Zhang, 2009). Furthermore, collaboration efforts in this domain encompass relationships with the Embassies of Sweden, Germany, and the USA, together dedicated to advancing the rights and welfare of those with disabilities in China (Wanhong, 2023). The PROPEL-China initiative has achieved significant advancements in addressing prejudice and promoting skill development for individuals with disabilities since its inception in 2010 (Zhang, 2009). Collectively, several provincial and local governments in China, like Hunan, Beijing, Jilin, Dongying, and Guangzhou have implemented policies aimed at promoting and facilitating the employment of those with disabilities (Zhang, 2009) in both public and private sectors. The Policies on Assistive Employment for Persons with Disability were issued by the central government in July 2015 and pertain to the establishment of Assistive Employment Centers. It

was required by these laws that every district and county construct Assistive Employment Centers prior to the year 2020 (Wanhong, 2023). The establishment of support networks has been observed in various urban areas, including Dalian, Chongqing, Wuhan, Beijing, and Shanghai, encompassing both local business networks and disability networks. The establishment of these networks can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of the China Enterprise Confederation and the China Disabled Persons' Federation.

The current number of supported employment job coaches actively providing assistance to persons with disability in their transition into the labor market and business stands at 480 (Zhang, 2009). A range of advocacy campaigns have also been implemented, encompassing activities such as seminars on supported business ventures that focus on the inclusion of individuals with hearing impairments. Additionally, the establishment of China Disability Month and the organization of the Youth with impairments Leadership and Advocacy Capacity Building Camp in 2015 are notable endeavors in the area of business ownership.

However, since the 1980's even with the quota and the above legislations, the level of employment and return on employment among the Deaf community in China is still low. For example, according to the Conference Board of China (Bruyère & Schrader, 2019), the quota has only realized 0.5% implementation rate which is much less than the 1.5% stipulated in law. This is because most employers see the penalty of non-compliances as a fee that they can easily pay instead of implementing the quota. Others also claim that finding the qualified and certified talent that can fill their job demand as part of the quota is a big problem because of the inadequate training or lack of certification. The skills most of them are equipped with are not sufficient to allow them to compete in the current labor market of China. Similarly, we all

know that most business opportunities and resources are normally more concentrated within the urban areas but in China, a large percentage of persons with disability have been compelled to live in the rural areas which are not market driven. This has resulted in a large wage differential between households with people with disability and those without.

Policies for people with disability in China are present but still have room for improvement in order to realize equitable opportunities for Deaf people. The USA is often considered a leader in forward-thinking disability policy, but there are challenges for Deaf people in the US as well. The next section will discuss the policy framework in the US.

### **Analysis of Legal & Policy Frameworks for Entrepreneurship in USA**

The ADA, enacted in 1990, is a comprehensive civil rights statute that safeguards the rights of people with disabilities in the US (Kanter, 2015). Its enactment has had significant turning point in the civil rights protections that the US offers to people with disabilities (McMahon, et al., 2020). It covers four fundamental tenets including: complete involvement, equitable access, self-sufficient living, and financial independence (Diller, 2000). The main goal of the ADA is to end discrimination against persons with disabilities in all facets of American society, including work, business, public accommodations, transportation, and communal living (Kanter, 2015).

Despite its clear stipulations, and successes, there are still obstacles in the way of guaranteeing that people with disabilities can participate fully in all aspects of society. As a result, in 2021, the US government made a deliberate choice to join forces with other

countries, civil society, and experts, and partake in an international conversation on disability-inclusive democracy venture (UNICEF, 2022). Following this program, significant actions have already been done by the Biden-Harris administration to promote a more inclusive democracy for people with disabilities. For example, they appointed a US Special Advisor on International Disability Rights, a position currently occupied by Sara Minkara. Special Advisor Minkara is a senior-level State Department official who oversees a comprehensive plan to fight for the rights of people with disabilities around the world (USDS, 2024). Her appointment serves as another evidence of the dedication to advancing disability rights in the US and globally.

Similarly, the Executive Order 14035, which President Biden issued, requires federal agencies to assess and enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout the government (USDS, 2024). The directive has lowered physical barriers to accessibility for persons with disability. Federal agencies are additionally directed in carrying out these recommendations by the administration's Strategic Plan for Advancing DEIA in the Federal Workforce (UNICEF, 2022). The administration has prioritized improving access to essential services throughout the US, encouraging independent living through accessible housing and community-based services, and promoting economic self-sufficiency. Additionally, it aims to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the resources they need and are actively involved in important productive ventures by enacting policies quickly (USDS, 2024).

Another relevant policy is the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504. This law forbids discrimination on the grounds of disability in any activity or program that gets financing from

the federal government. It applies to organizations that get financial support from the federal government, including educational institutions and federal agencies (Pohlman et al., 2005).

This goes hand in hand with the Fair Housing Act which addresses any forms of discrimination in housing on the grounds of disability (Schwemm, 2019). Through this act, all housing providers must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate persons with disability.

Similarly, there is also the Telecommunications statute of 1996. This statute has played a pivotal role in ensuring that Deaf persons in businesses can effectively communicate with their clients. As a result, technologies like text-to-text (TTY) services, relay services, and VRS-enabled communication services for people with communication difficulties were developed (Hundt, 2006). This is particularly helpful in providing the technological support that persons with disability require to cope with businesses in this technological age.

### **Summary Chart of the Literature**

The comparison chart synthesizes key findings from the literature review, highlighting the challenges faced by Deaf entrepreneurs, government support and policies, and cultural attitudes towards disabilities and entrepreneurship in both China and the USA. By juxtaposing these aspects side by side, this chart provides a comprehensive overview of the landscape surrounding Deaf entrepreneurship in two distinct socio-economic contexts. Through this comparative analysis, readers gain insights into the similarities and differences between the two countries, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the factors influencing Deaf entrepreneurship.

	<i>China</i>	<i>USA</i>
<b>Key Challenges Faced by Deaf Persons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prevailing narrative of “self as enterprise” (Dauncey, 2012)</li> <li>● Limited emphasis on practical skills and vocational training (Worrell &amp; Taber, 2009)</li> <li>● Language barrier affecting communication</li> <li>● Discrimination in business interactions and employment opportunities instructors (Atkins, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Economic dependence on Social Security Disability Insurance (Bagenstos, 2000)</li> <li>● High unemployment and underemployment rates (Dammeyer et al., 2019)</li> <li>● Challenges in creating business plans and accessing financial resources (Pohlman et al., 2005)</li> <li>● Difficulty in convincing hearing individuals of Deaf entrepreneurs' capabilities (Atkins, 2011)</li> </ul>
<b>Government support and Policies Supporting Disabled</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legal framework for disability rights protection (McMahon, et al., 2020)</li> <li>● Implementation gaps and challenges</li> <li>● Job quota system for individuals with disabilities (ESCAP, 2017)</li> <li>● Limited access to formal education in sign language (Atkins, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act (Francisco et al., 2020)</li> <li>● Initiatives to promote equal employment opportunities (Zhang, 2009)</li> <li>● Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (Kelly et al., 2016)</li> <li>● Telecommunications statute for accessibility (Hundt, 2006)</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Attitudes towards Disabilities and Entrepreneurship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prejudice and social exclusion (Wang, 2019)</li> <li>● Quota system in employment leading to low-status positions (ESCAP, 2017)</li> <li>● Limited access to formal education and vocational training (Atkins, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increasing acceptance and promotion of entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Deaf community engagement in entrepreneurship events and activities</li> <li>● Importance of mentorship and networks in entrepreneurial success (Díaz-Cintas &amp; Massidda, 2019)</li> </ul>



<b>Legal &amp; Policy Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legal framework includes the Constitution, Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons, and Employment Promotion Law (Zhang, 2009)</li> <li>● Implementation challenges and gaps in special education and employment policies</li> <li>● Job quota system and its impact on employment opportunities (ESCAP, 2017)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legal framework includes Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Telecommunications statute (Hundt, 2006)</li> <li>● Initiatives to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility</li> <li>● Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and their role in facilitating employment (Kelly et al., 2016)</li> <li>● Fair Housing Act and Telecommunications statute ensuring accessibility (Schwemm, 2019)</li> </ul>
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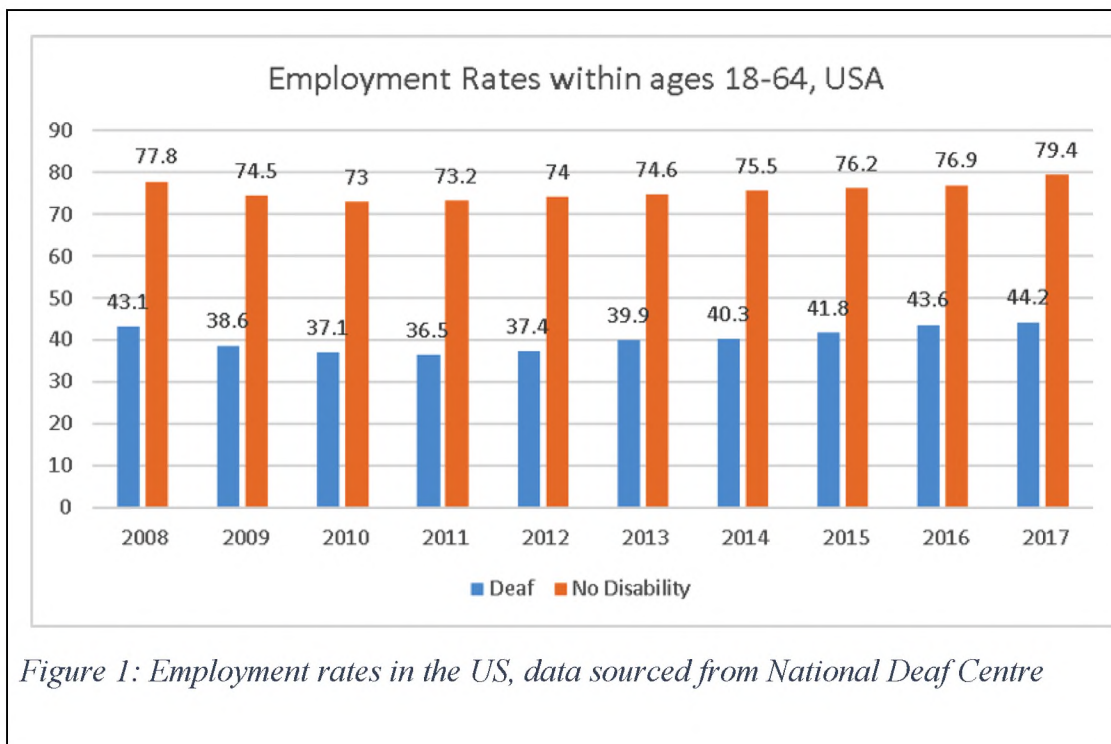
Therefore, the comparison chart serves as a bridge between the detailed examination of Deaf entrepreneurship in China and the USA presented in the literature review and the subsequent sections of the report. By distilling complex information into a concise and digestible format, the chart enables readers to grasp the key dynamics at play in each country. Moving forward, readers can delve deeper into specific areas of interest, armed with a clearer understanding of the challenges, policies, and cultural attitudes shaping the entrepreneurial landscape for individuals with hearing impairments.

### **Data Analysis**

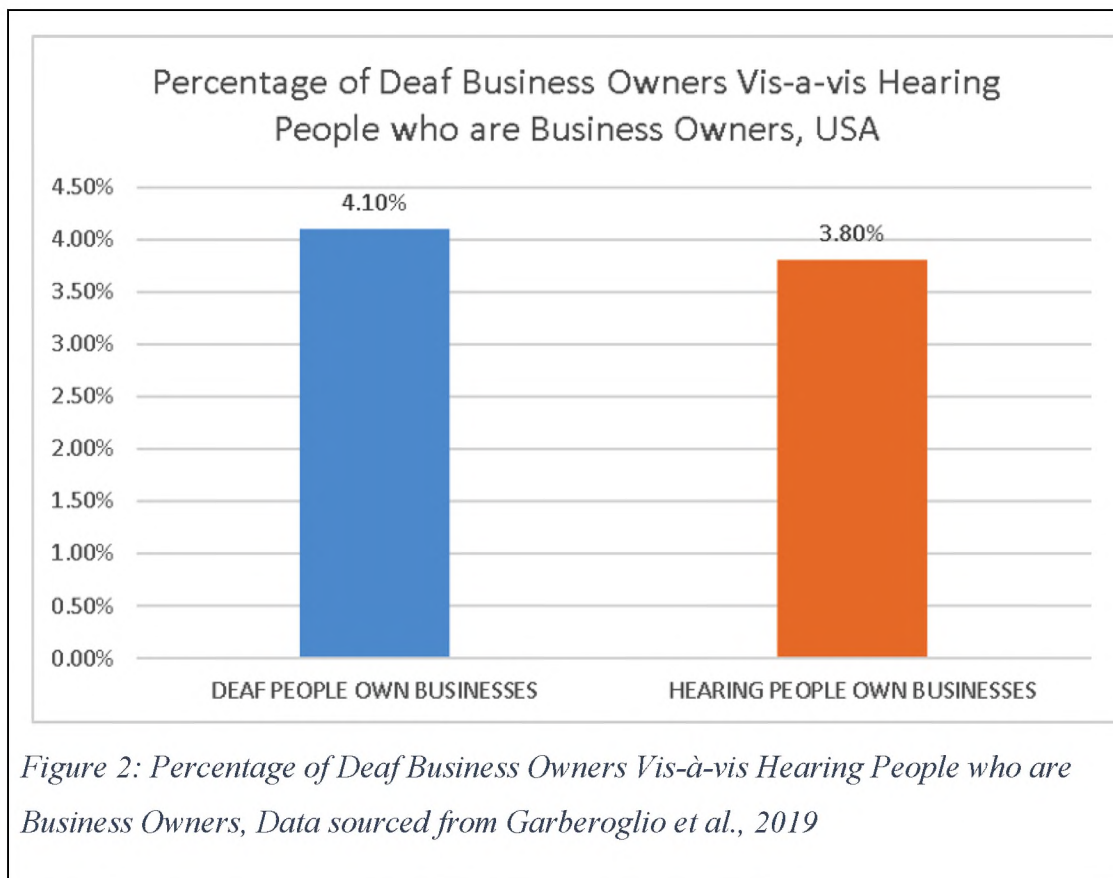
In this study, a comparative analysis should have been done on Deaf entrepreneurs in the US and China. However, since the study was relying on secondary research, the researcher was unable to find statistical evidence to back up the theoretical viewpoints of past

publications regarding the Deaf economy in China. Therefore, in the case of China, the analysis of the Deaf economy only relied purely on the qualitative viewpoints of past studies. This implies that, as of the time of this research the situation of the Deaf economy may have improved or worsened, but without the necessary statistical evidence, we can only speculate. On the other hand, there was enough statistical evidence in the case of the US. Since we established from literature review that the US is doing better with its Deaf economy than China (Atkins, 201 & Pressman, 1999), we can safely infer to the situation of the Deaf economy in China based on the numbers from USA. Therefore, even without the actual statistics for China, the analysis and recommendations made are still valid.

From 2008 to 2017, the employment rates of those who are Deaf in the United States did not change much. In 2008 it was 43.1% and in 2017 it was 44.2, with minor variations in the years in between as shown in figure 1 below. This was interpreted to mean that from the year 2008 to 2017, even though a lot of laws and legislations to support persons with disability have been passed in the US, the employment rates of the Deaf persons have not significantly increased.



Using the US statistics, we observe that Deaf individuals who are employed have a slightly higher percentage of being self-employed or business owners when compared to their hearing counterparts as shown in the graph below. This is because most Deaf people turn to forming their own businesses to help them deal with the difficulties and prejudices that they frequently encounter in typical workplaces. Although it is not a big difference percentage wise, given that the Deaf people are a smaller number of the population, this can be translated to mean that they have many opportunities to self-employ. In contrast, the vocation training for the Deaf in China is limited to areas such as: computer applications, animations, and diverse practical skills, but limits access to areas such as social sciences, mathematics, economics and entrepreneurship that they need to maneuver the business world. With this we can expect that the numbers of Deaf owned businesses are still lagging behind those in the US.



When Deaf people work full-time, their reported median annual earnings are similar to those of hearing people, with both groups earning around \$50,000. However, it's important to note that employment rates and earnings can vary significantly within both Deaf and hearing communities in the US. For the purposes of these analysis, we assumed that same is true for China as well.

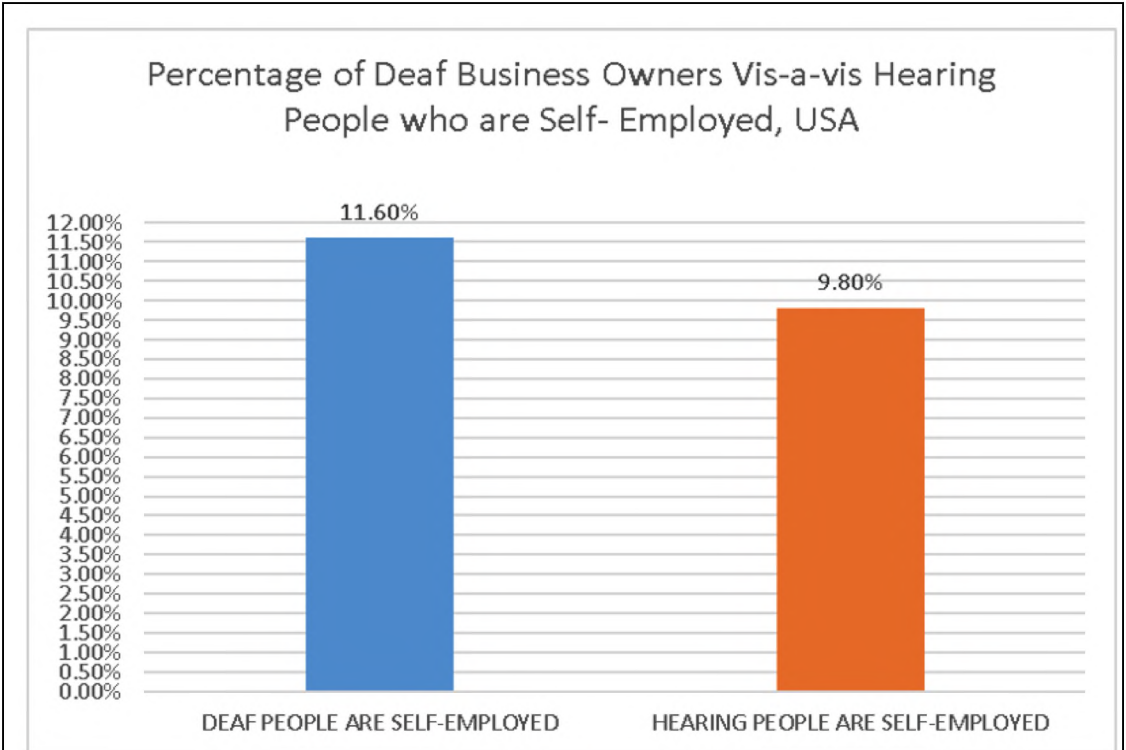
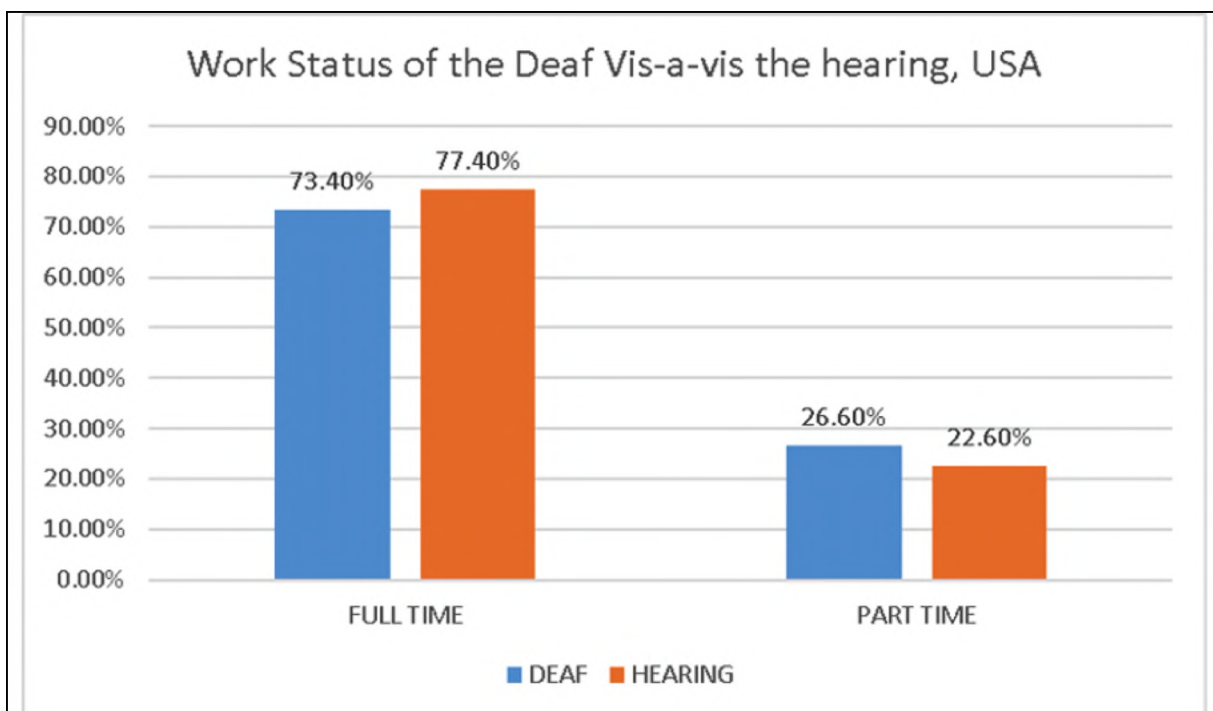


Figure 3: Percentage of Deaf Business Owners Vis-à-vis Hearing People who are self-employed , Data sourced from Garberoglio et al., 2019



*Figure 5: Work Status of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People in the US, Data sourced from Garberoglio et al., 2019*

The outcomes of the education and employment level of the Deaf communities in the USA seem to be positively correlated. The eras that had the most advancement in education seem to have the most progress in Deaf persons engaged in productive employment. Even in the case of China, we found from literature review that during Maoist era, the main goal of Chinese special education was to prepare students to work as socialists and not for self-employment (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Since a strong educational foundation is essential if we want to create a strong business environment, China might be lagging behind the US in terms of Deaf owned businesses.

From the analyzed data in the Figure 5 above, we observe that the employment gap between the Deaf and the hearing is lessened for those with greater education levels. Similarly, the reviewed literature, we observed that in terms of Deaf education and support, US is doing much better than China (Atkins, 2013 & Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). As a result, the initiatives and resources that are now accessible caused positive employment results for the Deaf community. In contrast, we expect the employment gap in China to be wider given the numerous challenges that are still there in the education sector. This is because, regardless of the available legislature changes that have been made in China, there are still problems with the implementation and application as seen through irregular special education development throughout regions in China (CDPF, 2012a). For instance, many Deaf children in China continue to be deprived of the option for receiving formal education through sign language. Many of the residential schools, 600-900, for Deaf students nationwide are predominantly covered by hearing teachers with limited skills in the field of education for the Deaf (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). In addition, special education in China has been limited by prejudice against students with disabilities and social exclusion, along with restricted educational resources (Wang, 2019). Although the researcher could not find the actual employment statistics for China, it is reasonable to speculate that the employment gap may continue because of the observed challenges in their educational sector.

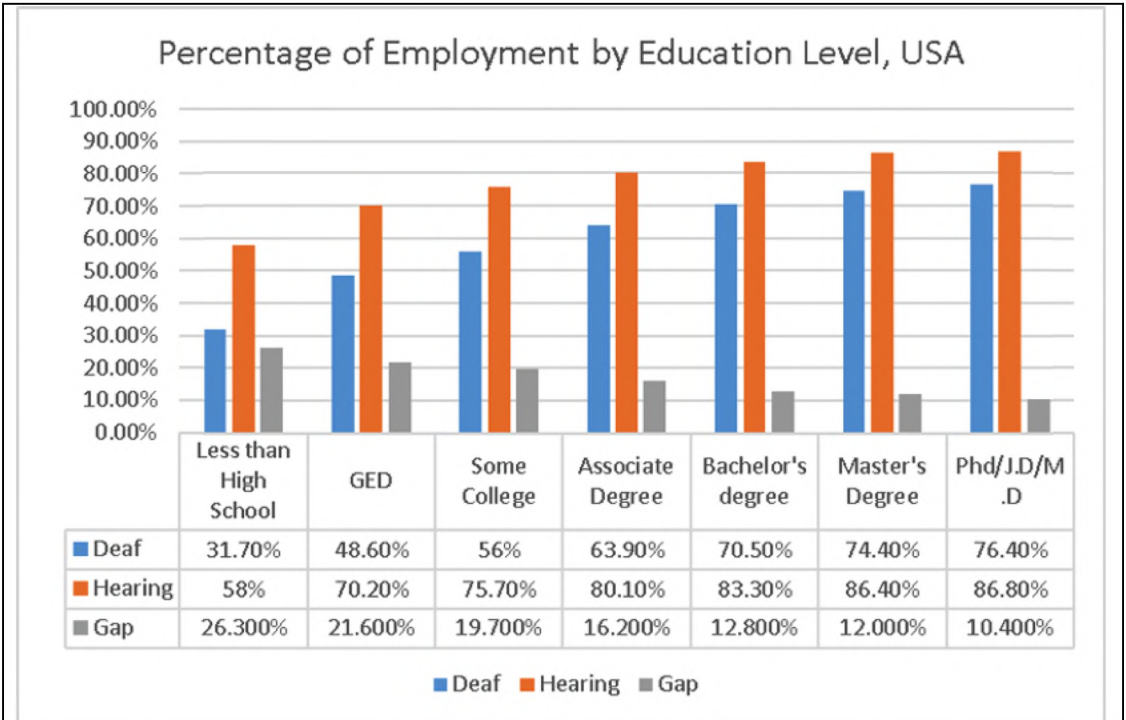
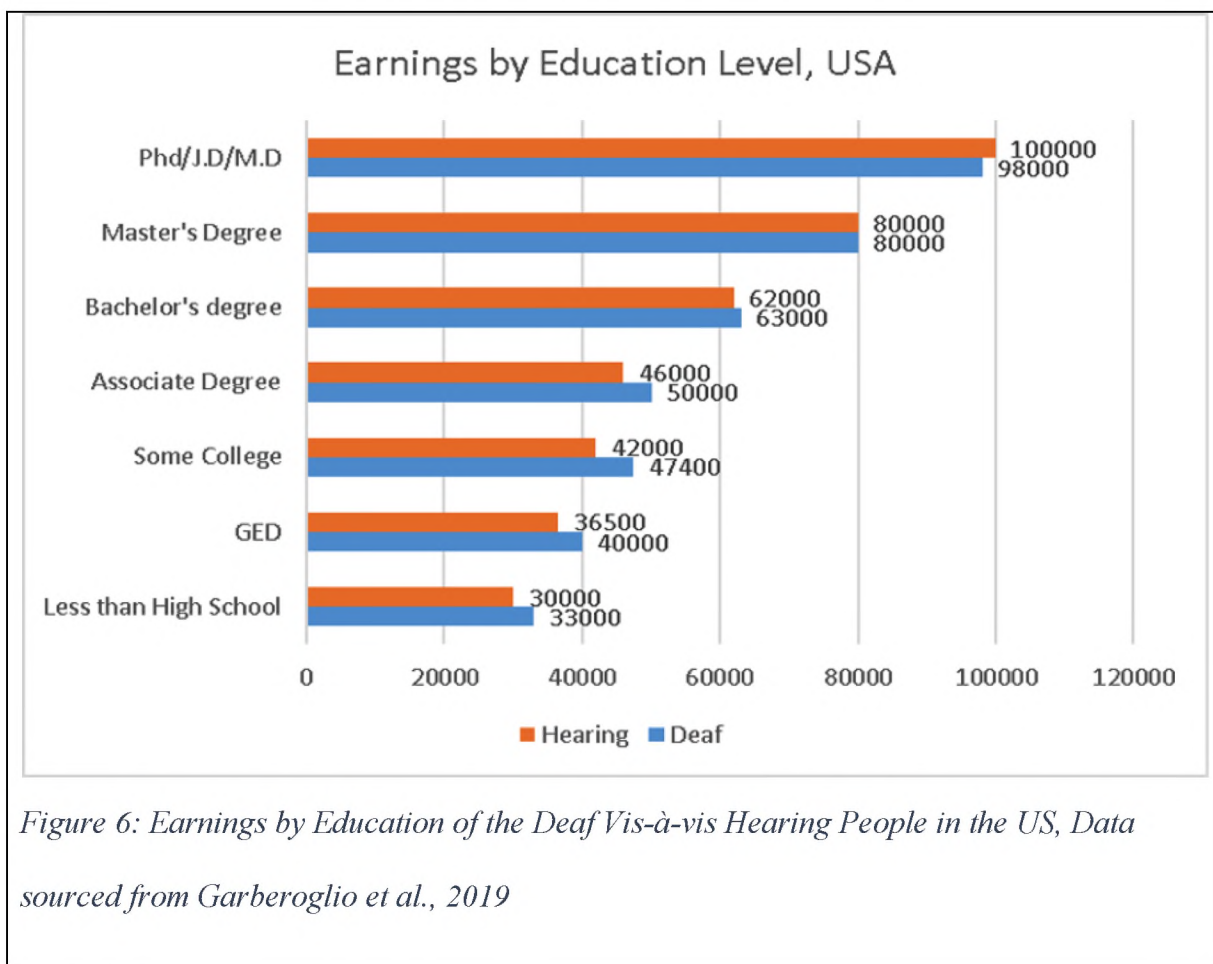


Figure 6: Percentage of Employment by Education of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People in the US, Data sourced from Garberoglio et al., 2019

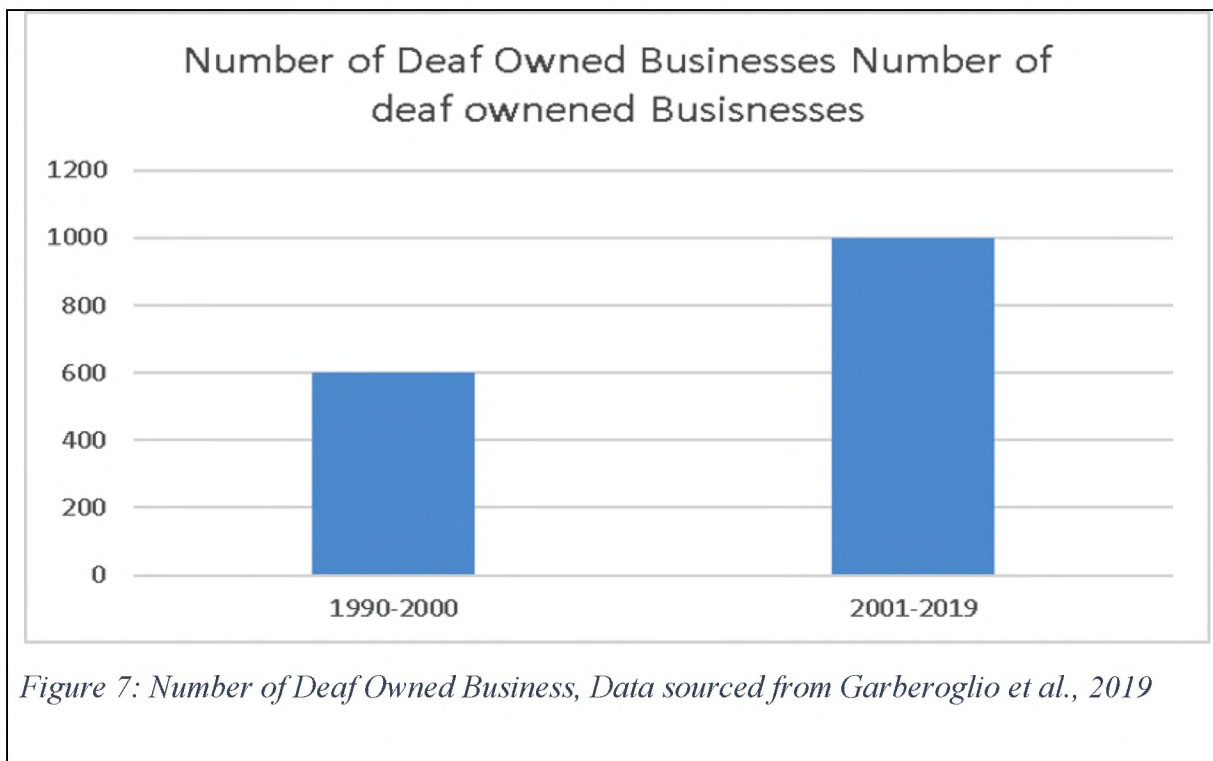
From the available US statistics, we can observe that the education level narrows the gap between the Deaf and the hearing in employment. Therefore, by enhancing their entrepreneurial skills, we can also empower them to engage more in business.





*Figure 6: Earnings by Education of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People in the US, Data sourced from Garberoglio et al., 2019*

In the case of the US, the Deaf persons who have excelled in education and secured employment seem to earn more than those without disability because of the tax exemptions. Even in business, the Deaf business owners are awarded tax reliefs, and this has had positive impacts on the increasing number of Deaf-owned businesses as shown in the figure below.



Atkins, (2017) states that there are a lot of factors that contribute to data uncertainty, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Deaf-owned businesses. These range from incompleteness of census data, insufficient information pertaining to the legal status of certain enterprises, and the difficulty in creating a standard classification system for Deaf-owned enterprises due to the wide range of hearing impairment levels among members of a population. Therefore, owing to the lack of a defined categorization scheme makes it more difficult to get an accurate and thorough census, and institutional reports of these businesses. However, these challenges notwithstanding, the expansion of Deaf-owned companies is very much noticeable. The number of Deaf-owned firms in the US is thought to have increased, from approximately 600 less than ten years ago to over 1,000 as of 2017. These days, Deaf

business owners run everything from car repair shops, restaurants, beauty parlors, bakeries, law firms, and even medical clinics (Weber, 2017).

### Summary of the Available Data

One of the challenges of this analysis is the difference between the USA and China in having data on economic opportunities for D/Deaf people. As discussed previously, both cultures have different attitudes towards disability which can complicate efforts to achieve greater equality especially in countries where the research goals are focused on the general population. The table below shows just how challenging it is to get data in China.

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>USA</i>
• <b>Employment rates between the Deaf persons vs the hearing</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Percentage of Deaf Business Owners Vis-à-vis Hearing People who are Business Owners,</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Work Status of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Percentage of Deaf Business Owners Vis-à-vis Hearing People who are self-employed</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Percentage of Employment by Education of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Earnings by Education of the Deaf Vis-à-vis Hearing People</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>
• <b>Number of Deaf Owned Business</b>	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>Available</b>

As evidenced, in this table the US has a lot more research on Deaf people in the United States. This could be for a variety of reasons, including legislation that requires data to be collected and published on different minority groups.

## **Discussion**

In the US, studies show that a majority of Deaf business owners started their entrepreneurial journeys before the age of 35 (Pressman, 1999). Similarly, a large number of them came from a variety of educational backgrounds, with the majority having graduated from residential and/or mainstream school environments (Atkins, 2013; Weber, 2017 & Garberoglio et al., 2019). Most of these business owners hold at least a bachelor's degree from recognized colleges and institutions and this emphasizes the role of sufficient and skillful education to this marginalized group (Atkins, 2013). Since many of them have been Deaf since birth, they mostly use American Sign Language in their daily lives. However, many at times, a large percentage of them use speech and writing in professional settings when communicating with hearing people. According to Pressman, 1999, sign language interpreters, electronic mail systems, and phone relay services have been reported to play a significant role in the entrepreneurial journey of Deaf persons because they bridge the gap in communication between the Deaf and those who are hearing.

Reports by the Entrepreneur revealed a wide range of business models within the rising Deaf economy. Within the Deaf economy, startup funding frequently came from personal savings, and the majority of companies are private enterprises. Two common reasons these

people decide to start their own business are the "desire to be their own bosses" and the "wish to earn more money" (Pressman, 1999). However, most of them still find challenges when it comes to creating a business plan, identifying financial sources, marketing, and advertising their businesses. Additionally, it is often difficult to convince hearing people that Deaf people could operate successful businesses and interact with hearing clients in an effective manner. The study identified mentors and influential role models at various phases of career development. In the early phases of a profession, family and teachers are crucial, but "friends" also became important, especially when it came to starting new businesses.

There are a number of reasons for the growth of Deaf-owned enterprises, including changes in legislation and technological developments. In the past, the Deaf were barred from working thus making it difficult for them to find work. For them, an important milestone occurred when the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was passed. This law abrogated disability discrimination which promoted increased social participation for members of Deaf community.

Today more than half of America's Deaf population is full time employed (Weber, 2017). Similarly regarding China, "the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons," includes a general range of provisions that pertain or relate to many areas including rehabilitation welfare, education accessibility, employment culture and participation in legal responsibility. Its amendment has also incorporated provisions relating to financial aid; healthcare services, rehabilitation programs and employment initiatives that can be accessed by a Deaf entrepreneur so as to get further support for their business undertakings (Zhang, 2009).

In the US, for instance, a vibrant “Deaf ecosystem” in Maryland is transforming the state’s economic landscape by empowering Deaf individuals. In the state alone, there are more than 75 Deaf-owned enterprises, indicating the distinctive economic impact this growing population is making. The expansion of these businesses fosters the development of critical soft skills like leadership, cooperation, confidence, and teamwork in addition to achieving financial independence. As denoted by Kelby Brick, the Deaf owned businesses contribute more staff who are Deaf employees to the emerging Deaf economy. Along with financial income, the Deaf entrepreneur is presented with an invaluable experience that makes them feel as if they are part of a network and rely on each other. As a result, they exchange social skills and improve their self-esteem. The entrepreneurship spirit in this community becomes evident in its exceptional manifestation at Streetcar 82, a brewery at Hyattsville owned by three Deaf men. The brewery not only concentrates on brewing the best beers as well but also manifests how Deaf-owned enterprises can be of benefit to the community.

The fact that Mark Burke, who had been a home brewer and bartender some years ago, is a successful entrepreneur demonstrates that Deaf people do not have to be limited in their businesses. Besides good marketing, the use of video relay services is what made Streetcar 82 service successful. VRS continues to play a crucial role in easing contact with bodies such as the Small Business Administration and receiving necessary support. They can now get calls get calls from hearing people without them having to dial a separate number for relay. Additionally, Deaf people could sign directly in real time to callers instead of turn taking through the traditional TTY. Inherently, this has allowed for more natural phone calls from

hearing peoples' experience and less 'hang up on this business" situations which has boosted the business.

The cooperative mindset within the network of Deaf-owned businesses is also best demonstrated by Streetcar 82's dedication to giving preference to Deaf suppliers for contract work and hiring a majority of Deaf employees. Customers of the brewery use a combination of lip reading, vocal communication, and American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with each other, acting as a bridge between the hearing and the Deaf communities. Therefore, like many Deaf owned businesses, brewery's success story involves not only producing high-quality beer but also promoting diversity and dismantling barriers.

Similarly, businesses like Starbucks are facilitating this shift by opening locations that are exclusively run in sign language, giving the Deaf and hearing communities a place to interact. The opening of the first Starbucks Signing Store in the United States and parts of China was a huge success, and it's a reflection of the world's general shift toward inclusivity and accessibility. Previously marginalized in the "hearing world," Deaf people are now claiming their identity and skills, calling for equitable opportunities, and pressuring institutions to reconsider antiquated standards. For example, through sign language, use video boards, doodle pads, visual catalogue and menus, Starbucks and Mozzeria have made efforts to make both their Deaf and hearing clients comfortable. These initiatives seem appealing, but before Chinese businesses can adopt them, they must first understand the distinctive cultural, linguistic, and societal variations between the US and China. For them, adopting a visual-centric strategy may make more sense because their culture largely values non-verbal

communication. Providing workers with sign language instruction and services can also improve the general customer experience.

The story is set in a number of industries, including aviation, where Deaf pilots such as Jackson Busenbark are pushing for changes to the rules. The Deaf people undertake the “Let Us Work” movement. This initiative is geared towards the jobs which were previously done by only the hearing people who were able to communicate through radio waves. The movement has more than 200 members and its main aim is to challenge the FAA’s stand that radio communications are a must. Moreover, the makers of this project emphasize the possibility that NextGen technology could serve as a bridge to more inclusive. The core message of the ongoing project #DeafEffect is referred to as “Deaf gain,” when the spotlight is on a lot of positive aspects of Deaf people. Besides aiming for financial growth, other organizations and businesses owned by hearing impaired individuals including Communication Service for the Deaf are not only challenging people’s misconceptions but also creating a place where Deaf people are recognized for their accomplishments.

The narrative also goes beyond the venture of the private company. There are many other states in the US (for instance, Maryland), it indicates the inclusiveness and economic freedom. Deaf people are not in a position to sit and let miracles happen. They have taken up their own destiny and are criticizing the old prejudices and protesting against both material and spiritual discrimination. This effect is felt in the economic circle as well as the society as it is possible that there can be successful Deaf persons from the working class.



## Best Practices

Among the principal non-profit organizations that are helpful in the realization of Deaf founded companies is the Deaf Entrepreneurs America Foundation. It gives Deaf people the chance to become entrepreneurs and spreads the awareness of banks and other financial institutions on how to offer the financial services that are inclusive to hearing impaired individuals. This foundation is a platform between businesses and entrepreneurs that creates awareness, encourages knowledge among people in the larger community.

Moreover, sites like Deaf Friendly and such platforms allow these companies to get further visibility, attract more customers and develop a group of loyal consumers. A blog like DeafRead is dedicated to the collection of “best Deaf blogs and vlogs”. It contains up-to date news that can be useful for a number of people, including businesspeople since it also covers topics like conferences, apps etc. This selection of content not only gives entrepreneurs insightful connections but also helps to create a sense of community between *f* company owners. Also, the SBA provides very valuable information to help business owners on their venture at every stage from advice about a thorough detailed business plan to handling issues of funding and filing permits.

Another reason for notable growth of Deaf-owned enterprises is technological progress, specifically in the field of communication. With the widespread availability of broadband internet service, today communication cost and how complex it is for those who are Deaf has greatly reduced. The Video Relay Service, which was approved by the FCC more than ten years ago has become a standard component of the telecommunications infrastructure.

It has come in handy in bridging the gap between Deaf persons even in the case of business to their clients. With VRS, smartphones and broadband internet, people who are Deaf can start video phone calls, and a communications assistant can help hearing people communicate with them in real time. Before these advances in technology, the main means of communication for Deaf people was through fax machines or teletypewriters. These tools, however, were described as slow, laborious, and necessitated the use of English, which many Deaf people may speak as a second or third language.

An excellent illustration of VRS's beneficial effects can be found in Mozzarella, a San Francisco-based Italian restaurant. The restaurant experienced difficulties in 2011 since its outdated communication system caused it to miss almost half of its phone calls. But because of developments in technology, especially VRS, Mozzarella's call capture rate shot up to a whopping 95%. Consequently, to improve customer relations, the restaurant also provides tablet computers to all its personnel, including a dozen Deaf employees.

Furthermore, sites on social media such as X's #DeafTalent showcase the achievements of Deaf individuals in various fields and serve to inspire while fostering a sense belonging. For instance, nowadays there are many prominent Deaf people in the show business including popular stars such as Nyle DiMarco, and Marlee Matlin. 1986 saw celebrated actress Marlee Matlin making headlines as the first Deaf artist to win an Academy award for best actor, thanks to her appearance in "Children of a Lesser God". The bold step marked a new departure towards creating more recognition and attention on such talent emanating from people afflicted with this handicap within the film world. Nyle DiMarco won

ABC's "Dancing with the Stars." Besides demonstrating his dancing talent, he proved that Deaf people were also capable of competing very well. Nyle DiMarco has exercised his supportive role to share knowledge about how Deaf culture and language works, beyond the peak of career he had on dance floor, whereby he made an appeal for Deaf equity. Hence, the industry of entertainment becomes more diverse and inclusive by representing talents and backgrounds of people with hearing impairments.

### **Policy Recommendations for China**

The economic empowerment of Deaf persons necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes focused interventions and policies that are supportive. Developing specialized mentorship and internship programs for the Deaf community is one important component that China can implement. It has been observed that most internships lead to hire because they give young people work experiences, and open opportunities for supervisors to integrate PWD into businesses. They can learn first-hand where to get additional support such as capitulation for business ventures. Today, the previously mentioned Deaf businesspeople should be prepared to change the working conditions for their Deaf employees as well as to run the mentoring programs that include the ones which help to integrate the employees into the business. In addition to the internship program, the programs will have a dual purpose of creating avenues for students to acquire work experience which will enable them to secure a job after their internship period by equipping them with professional networks and the necessary skills. Deaf entrepreneurs should be offered special courses that are customized to their needs in order to reduce the gap between the theory and practice of business and the competence in business

skills. China can teach Deaf people how to commence and govern a business by providing formal education for those who may not be familiar with the subjects such as entrepreneurship, economics, and business management. This strategy is the best that it is congruent with the fast-changing business environment in China where the business owners are given opportunities to have first-hand experiences about the market operations, dynamics of the industry, and more importantly, the right way to effectively manage a business.

Media social is surely an instrument of paramount importance for business in the present day. The government will then be allowed to initiate the creation of sites on social media platforms like X's #DeafTalent where the Deaf are given a platform to showcase their achievements in various sectors, create a sense of belonging; plus, provide inspiration. Since in the case of China, there is not much of these practices yet and there is need to put in place educational and training programs which are inclusive to be designed for Deaf persons, the government can integrate the two and offer them the digital skills they so need to maneuver the business world. This will allow them to develop crucial skills and run successful business both online and offline.

To promote more seamless communication between Deaf entrepreneurs and their customers, the government can make arrangements to implement contemporary communication technologies like Video Relay Services. They can also adopt an excellent illustration of VRS's as is the case of Mozzarella. For example, the restaurant experienced difficulties in 2011 since its outdated communication system caused it to miss almost half of its phone calls. But because to developments in technology, especially VRS, Mozzarella's call capture rate shot up to a whopping 95%. Consequently, to improve customer relations, the businesses can also learn from Mozzarella and offer tablet computers to all their personnel.

Legislative backing is also necessary to advance diversity in the corporate world. Policies that mandate a specific proportion of bids be set aside for those with impairments, like to China's quota system, can expand business prospects and support the aspirations of Deaf entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, dispelling myths and creating a more accepting atmosphere for Deaf entrepreneurship depend heavily on raising understanding of Deaf culture and the ability of Deaf people. Public awareness campaigns and educational programs can influence public opinion and encourage a more accepting attitude toward Deaf people in the workplace. China can help Deaf entrepreneurs succeed and contribute to the economy by demystifying the idea of “self-as-enterprise” to work in the favor of persons with disability. Even though the concept is based on the idea of self-reliance, it can still be turned around to make those with disability to be self-reliant by empowering them to venture in sustainable businesses. First of all, the idea of this strategy is the combination of self-reliance and independence. Therefore, the strategy can be improved, and it can be used to empower persons with disability by creating sustainable businesses. This can be achieved by the government funding the educational centers, giving financial aid, creating the public-private cooperation, and supporting the startups that are owned by the Deaf.

Furthermore, government of China can follow the US government by granting monetary aids to those Deaf entrepreneurs who are engaged in the business community. In addition, we will encourage Deaf entrepreneurs by extending the current tax relief law with other financial incentives such as grants, low-interest loans, and business growth resources to help them excel. This will be a financial path that will help to become a business and will be a source of entrepreneurial activities in the Deaf community. The government could design

favorable business environment for Deaf entrepreneurs by allocating the resources to support those programs.

Along with the public non-for-profit organizations, private companies, and governmental participants, the Deaf entrepreneurship can be actively promoted and nurtured. These ties can lead to coordination and implementation of comprehensive programs that aid Deaf business owners in getting access to the resources, skills, and networks which are vital for success. The goals of such activities should focus on providing access to specialist training, creating mentorship programs, and offering guidance in business policies and procedures.

### **Policy Recommendations for USA**

The US may consider the quota system that the Chinese government used to impose that both public and private entities must set a certain number of quotas for disabled persons. This will be a breeding ground for companies to develop their markets. Create an account to reveal the answer to the question. Thus, the total number of people who will be forced to work in the devitalizing roles that are particularly destructive to their self-consciousness and productivity will subsequently decrease.

Furthermore, the financial assistance offered to the US would enable the design of education programs and resources, which would ultimately lead to a better understanding of the importance of education and eventually the creation of more opportunities for Deaf people. The avenue of education is one of the sure ways of bridging the gap between the Deaf and the hearing world when it comes to the business world. For instance, the ear can be considered as the source of the economical, business, and entrepreneurial information. Therefore, it is

required that the Deaf people are provided with education as a way of ensuring they have all the elements to excel in these fields. The awards and grants that are specifically for Deaf students will allow them to go through the process of discovering themselves as entrepreneurs and can become a roadmap for them to achieve academic success.

This may include the provision of ramps, unique toilet provisions, accommodating parking facilities and other strategies that aim at providing inclusivity in the business premises is also unavoidable. Use of assistive technologies on a wide scale, conducting training programmes for employers on the inclusive practices, and setting up accessibility standards in building can be some of the steps that can bring equality for Deaf entrepreneurs. Despite their hearing loss, the Deaf should not be deprived of the chance to join the business circles and fulfill their dreams.

### **Conclusion**

It is indisputable that the Deaf entrepreneurs in both China and USA experience a relatively conducive environment, and this can be accredited to the joint effort of the institutions and the resources that understand the need for their growth. It should be noted that the two countries are still going through the obstacles, and have a dissimilarity in their way of leading special education, and yet, both countries have made remarkable progress in giving inclusive educational opportunities and the employment avenues to the hearing-impaired community.

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of Deaf entrepreneurs in China and the USA, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One notable limitation is the scarcity of data available for China, which highlights the need for further research in this area. Additionally, the implementation of policies aimed at supporting Deaf entrepreneurs may still be lacking in both countries, indicating areas for improvement. Addressing these limitations and conducting more comprehensive research will be essential for developing effective policies and initiatives that foster greater inclusivity and support for Deaf entrepreneurs in both China and the USA.

Achieving quality of life for the Chinese Deaf is a long-term objective, but it means struggling to go through the obstacles in education, language learning, and personal acceptance from others. This concerted effort served as the catalyst in modifying the general public's attitude from a narrow-minded one to a more lenient one that is glad to celebrate diversity and admit that every individual is gifted in unique ways. Although in this situation the people may say that the policy is only good on paper because the implementation of it is still way below the level that could be called perfect.

The two countries, though different in terms of their approach, have an opportunity of benefiting from the support systems and expertise that the system provides. By use of these practices and resources, this can be used to advance the businesses of Deaf entrepreneurs. The continuous growth in the number of Deaf-run businesses is attributed to a combination of factors including the improvements in technology and legal issues. Speaking of USA, Deaf people underwent huge changes in their lives after the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)



was passed by the law in 1990. The ADA prohibited discrimination against disabled people and tried to enhance social integration. The country has a five percent Deaf population, of which half of them are employed as full-time workers, while others are working part time and the rest are running their businesses.

In looking at China's law, "The Disabled Persons Protection Act," we see that this act includes a very broad range of provisions that address the topics of rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural participation, social security, accessibility, and legal responsibility. In 2000 the amendment was done which contains the components like financial support, healthcare facilities, rehabilitation programs and job initiatives that an entrepreneur with disabilities can use to increase the chances for successful business undertaking. These factors having been taken together, the growth of Deaf owned businesses in both countries follows, but discrimination against Deaf people still exists and has to be addressed further.

One of the most efficient ways to achieve the development of the Deaf economy on both the Chinese and American sides is to apply a multidimensional strategy which includes an elaborated policy and actions. Firstly, Deaf-oriented coaching and internship programs can serve as a network for professionals, fill vital gaps in job experience, and make the entry into the business world a more seamless transition. Also, if the gap between theory and practice can be closed via the establishment of formal business management, economic and entrepreneurship training classes, then this will be a way forward. Such programs of microenterprise development would help the Deaf business people to understand the management techniques and run their business successfully.

Deaf firms may become the core of such communication and visibility by using the modern communication technologies like VRS and supporting the social media platforms which are designed to show off Deaf artists and art. The quota system just like the one in China is beneficial for providing opportunities and equalizing the situation in the workplace in the same way as the legislation assistance does. Also, it is necessary to continue advertising and educational programs that would increase people's knowledge and appreciation of the culture and abilities of the Deaf and would eliminate any misconception about this kind of business. China can be the setting for a highly successful society of the people who are Deaf by making available education for Deaf people, granting financial aid, enhancing accessibility, cooperation between public and private sector, and supporting businesses that are run by Deaf people. In addition to this, the initiatives will also be coherent with the “self-as-business” approach, which is based on individual self-reliance and sustainable business activities.

Moreover, the American government should pay more attention to the augmentation of the number of people who are enrolled in education, supporting the businesses of Deaf people, and providing economic incentives. While the US and China are involved, they also need to devise more ways that focus on Deaf entrepreneurs and help them to grow the economy by implementing the proposals.

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