

ABSTRACT

The Government of Kenya in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations play a vital role in promoting inclusive education in Kenya yet 158 (30.2%) learners with low vision dropped out of regular primary schools in Vihiga County between 2008 and 2011. While the figure is relatively high, the cause of the drop-out is unknown. Literature shows that curriculum and physical environment are yet to be adapted to cater for the educational needs of learners with low vision in regular primary schools in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish teachers' perspectives on influence of learning environment on the drop-out of learners with low vision in regular primary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya. Objectives of this study were to: establish teachers' perspectives on reasons for the drop-out of learners with low vision in regular primary schools; determine teachers' perspectives on influence of curriculum adaptations on drop-out of learners with low vision in regular primary schools; and find out teachers' perspectives on influence of adaptations made on physical environment on drop-out of learners with low vision in regular primary schools. This research was guided by a conceptual framework showing the relationship between learning environment and drop-out of learners with low vision. Descriptive survey research design was used in the study. Study population comprised 24 head teachers, 490 teachers, 117 learners with low vision in schools and 158 drop-outs from 24 regular primary schools in Vihiga County. Saturated sampling technique was used to select 22 head teachers, 105 learners with low vision in schools and 142 drop-outs while simple random sampling technique was used to select 147 teachers. Instruments for data collection were questionnaire, interview schedule, document analysis guide and check list. Using simple random sampling technique a pilot study on 10% of the entire population was conducted to determine reliability of the instruments. Experts from the Department of Special Needs Education, Maseno University ascertained the face and content validity of the instruments. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and means as well as Pearson's r correlation were used to analyse quantitative data. Qualitative data was transcribed, categorized and reported in an on-going process as themes and sub-themes emerged. Study findings revealed teachers' perceptions on drop-out of learners with low vision from regular primary schools in Vihiga County as: poor performance, repeating of classes, lack of adapted learning resources and inadequate teaching staff. The study further revealed that a decrease in value of adaptation on curriculum or physical environment led to the drop-out of learners with low vision. To control the drop-out, the study recommends adaptation of curriculum and physical environment to meet the educational needs of learners with low vision. The study will be significant to curriculum: developers, implementers and evaluators to ensure that learners with low vision access quality and relevant education in a least restrictive environment.