

The Level of Stakeholders Training on Communication Modes for the Management of Learners with Hearing Impairment in Regular Public Primary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract – Communication modes are the most important ingredients of the school environment that children with hearing impairment rely on. As part of institutional preparedness, this study sought to investigate the level of stakeholders training on communication modes for the management of learners with hearing impairment in regular public primary schools in Kajiado County. The study used mixed methodology and applied the embedded research design. The study contained a sample of 20 regular primary school head teachers, 117 teachers, 20 Board of Management (BOM) chair persons and the District Education Officer (DEO) of Kajiado central sub county making a total of 158 respondents. While the rest of respondents were selected through random stratified techniques the DEO was purposively selected. Three types of instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and observation were used for collecting data. The quantitative data collected was analyzed by use of Chi-Square technique ran through Statistical packages of social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analyses was done through calculating frequencies, percentages and tabulating them appropriately using frequency tables, graphs and pie charts. The qualitative data was organized into related key themes and summarized in narratives. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between stakeholders' training on communication modes and management of learners with hearing impairment. There was a great institutional unpreparedness in terms of stakeholders training in communication modes in the regular public primary schools for the management of hearing impairment.

Keywords – Communication Modes, Hearing Impairment, Regular Public Primary Schools, Training.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Wooden J. (2010), "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail". This quote evidently elucidates the situation during the distressful periods through which learners with disabilities all over the world passed through for years. The periods ranged from extermination, ridicule to asylum (Maher, 2009). During the Neglect period which existed before 17th Century, persons with disabilities were considered useless, thus rejected and discriminated by the society together with their families. Disability was considered contagious and was attributed to witchcraft, curse or punishment from God. In Sparta in Greece, children with distinct features of disability were killed while in some African communities like in Kenya, babies were thrown to bushes. They were called abusive, derogative and dehumanizing names such as: idiot,

imbecile, moron among others. The neglect period was followed by Private tuition in the 18th century where rich families and individuals who saw potential in children with disabilities taught and managed them at family level. For example, Saint John, a bishop of Berverly taught a person with hearing impairment how to articulate and talk (Randiki, 2002).

After private tuition, came institutionalization which was common in Europe and USA in 19th century where children with disabilities were put in residential facility for protection from neglect. This was mainly to offer rehabilitation services with a hope of normalizing them as medical services emphasized. Institutionalization was followed by the Separation period which started in 20th century up to 1960s. It was realized that children with disabilities could not learn alongside with non-disabled and this resulted to segregation into special programmes such as: special schools, units, juvenile homes, small homes, approved schools (now rehabilitation centers) or even hidden in family homes.

Inclusion stresses on the duty of schools to adapt the principle of accepting all children. This means the achievement of a society that shows not only an absence of discrimination but also the availability of opportunities for all individuals to participate in every facet of society. This drive is reflected in the United Nations contention (UNESCO, 1994) which states that, children with disabilities should access regular schools. Maher (2009) asserts that, the practice of inclusive education has been widely embraced as an ideal model both in Africa and Internationally. However, the achievement of its benefits lies in the ability of the relevant stakeholders actualizing the policies designed to achieve inclusion in general schools for the pupils with special needs among which are those with hearing impairment. The latter has a unique characteristic in that it is not spontaneously identifiable by non-experts due to their hidden disability and consequently their language of communication which differ from others.

Communication modes are the most important ingredients of the school environment that children with hearing impairment rely on to learn. Children who lose hearing at early age are likely to battle with most facets of schooling such as academic, linguistic, intellectual, social and emotional growth in inclusive setting. Thus communication is the main hurdle in implementing inclusive education for learners with hearing impairment.

This is largely due to the effects of hearing loss and the ability to understand speech and language acquisition of learners with hearing impairment whose parents are also deaf (Sheridan & Davies, 2001).

The right to education and demands of its systems and programmes to be designed to suit the wide diversity is confirmed by article 2 of Salamanca Statement (1994). This means an appropriate child-centered teaching and learning environment must be provided by regular schools for accommodating special educational needs. The article concludes that “this inclusive orientation in regular schools offer the most efficient ways of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, constructing an inclusive society and attaining education for all” This realization originates from the UNESCO Constitution of 1945 which was founded on the expression of a notion: “in full and equal opportunities” for EFA. The Salamanca called on governments to take measures on policy, legislative and implementation to translate national education and prepare a system of inclusive schools. Clear guidelines given for action required to insure reforms at the level of school management includes appropriately trained personnel. Lack of this antecedent preparation may cause undesirable conditions to such children as it were during the periods expounded earlier.

Countries including Kenya, Uganda, Britain, USA or Scandinavian are practicing inclusive education. According to Ainscow, (2002), the fact that inclusive education has been embraced rarely translates to action in the classrooms. They further assert that the success of inclusion depends on head teachers’ attitudes and actions and the investment made by school human resource as they make the culture of the school and have the power to challenge or back up inclusion (Ainscow, 2002). African countries have embraced inclusive education policies as a new phenomenon in the field of education. The emphasis is put on policy options from integration to inclusive schools to serve all children with disabilities in the mainstream (Arbeiter 2002).

In Kenya, efforts to inclusive education started with Ominde report in 1964 after the independence until the completion of national comprehensive policy on Special Needs education (2009). This indicates that the concept of inclusive education in Kenya is not very new but its implementation is. The Kenyan government in collaboration with Danish government began training teachers on inclusive education in the year 2001. This was done through Kenya Institute of special education. The inclusion policy incorporated in education system projected that by the year 2015 there would be a minimum of one special needs teacher in every institution which has not been fully achieved (Adoyo, 2007).

In Kajiado County there is no documentation on the state of inclusive education. However, through key persons who have been involved with special education, especially in the Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARC), there were learners with disabilities in general primary schools even before the EARCs started in Kenya (1984). Currently, there are 23 units/ integrated programmes in the whole Kajiado County and no special

schools. These units/integrated programmes consist of the 4 traditional categories: Visually and hearing impaired; physically and mentally challenged. Out of the 23, there are only 3 Units for the hearing impaired one in each of the former three districts of the county: Ngong, Loitoktok and Central where the study was carried out. For this study, the researcher’s interest was to establish the level of stakeholders training on communication modes for the management of learners with hearing impairment in regular public primary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regular schools are the mainstream schools which follow the curriculum that is designed for the learners with average ability (Ngugi, 2002). These schools are characterized by among others unsuitable modes of communication and societal negativity. Teachers in regular schools are generally trained to teach the regular learners and therefore they require training on special education to be able to support learners with hearing impairment. Training of teachers is generally considered a major aspect in the improvement of quality education (UNESCO, 2004). Zindi (2000) points that since 1977, the National Education Research Council in Zimbabwe stress the integration of special education aspects into all teacher education programmes in the country with expectation that teachers at one point during their care may be faced by a child with special needs such as hearing impairment.

According to Carroll, Forlin & Jobling (2003) teacher training level is among the challenges experienced in implementation of inclusive education. Studies conducted in Australia for pre-service teachers revealed that their only exposure to the field of inclusive education is an introductory subject included in teacher education course which yielded a positive influence on the attitudes and confidence of the students (Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003). Skjorten (2001), states that teacher’s education requires introduction of radical changes for preparing teachers to meet the challenges of inclusive education. Many proponents of inclusion feel that all teachers in regular education can and must accommodate learners with special needs, other commentators within present reality feel that teacher responsibility and accountability are more cautious. Nagata (2005) points out that a single university subject on inclusion cannot be sufficient in preparing teachers to implement the various aspects of inclusion and its related practices. There is need for thorough training of teachers in inclusive education so as to manage learners with hearing impairment.

In Kenya, teachers for special needs education were initially trained from abroad especially in USA and Britain. Training of teachers for learners with hearing impairment started locally in 1964 with certificate training at Central Teachers College (now Kenya Institute of curriculum Development) which later moved to Kenyatta College (now Kenyatta University) in 1969. In 1972 the course moved to Siriba Teachers College (now Maseno University). In 1973 the first two- year course started. It then moved to Kamenja Teachers College in 1977 before

moving to Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) and in 1987 the course was upgraded to Diploma levels (Randiki, 2002).

The purpose of training teachers in SNE is to offer skills and attitude geared to habitation and adjustment to environment; identify, assess and give early intervention for correction and rehabilitation; create awareness of needs of the challenged and prevent challenges in order to limit the incidences of occurrence and this training on challenges of inclusion should be provided within pre-service courses and in-service (MoEST, 2004). Kamene’s study (2009) in Kenya found that majority of the teachers did not have special needs education qualification.

A study conducted by USAID (2006) in Zambia, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo found that since most teachers working in schools for the hearing impaired are hearing people, they received traditional teacher training but did not receive any specialized training in sign language or teaching methods that are critical for pupils with hearing loss. This study revealed that teachers were not prepared to facilitate language development in the hearing impaired pupils. Teachers require updated and comprehensive training to match the needs of learners and not just what some Universities are training teachers on inclusive education.

In Kenya various modes of communication such as Signed English (SE), Signed Exact English (SEE) and Total Communication (TC) were used in the 1970s and 80s but the learners would fall back to Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) for clarification of concepts. As such KSL was adopted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) as a better medium of instruction. There are studies indicating that some schools were not using sign language (Ndurumo, 1988); that some schools lacked teachers of hearing impairment as well as sign language interpreters and that learning/ teaching resources were inadequate (Mukangu, 2008; Bunyai, 2010). These findings act as a pointer to the need for institutional preparedness which includes training the personnel in the management of learners with hearing impairment in regular primary schools.

III. SOURCES AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The data in this study are both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was obtained from the Kenya Institute of Special Education, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. The primary data was obtained through questionnaires for head teachers, teachers Board of management chairpersons and interview schedule for the District Education Officer (DEO).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches for the aim of breadth and depth of apprehension and certification (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007). Qualitative and quantitative forms of data was linked for three reasons: First, for confirming or corroborating each other via triangulation; second, for elaborating or developing analysis, offering richer details and third, for initiating new lines of thinking through attention to new ideas coming up and providing fresh insight (Rosmann and Wilson (quoted in Miles & Huberman (1994). The researcher used quantitative research supplemented by qualitative research in order to offer a holistic opinion of institutional preparedness.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data was analyzed using Chi-Square technique ran through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analyses was done through calculating frequencies, percentages and tabulating them appropriately using frequency tables, graphs and pie charts. The qualitative data was organized into related key themes and summarized in narrative assertions.

5.1 *Head Teachers’ Preparedness on Communication Modes for Learners with HI*

To determine this, the head teachers were required to give their views on preparedness of communication modes for learners with HI in regular primary schools. Their questionnaire contained a section with a 6 items in Likert scale meant to measure head teacher teachers agreement to the given statements. The findings are as shown in table 1 below:

Table 1. Head teachers’ responses of preparedness on communication modes

Statements	f	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
My teachers are trained on modes of communication for pupils with hearing impairment (HI).	f	1	8	1	4	5	19
	%	5.3	42.1	5.3	21.1	26.3	100.0
Teachers in my school know Sign Language	f	1	4	1	7	6	19
	%	5.3	24.1	5.3	36.8	31.6	100.0
We use oral approach when teaching in our school for all pupils.	f	9	6	3	1	0	19
	%	47.4	31.6	15.8	5.3	0.0	100.0
I and my teaching staff have frequently attended workshops and seminars on HI or inclusive education	f	2	4	2	6	5	19
	%	10.5	21.1	10.5	31.6	26.3	100.0
Indicators of deafness are known by all my teaching staff	f	1	3	1	8	6	19
	%	5.3	15.3	5.3	42.1	31.6	100.0
My teachers are specially trained.	f	1	5	3	4	6	19
	%	5.3	26.3	15.8	21.1	31.6	100.0

Table 1 indicates that an equal number of the head teachers agreed and disagreed (47.4%) while 5.3% were undecided on teachers training on modes of communication for pupils with hearing impairment. Concerning teachers' knowledge of sign language, majority of head teachers (68.4%) disagreed and 29.4% agreed while 5.3% were undecided. The DEO indicated that the main mode of communication used by the learners with HI was Total Communication. Most head teachers (79%) agree on teachers' use of oral approach when teaching, 5.3% disagreed while 15.8% were neutral. The high percentage usage of oral approach depicts ignorance of learners with HI who mind be in their classes. On the question of head teachers and the teaching staff frequently attending workshops and seminars on HI or inclusive education, majority (57.9%) disagreed, 31.6% agreed and

10.5% were undecided. These findings concur with Nikolarazi (2000) who found out that teachers for the deaf lacked appropriate in-service training required for working with deaf learners and further revealed that the teachers faced problems in working with deaf pupils.

5.2 Teachers' Preparedness on Communication Modes for Learners With HI

Just like the head teacher respondents, teachers were to give their views on communication modes preparedness for learners with HI in primary schools. To establish this, the teachers' questionnaire contained a section with a 6 items in Likert scale meant to measure teachers' rate of agreeing with the given statements. The findings are as stated in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Teachers' responses on communication modes preparedness

Item	Statements	f	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	I use Total communication when speaking to pupils with hearing impairment(HI)	f	11	33	12	26	34	116
		%	9.5	28.4	10.3	22.4	29.3	100.0
2	I use oral approach when talking to pupils with HI	f	9	40	11	26	30	116
		%	7.8	34.5	9.5	22.4	25.9	100.0
3	I have frequently attended workshops and seminars on HI or inclusive education	f	6	12	8	24	66	116
		%	5.2	10.3	6.9	20.7	56.9	100.0
4	I use Sign Language when communicating with pupils with HI	f	12	22	6	21	55	116
		%	10.3	19.0	5.2	18.1	47.4	100.0
5	I communicate with pupils with HI in short notes.	f	5	23	13	24	51	116
		%	4.3	19.8	11.2	20.7	44.0	100.0

As indicated in Table 2 above pertaining on whether teachers were trained on communication modes, 51.7% disagreed on whether they used Total Communication when speaking to pupils with hearing impairment, 37.9% agreed while 10.3% were undecided. With regard to having frequently attended workshops and seminars on HI or inclusive education 77.6% disagreed, 15.5% agreed and 6.9% were neutral. On the quest of teachers using sign language when communicating with pupils with HI, 65.5% disagreed, 29.3% agreed while 5.2 were undecided on this statement. Finally most teachers (64.7%) disagreed on communicating with pupils with HI in short notes, 24.1% agreed whereas 11.2% were undecided. These findings are in line with study conducted by USAID (2006) which revealed that teachers were not prepared to facilitate language development for the pupils with hearing loss. This implies teachers require updated training to match the needs of learners particularly those with hearing impairment.

5.3. BoM Chairpersons' Preparedness on Communication Modes for Learners With HI

Just like the head teacher and teachers BoM chairpersons were also required to state their knowledge on communication preparedness for the learners but on a slightly different manner.

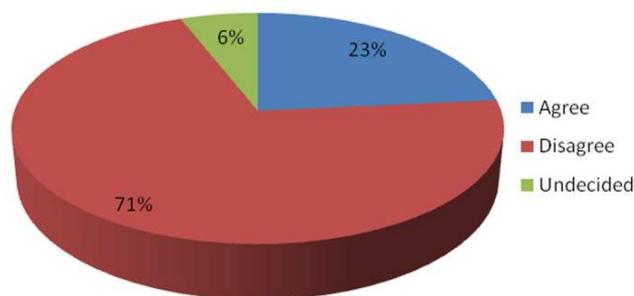


Fig. 1. Attending seminar/workshop on children with HI

The results shown in figure 1 revealed that majority (70.6%) of the BoM chairpersons had not attended any single seminar/workshops on children with HI, 23.5% had attended while 6% were undecided.

Table 3. Communication methods with children with HI

Communication	Frequency	Percent
Total communication	4	17.6
Sign language	4	23.5
Use of sign language interpreters	3	23.5
Any other	6	35.4
Total	17	100.0

The BoM chairpersons were also asked to state the methods they used when communicating with children with hearing impairment in the schools they managed. They stated on equal measure that they used sign language (23.5%) and sign language interpreters, 17.6% indicated use of Total Communication while 35.4% used other methods as shown in table 3.

5.3 Preparedness on Communication Modes and Management of Learners with Hearing Impairment

Table 4. Chi-square statistical test between communication modes and management of learners with HI

	Value (χ^2)	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.268 ^a	9	.032
Likelihood Ratio	20.495	9	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.587	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	116		

Table 4 shows results of Chi-square test on relationship between preparedness on communication modes and management of learners with hearing impairment. The Chi-square test ($\chi^2=18.268$, $df=9$, $p<0.05$) revealed that there was a significant relationship between stakeholders' training on communication modes and management of learners with hearing impairment.

The researcher also found that teachers in the field who had done SNE in the area of HI were feeling mistreated in that they were posted to any school without considerations. This was realized through verbal talks with the researcher during the time of data collection. The teacher respondents felt their efforts in studies were not recognized by the concerned authorities in Kajiado central sub county. These are teachers who had sponsored themselves to study SNE including HI and inclusive specializations and were thrown anywhere the education officers felt like yet the children with special needs were in schools where the teachers had no knowledge of how effective they could manage the learners especially those with HI. This caused the native specialist quit the field of special needs to regular schools in fear of the surrounding politics. The most accused for this were the Teachers Service Commission concerned officers in Kajiado central influenced by the EARC officers and head teachers.

VI. SUMMARY

The relationships between stakeholders' training on communication modes and management of learners with hearing impairment was determined by use of Chi-square test of significance ($\chi^2=18.268$, $df=9$, $p<0.05$) which revealed that there was a significant relationship between them. The findings from the head teachers on whether teachers were trained on modes of communication for pupils with hearing impairments indicated their responses on equal bases of (47.4%) agreeing and disagreeing. Majority of head teachers (68.4%) disagreed to whether teachers in their schools knew sign language while the teachers (65.5%) supported by indicating that they didn't use sign language when communicating with pupils with HI.

Findings on whether teachers used oral approach when teaching in the schools for all pupils, most head teachers (79%) agreed, 15.8 % of teachers disagreed while 5.3% were undecided. Use of oral speech may indicate that there

were no such learners with HI in their schools or they ignored them since the method is only best for hearing counterparts. The quest of the rate of whether head teachers and their teaching staff had frequently attended workshops and seminars on HI or inclusive education, majority of head teachers (57.9%) disagreed coinciding with majority of teachers (77.6%). Similarly most head teachers (73.7%) disagreed that indicators of deafness were known by all. Finally the head teachers admitted by (52.7%) that their teachers were not specially trained.

In addition to preceding findings, teacher respondents (61.2%) indicated disagreement on the statements that they were trained in inclusive education as well as Total Communication (51.7%) and short notes (64.7%) for communicating with pupils with HI. Through the interview an education officer admitted lack of training in SNE and indicated that Total Communication was used for learners with HI in regular schools.

Since BoM chairpersons are not professional like head teachers and teachers, their preparedness on communication skills to learners with HI were tested on a slight light manner. This was through attending seminars and the like. The findings indicated that most (76.5%) BoM chairpersons had never attended any single seminar/workshops on children with HI. On the inquiry of the methods BoM chairpersons used when communicating with children with hearing impairment in the schools they managed, majority 35.4% stated other methods apart from use of total communication, sign language and sign language interpreters.

The overall results from head teachers' responses were 50.9% disagreed, 39.5% agreed while 9.7% were undecided. Likewise, 61.5% teacher respondents disagreed, 30.9% agreed and 7.7% were undecided on training of communication modes. This was supported by the BoM chairpersons (76.5%). These results define unpreparedness in the area of communication modes for learners with HI.

VII. CONCLUSION

The result of the analysis showed that there is a significance relationship between the level of training of the stakeholders and the management of learners with hearing impairment as well as the following:

- Majority of the head teachers had obtained the government requirement of diploma course in management which is organized by collaboration of the state and Kenya Educational Management Institute (KEMI), trained in SNE and specialized in inclusive education. A lot would be expected from such a learned group nevertheless, the truth on the ground leaves a lot of questions unanswered.
- Unlike head teachers, teachers had insufficient training on Special Needs Education including Inclusive Education and therefore unprepared for management of learners with HI in regular schools.
- There was no data available on the number of teachers trained in HI and the number of public regular primary schools with pupils with HI in Kajiado Sub County. Lack

of appropriate data makes the office have difficulty in planning for learners with HI.

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