

ABSTRACT

The primary effect of hearing loss is inability to hear sound and communicate orally particularly for those who are Hard of Hearing (HoH) and whose primary mode of communication is spoken language and lip-reading. Such learners require audiological rehabilitation (AR) to enable them improve their oral/aural communication skills. Report by Kenya Society for Deaf Children (KSDC) of 2012 revealed that, out of 824 hearing aids issued to schools in Western and Lake Region of Kenya between 2009 and 2012, 321 were used in 2009 while only 81 were used in 2012. A baseline survey in the study area revealed that only 1 out of 6 specialist subjects appeared in class three time table and all other subjects were not taught consistently as required by the curriculum. This indicated a decline in oral/aural communication skills among the learners. The purpose of this study therefore was to evaluate AR status among learners who are HoH in primary schools for the deaf in Western and Lake Region of Kenya. Objectives of the study were to: determine the extent of communication training to learners with hearing impairment, establish the teachers' competence level in AR in primary schools for the Deaf, examine the extent of use and management of hearing aids among the learners and determine the attitudes of teachers and the learners towards AR. The study applied Stufflebeam's Content, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation model. Descriptive survey research design was used. The study population comprised 18 headteachers, 188 teachers, 34 EARS teachers and 95 learners. Saturated sampling technique was used to select 15 headteachers and 85 HoH learners, while purposive sampling technique was used to select 56 teachers and 30 EARS teachers. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussion, questionnaires, interview and observation schedules. Face and content validity of the instruments were determined by experts in the department of Special Needs Education. Reliability of the instruments was determined through pilot study using test re-test method and Pearson Correlation. Questionnaire for teachers had $r = .87$, headteachers $r = .89$ and EARS teachers $r = .81$, $p < .01$ showing high degree of reliability. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through frequency counts, percentages and graphs, while qualitative data was transcribed, categorized and reported according to emerging themes. The study established that, generally, specialist subjects were taught only once a week. Teachers were generally incompetent in all areas of AR. Only six hearing aids; BTE and ITE types were used. Learners had negative attitudes towards AR while teachers had positive attitudes. The study concluded that AR was practised to a very small extent. The study recommended specialist subjects to be taught five times a week with appropriate amplification. Findings of this study are expected to contribute to improvement of knowledge in educational audiology and development of AR training curriculum. Furthermore, through AR, the learners who are HoH may acquire skills to use residual hearing with appropriate amplification thereby improving oral/aural communication skills. It may also form a basis for policy formulation for future AR training.