

Assessment of Academic Performance of Learners with Hearing Impairment in Selected Special Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess the academic performance of learners with hearing impairment in special primary schools in Kenya. The study was carried out in five selected special primary schools across five counties in Kenya. The study targeted a population of three hundred and sixty nine respondents: five head teachers, one hundred and eleven teachers, and two hundred and fifty three learners. A sample size of one hundred and twelve respondents was selected: five head teachers, fifty seven teachers, and fifty learners. Purposive sampling was applied to select counties, schools, head teachers and learners, while a simple random sampling procedure was applied to select teachers in each school. The instruments used for data collection included questionnaires, interview guides, and document analysis guides. Data obtained from questionnaires were analysed quantitatively, using descriptive statistics while data collected using interviews and observations were coded, quantified, categorized and analysed following themes derived from the research objectives. Both data were integrated to get the findings of the study. The study found that the use of Kenyan Sign Language to instruct learners with hearing impairment had led to an improved in their academic performance. Head teachers and teachers felt that learners' performance after the official introduction of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) in 2004 was better compared to performance prior to that. While KSL as a subject was found to be the best performed, the scores in certain subjects, such as Social Studies were very low and performance of learners with hearing impairment was still below average as compared to their hearing counterparts. The study recommends that the regular primary curriculum be modified and made easily understandable especially in Social Studies and Religious studies to suit learner's needs and interests. The research findings therefore, will be useful to curriculum developers and policy makers, and will provide information that can be used to enhance and promote the education of learners with hearing impairment; which will lead to improved academic performance, consequently resulting in better transitions.

Keywords: Academic performance, Kenyan Sign Language, Hearing Impairment, Deaf, Special Schools

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