

Effectiveness of Placement Options for Learners with Hearing Impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on Effectiveness of Placement Options for learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya. The study specifically examined mode of placement, adherence to classroom placement guidelines, parental/guardian perceived satisfaction with placement options. This study was anchored on Labelling Theory. This was a descriptive study covering various learning institutions with 78 respondents sampled through a variety of sampling methods. Data was mainly collected by use of questionnaires and observations, which were then analysed descriptively, and reported in percentages, tables, pie charts and graphs. Findings from the study revealed that there was no special school for learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County and special units for learners with HI were limited. In terms of policy, this study recommends that the government to make available adequate school for placement of learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County. The fact that this study was confined to a small geographical area, calls for the need for similar studies to be done in parts of Kenya so as to provide for a comprehensive understanding of issues relating to assessment for placement of learners with hearing impairment in our country Kenya.

Key words: Placement, Hearing impairment, access,

1. Background to the Study

This study focused on placement options for learners with hearing impairment in learning institutions in Kajiado North Sub-County. Learners with hearing impairments are those who have a problem with a sense of hearing. WHO (2012) estimates that about 360 million people or 5.3% of the world population suffer from hearing disability problem. The report further states that 91% and 9% of hearing impairments cases have been reported by adults and children respectively. In terms of gender, the WHO (2012) reveals that more males than females are affected by hearing impairments. Specifically, 56% of the males experience hearing problems, with 44% of the females mentioning this problem. With regard to regional prevalence in both children and adults, hearing impairments is greatest in South Asia, Asia Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa in that order WHO (2012). The burden that hearing impairments poses to countries is said to be twice larger in developing countries. For instance, it is observed that in developing countries, learners with hearing impairments rarely receive any schooling. Adults with hearing impairments in these countries have a much higher unemployment rate (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014). The authors further observe that even among those who are employed, a higher percentage of people with hearing impairments are in the lower employment grades in general workforce.

To improve the fortunes of persons with hearing impairments, Cheng, Chow, and Tsui, (2001) advocate for the improvement of access to education and vocational rehabilitation services for these people as well as raising awareness especially among teachers, employers and critical state agencies on the plight of persons with hearing impairments. The authors emphasize the need for proper formal education for persons with hearing impairments as a pre-condition for their employment and social valuation. Although there are no comprehensive statistics on the number of people with hearing impairment in Kenya, it was estimated over five years ago that the number of children with hearing impairment was about 23,000 countrywide (NDCS, 2008). However, it is thought that this represents less than 10% of the number of persons with hearing impairment in the entire county if WHO (2012) approximations of the adult to children prevalence of hearing impairment are anything to go by. The placement of learners with hearing impairment in Kenya began in the 1950s following the establishment of Kenya Society for the Deaf (KSD). Nyangoma and Mumias Schools in Western Kenya became the first placement institutions for learners with hearing impairment (KSD, 2001).

Adoyo (2004) observes that educational placement options for students with hearing impairment in Kenya include special schools, separate classrooms in regular schools, and regular education classrooms. Similarly, Gargiulo (2006) found that some learners with various forms of impairments such as the deaf and hard of hearing were placed in public school classrooms. Currently, there are over 1100 units and 100 public special schools in Kenya which include vocational and technical institutions that cater for learners with special needs and disabilities (MoE, 2008), this is in relation to 26,885 learners with disabilities in 2003 (Koech Report,1999). Educational placement is putting a learner with special needs in the most appropriate educational setting or position Gargiulo (2006). He states that individuals with hearing impairment can receive their education in a number of setting generally classified into two categories, regular public and special programmes. On the other hand, Gargiulo(2006) observes that, in the United States some placement options for learners who are deaf and hard of hearing may include; public school classrooms, resource room support, separate classrooms in public schools, separate non-residential schools, public or private, separate residential schools, public or private, home-bound or hospital environments as illustrated by US Department of Education (2006) as cited in Gargiulo (2006) in Figure 2.1.

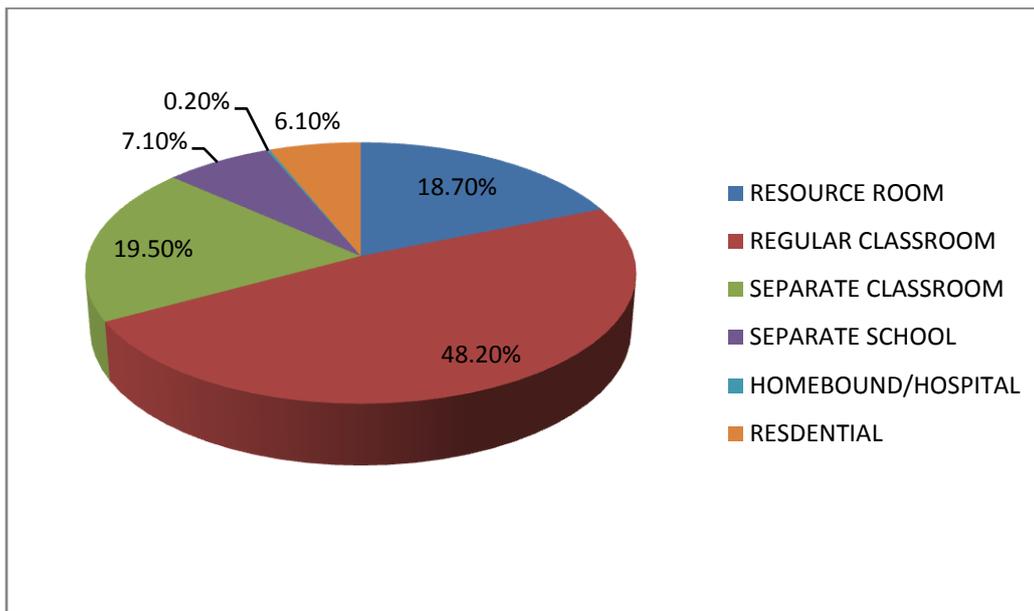


Figure 2.1: presents percentages of enrolment of learners with hearing impairment in the USA during the year 2005 and 2006.

Source: *Adapted and modified by Gargiulo (2006)*

The figure shows the various educational institutions attended by learners with hearing impairment. According Gargiulo, (2006) 85% of learners with hearing impairment attended regular public schools. Supporting on the same, Gallaudet Research Institute (2005), on their observation about placement of these learners revealed that, approximately half of children who are deaf and hard of hearing in the USA are placed in a regular classroom setting with hearing children, and may be served, depending on the IEP, by an itinerant teacher of the deaf or other professionals. Gallaudet Research Institute (2005) further observes that, an estimated of 40% children who are deaf and hard of hearing are placed in regular classroom settings and received sign interpreting services. Whether these placements and services were in provision for learners with hearing impairment in the district under study, left a major gap, which this particular study was to address.

Adoyo (2004) observes that educational placement options for students with hearing impairment in Kenya include special schools, separate classrooms in regular schools, and regular education classrooms. Similarly, Gargiulo (2006) found that some learners with various forms of impairments such as the deaf and hard of hearing were placed in public school classrooms. Currently, there are over 1100 units and 100 public special schools in the country which include vocational and technical institutions that cater for learners with special needs and disabilities (MoE, 2008), this is in relation to 26,885 learners with disabilities in 2003 (Koech Report, 1999).

Ademokoya (2008) in a study on the placement of students with HI in Nigeria found that, they were placed in special units or special schools despite their academic level, communication mode, and degree of hearing loss (HL). Adoyo (2004) observes that educational placements for students with hearing impairments in Kenya include special schools, separate classrooms in regular education schools, and regular education classrooms alongside students without hearing impairments. Adoyo (2007) adds that, 30% of deaf children in Kenya are not attending school. In view of this, the current study sought to investigate the effectiveness of placement options for learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The burden that hearing impairment pose to society is quite huge, with many adults with hearing impairment experiencing higher rates of unemployment. However, even among those who are employed, a higher percentage of them are in the lower cadre of employment compared with the general workforce. Low levels of education and training has often been cited as the root cause of the disadvantaged position of persons with hearing impairment in society. Education of persons with hearing impairment unlike other learners with no known significant disability problems depends on proper placement. Good learning outcomes are, however, dependent on effective and appropriate placement. Effective placement has been shown to be possible through proper procedures on assessment and placement. Yet in many countries including Kenya, assessment for placement of learners with hearing impairment is facing serious challenges including inadequately trained personnel, inadequate assessment equipment and tools as well as insufficient teaching in assessment for placement staff. Limited physical and human resources imply that persons with hearing impairment have to compete for placement in the limited opportunities available in the country. It is against this background that this study focused on placement options of learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the effectiveness of placement options that were available for learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- a) To examine classroom placement options for learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.
- b) To assess adherence to Classroom Placement guidelines of learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.
- c) To examine the Mode of Placement of learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya.
- d) To analyze parent/guardian perceived satisfaction with placement options.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

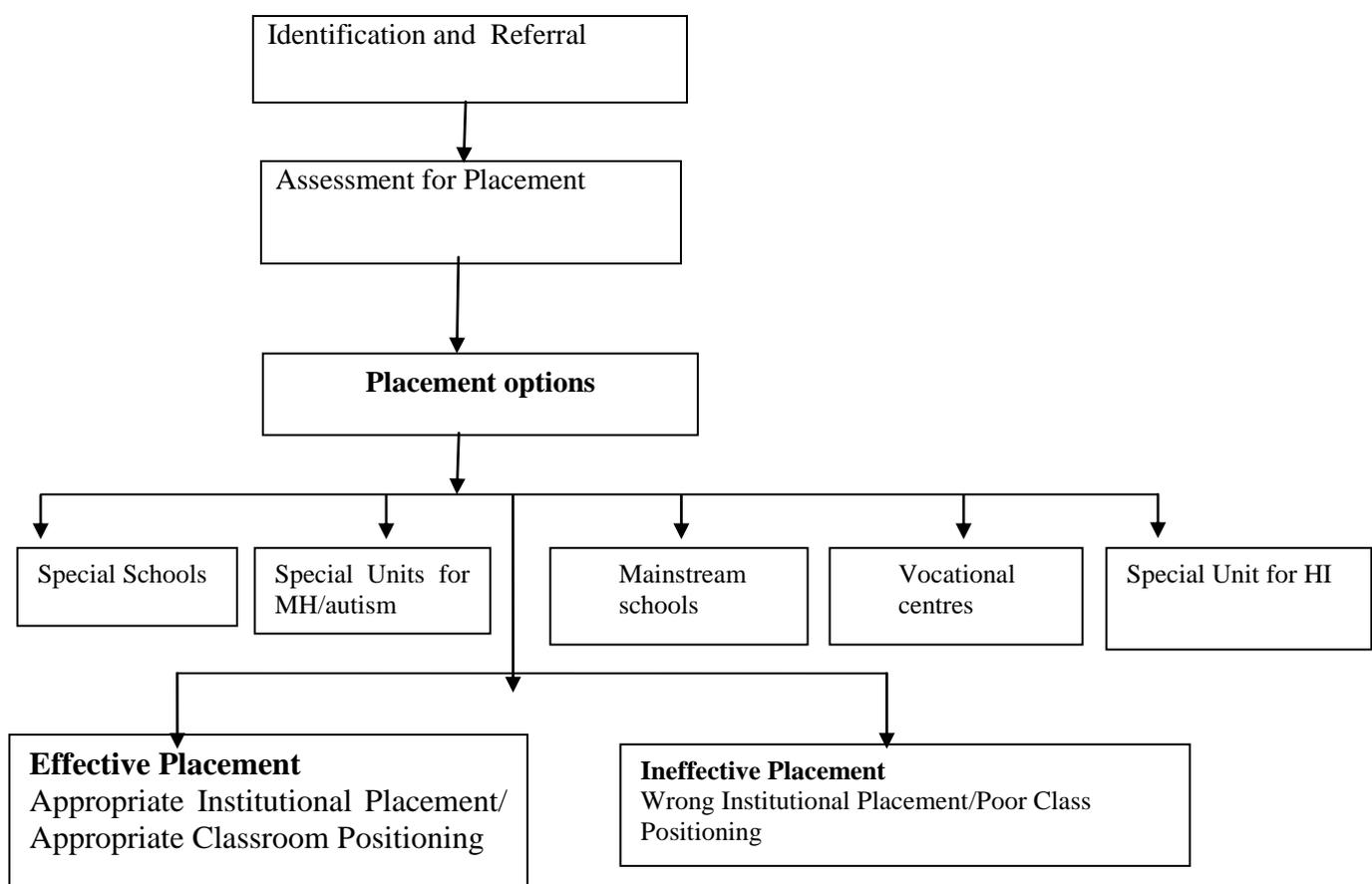
This study was guided by Labelling Theory. Labelling theory is traceable to the works of Becker (1973). Labelling theory was preferred for this study because it reveals that, people obtain labels from how people view their behaviour. According to Bala (2004), labelling is assigning a child with a condition to a general category in the classification system. There are both positive and negative sides to labelling (Ademokoya, 2006b). The positive part of labelling a learner leads to improved legislation, improved communication and development of advocacy, but on the negative side, there are possibilities of stigmatization, peer rejection and wrong placement of learners with disabilities based on inappropriate assessment (Ademokoya, 2006b).

This theory builds a subjective conception of the self but others intrude into the reality of that individual's life (Wright, 2009). The theory hypothesizes that the labels applied to individuals influence their behaviour particularly the application of negative or stigmatism. Labelling promotes deviant behaviour, becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy that an individual who is labelled has little choice but to conform (Wright, 2009). The essential meaning of labelling theory is that people become deviant because majority of the population and the authority concerned attach certain labels to their behaviour.

The implication of this theory to this study is that during assessment, learners with hearing impairment can either be labelled appropriately or inappropriately. This will have a bearing on the on whether the learner in wrongly or appropriately placed in the available learning institutions. It will then follow that an erroneously labelled child with hearing impairment will not only be inappropriately placed but also unsuitably instructed.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was modelled along the objectives of the proposed study, the literature reviewed and theory adopted for the study. Placement option of learners with hearing impairment was examined in the context of classroom placement option, adherence to Classroom Placement guidelines, mode of Placement and parent/guardian perceived satisfaction with placement options. The following figure 1.1 shows how this study conceptualized the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.



This study maintains that placement of learners will only be effective if it results in an appropriate institutional placement, appropriate class positioning-for mainstream schools, high degree of transition and good/high learning outcomes. On the other hand, placement is ineffective if it results in inappropriate results such as wrong institutional placement and class positioning, low degree of transitions and low or poor learning outcomes leading to improper transition in adulthood and world of work.

Although the study holds that effective placement options of learners with hearing impairment is influenced by availability of learning institutions, parental choice and cost of education, learners' attitude towards learning, teachers' and parental support may also have a bearing on the effectiveness of placement options. The kind of attitude the learner has toward education may also affect the effectiveness of learning outcomes notwithstanding the nature of learner's assessment and placement. A favourable view of education may help

the learner adapt to the learning environment leading to a better transition and learning outcomes, with the opposite view of education resulting in poor or low transition and learning outcomes to the world of work.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used descriptive research design. Descriptive design allows the researcher for the systematic collection, summary, presentation and interpretation of the results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This study collected data, analyzed, interpreted and summarized the results on the classroom placement options, adherence to placement guidelines, mode of placement and parent/guardian perceived satisfaction with placement options for learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North district, Kenya.

2.2 Target Population

There were 90 public primary schools, 8 special units, and 2 special schools in Kajiado North District, with a population of 33,555 learners, 420 were learners with disabilities of which 85 were learners with HI by the time the research was carried out. There were 80 special trained teachers in the sub-county and 80 parents/guardians. The population of parents was obtained only from learners with hearing impairment.

2.3 Sampling

This study employed a number of sampling methods. These were purposive, simple random and convenient sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers of schools with special schools and special units, EARC officers and special trained education teachers. Head teachers, special trained education teachers and EARC officers were selected purposively because they were better placed to respond to issues relating to availability of learning institutions and assessment for placement personnel as well, as how the two influenced the placement of learners with hearing impairment. This study used random sampling to select students with hearing impairment, with convenient sampling used to select parents due to the nomadic lifestyle of the community in the study area.

2.4 Sample Size

This study sampled 78 respondents representing 30% of the target population. Kajiado North Sub-County had 85 special trained teachers, 80 learners with hearing impairment and 80 parents of children with hearing impairment. The Sub-County had 10 head teachers heading schools where learners with impairment were placed, and 2 EARC officers. Consequently the study had the following sample size.

Table 1: Sample Size

Respondents' category	Target population	Sample size
Special teachers	85	25
Parents	80	24
Learners with HI	80	24
Head teachers	10	3
EARCs	2	2
Total	275	78

2.5 Research Instruments

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect quantitative data. Questionnaires had both structured and unstructured

questions to enable collection of standardized responses while simultaneously providing respondents the opportunity to respond without restrictions. More data especially those relating to physical resources were obtained through observational method. The observation checklist covered issues such as the availability of assessment room, assessment tools and equipment, retrospective records among other relevant issues.

2.6 Pilot Study

The study conducted a pilot study on 10% of the sampled respondents. The researcher modified the research instruments after the pilot study. The modified research instruments were thus made clear, specific on the issues sought and simple. The piloting involved 10% of the each of the respondents' categories.

2.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. In order to test the validity of the evaluation tool, the study administered questionnaires to sampled respondents using test-retest pilot method. Nieswiadomy (2002), recommends that 10% of the study sample size would be sufficient to serve as a sample for the pilot study. This study thus administered questionnaires to 10 sampled respondents. The researcher then modified the content of the questionnaire based on the assessment and responses to enable the tools elicit only desired and intended responses.

Reliability is the consistency of an instrument to yield the same result at different times (Frankel & Wallen, 2003). In the study, a reliability co-efficient (alpha value) of more than 0.7 was assumed to reflect the acceptable reliability (Cozby, 2001). The Alpha value ranges from zero to one and indicates the reliability of an instrument. The more the Alpha value is closer to one, the more reliable the instrument. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a correlation coefficient greater or equal to 0.75 shows a high reliability of the instruments.

1.8 Data Analysis

1.9 Data analysis was based on the research objectives. Data collected from the questionnaires were coded, edited and then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS- Version 20). Data was analyzed descriptively, with results being presented in figures and tables.

3.0 Results and Analysis

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Return Rate

Respondents	Sample Targeted	No. Collected	Percent Return Rate
Headteachers	10	10	100%
Special teachers	24	24	100%
Assessors	2	2	100%
Learners with HI	24	24	100%
Parents	18	18	100%
Totals respondents	78	78	100%

4.1 Demographic information of the respondent

This study covered a number of background information of the respondents. The following are, therefore, the detailed analysis of the respondents' profile or background information. Researchers obtain demographic

information from the study subjects to understand sample characteristics and to determine if samples are representative of the populations of interest (Kirton, 2000 cited in Muthungi and Nderitu, 2014).

4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

Gender is an important variable in a given social situation which is variably affected by any social or economic phenomenon and globalization is not an exception to it (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014). Hence, the variable gender was investigated for this study. Data related to gender of the respondents are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Gender representation of the respondents

Gender	Head teachers		Teachers		Assessors		Parents		Learners	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Male	8	80	8	33	02	100	6	35	14	55
Female	2	20	16	67	0	0	12	65	10	45
Total	10	100	24	100	02	100	18	100	24	100

The conclusions that can be drawn from this data is that majority of the respondents were females compared to males

4.1.2 Age of the Respondents

The study surveyed respondents of all age groups. Majority or 27.2% of the respondents were aged between 29-39 years. Persons aged between 18 and 28 accounted for about 23.8% while 40-50 years were 20.8% of the respondents. Another important age, the current study surveyed those aged below 18 years who mostly were learners who accounted for 17.8% of the respondents. Persons aged over 50 years had the least representation in the study where they accounted for just 10.4% of all the sampled respondents as indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondents by Age Group

Age group	Frequency	Percent
Below 18 years	14	17.8
18-28 years	19	23.8
29-39 years	21	27.2
40-50 years	16	20.8
Over 50 years	8	10.4
Total	78	100.0

4.1.3 Level of Formal Education of the Parent/Guardian Respondents

Education level of an individual may be an impetus or constraints on how they perceive and cater for people with special needs in society including those with hearing impairment (Muthungi & Nderitu, 2014). It is on this premise that the study considered parents/guardian respondents' level of education as one of the demographic profiles for analysis. As Figure 4.3 shows that majority of the parents/guardian respondents had formal level of education; a significant proportion of the parents/guardian respondents had attained primary, secondary and college level of education. There was also a small fraction of the parents/guardian respondents with university level of education. Parents/guardian respondents with no formal education

constituted 43%. Those with primary, secondary and college levels of education accounted for 21%, 14% and 15% of all the sampled parents/guardian respondents. University level of education had been attained by just 7% of the respondents.

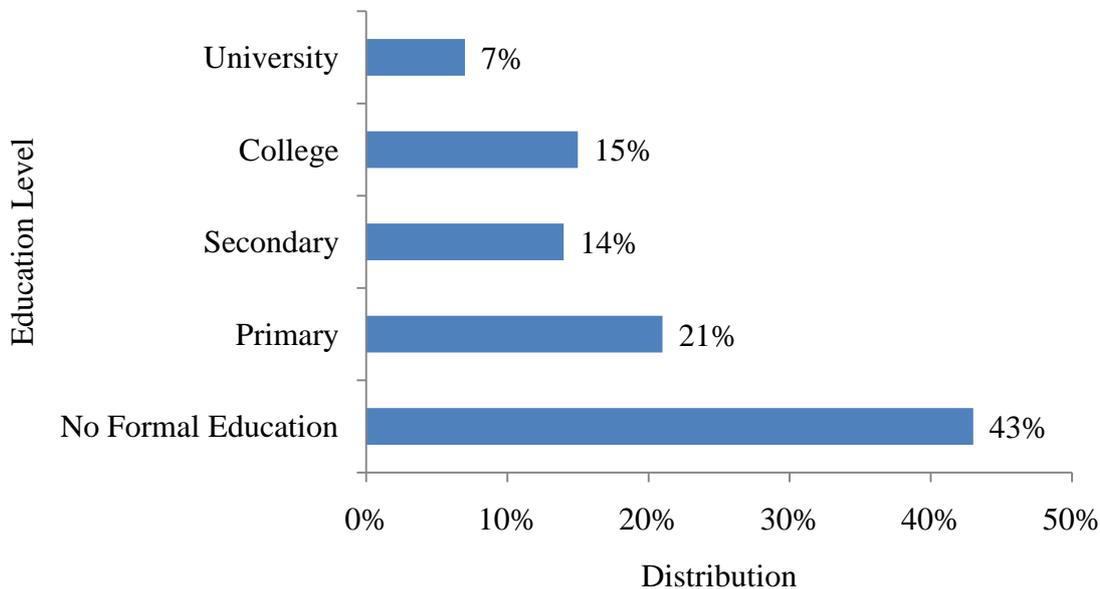


Figure 4.1: Education Level of Parents/Guardian

This study observed that the migratory nature of pastoralist Maasai community had made some of them not to attend formal schooling due to lack of permanent settlement.

4.2 Placement Options for Learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County

This study examined placement options for learners with hearing impairments. While examining the placement options, the study focused on key thematic areas. They included; the school placement options available in the Sub-County, classroom placement, adherence to placement options and parents' perceived satisfaction with placement options. The study established that there were various learning institutions spread across the Sub-County, which included two integrated private special schools, one public special unit for learners with hearing impairment, 7 special units for Children with Mental Retardation (MR) and a few regular classrooms, which were handling learners with HI. The study also revealed that a significant proportion of 53 (61%) of 85 learners with hearing impairment were placed in the two private integrated special schools present in the Sub-County. This was followed by 16(24%) of learners with hearing impairment who were placed in special units whereby only 8(9%) learners with HI were placed in the special unit for HI. About 4 (10%) of the learners with hearing impairment were placed in mainstream while 4(5%) were in vocational institutions as shown in Figure 4.2.

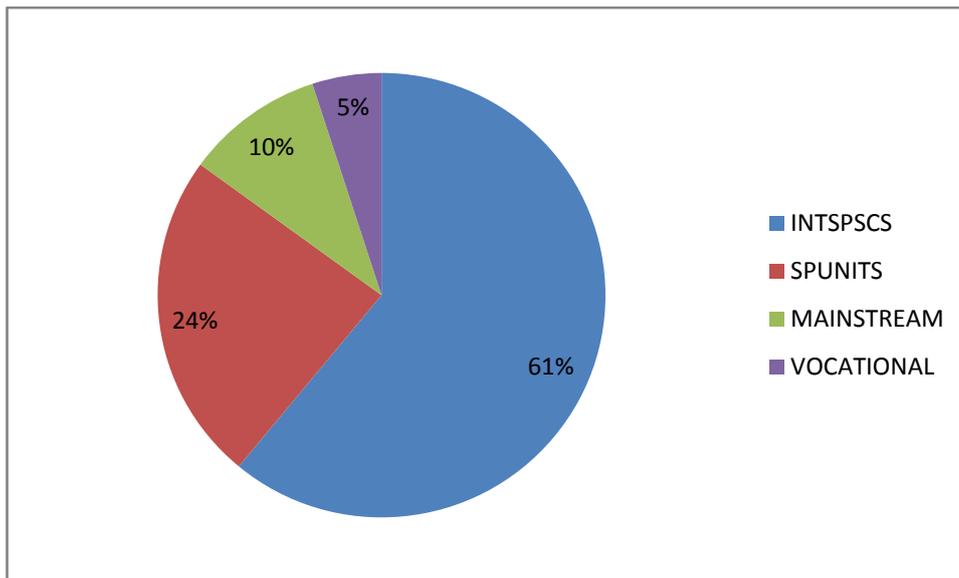


Figure 4.2: Placement Options for Learners with hearing impairment

The study revealed that, the respondents were all categorical that there was only one special unit for learners with HI in the entire Sub-County. The study further revealed that the two integrated special schools were private institutions and did not specifically cater for learners with hearing impairments but homes and institutions catering for all kinds of vulnerable children and those with special needs.

From the statement indicated by the two assessor respondents in the Sub-County, EARC indicated that there was shortage of learning institutions for learners with hearing impairments. In view of this shortage, the assessors were prompted to place some of the learners with hearing impairments into institutions with special education without considering the kind of disability and degree of hearing loss. This finding disagrees with the principles of educational setting for learners with hearing impairments, which are public schools and special schools (IDEA, 2004) cited in Gargiulo (2006).

From the findings, the study revealed that, none or insufficient schools for learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County resulted into placement of learners with HI into special units for learners with mental handicaps. This is quite a surprising revelation; a situation which most likely resulted into ineffective placement.

4.2.1 Mode of Placement of Learners with HI

There was need to understand how learners with hearing impairment were placed into these institutions in Kajiado North Sub-County and thereby being admitted to the institutions. The current study revealed that there were two broad modes of placements in the institutions. One was the parents/guardians of learners with HI who sought admission and the other was through referrals by the EARC. As Figure 4.3 shows, the study revealed that most of the learners with hearing impairment were placed through the parents/guardian who sought admission into these learning institutions. They never followed the right channel. The study revealed that majority 7 (70%) of head teacher respondents indicated that parents/guardian of learners with hearing impairment sought placement in their institutions. However, some were placed in these institutions through referrals by the EARC which constituted 3 (30%) of placement for learners with hearing impairment in Kajiado North Sub-County.

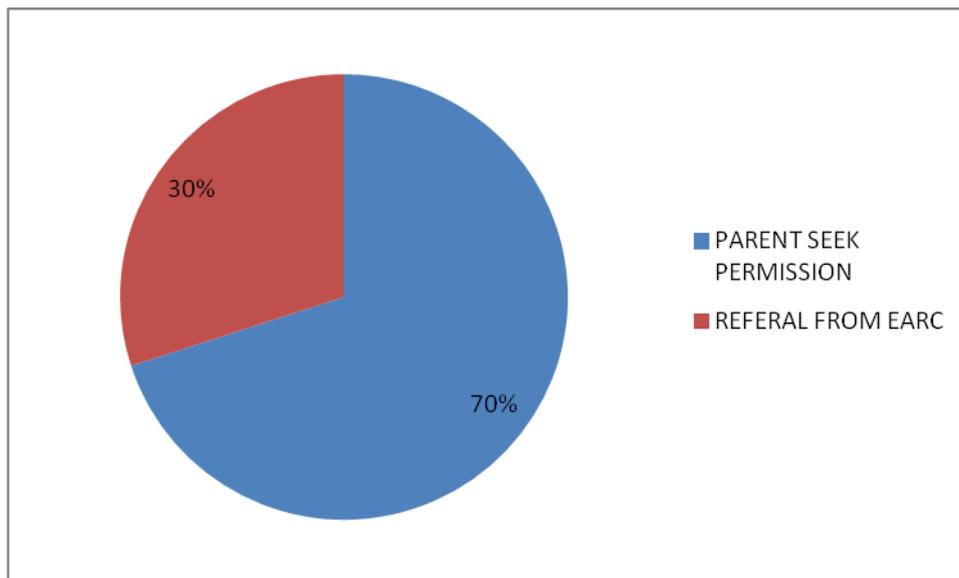


Figure 4.3, Placement Mode for Learners with HI

The findings of the current study on the mode of placement is supported by Tobey, Rekart, Buckely, & Geers, (2004), who found referrals by educational professionals as the main mode of placement for learners with special needs. The author argues that recommendations by educational professional in this case EARC assessors, increases the likelihood of appropriate placement of learners with special needs. Underscoring the significance of such referrals, Rossy (2009) supports the study by asserting that educational professionals are better placed to identify learner's specific problems of hearing impairment, which then allow them to have such learners placed in relevant learning institutions. The current study attributes high incidences to parental placement other than the EARC.

4.2.2 Classroom Placement of Learners with HI in the Mainstream/special Unit

The study had already revealed that there was only one special unit for learners with HI in the entire Kajiado North Sub-County. This meant that a significant proportion of learners with hearing impairment were placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). It then became important to understand how these learners with hearing impairment were placed especially in regular classrooms and special units for learners with mental retardation. The study, therefore, sought to establish the seating position in the classroom environment accorded to these learners while taking their lessons in regular schools and special units for learners with mental retardation. Baine (2006) in support of the study states that, learners with hearing impairment who are placed in mainstream learning centres should be placed at the appropriate position within the classroom. Supporting on the same study Jannet, (2006) states that teachers should encourage students with hearing impairment to seat themselves toward the front of the lecture theatre where they will have an unobstructed line of vision. The special trained teacher respondents in Figure 4.4 indicated how they placed learners with HI in the classroom environment.

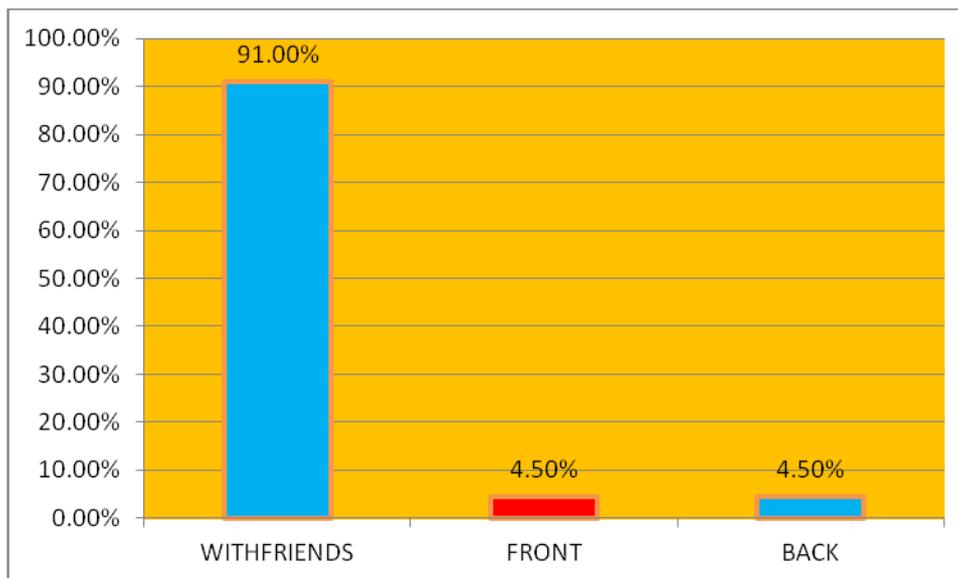


Figure 4.4: Classroom placement for learners with HI

Findings of the study revealed that the overwhelming 22(91 %) of learners with HI sat with friends while 1(4.50%) sat in front while another 1(4.50%) sat at the back. The present study reveals that majority of the learners with HI despite their disability could sit with friends at any position in the classroom environment. In support of the study findings, Kiriungi (2000) asserts that, a learner with any hearing loss would have trouble in the classroom situation if not properly placed. Tobey et al, (2004) argue that, the decision regarding classroom placement is usually made based on a combination of factors such as teacher's recommendation and degree of hearing loss. However, Kiriungi (2000) in support of the study advocates that learners with HI who are in regular classroom should sit in front and receive sign language interpreter so that they can gain skills and competence in their learning. The study provided evidence, which suggested that there was misplacement of learners with HI in the classroom situation in Kajiado North Sub-County. The current study finding is support Gargiulo (2006) who notes that, students with hearing loss should be given priority seating so that they will have a better opportunity to hear as well as have visual access to the teacher's mouth for lip-reading or see their interpreter if they have one.

The findings revealed that there were no regular schools with learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County with a sign language interpreter from all the head teacher respondents. In supporting the study Cawthon (2001), found a positive correlation between teachers and educational interpreters in a study of two inclusive classrooms, with deaf students who used sign language interpreters, one kindergarten and first-grade combination class and one second and third-grade combination class. Cawthon (2001) interviewed the two mainstream teachers regarding their philosophies of interpreter's roles and responsibilities. Both teachers reported having a team approach to educating their deaf students, with the educational interpreter being a critical member. They said that, the interpreter has as much input as anyone else.

Teachers reported to be using interpreters not only for the facilitation of communication, but also for monitoring and modifying behavior, assisting transitions, and interacting with students regarding curriculum implementation (Cawthon, 2001). Baine (2006) suggests that because of the exceptional demands of teaching content curriculum to deaf students, sign language interpreters should be considered important and must be put in place. Mutungi and Nderitu (2014) in support of this study, share the same views that the physical placement alone of students with special needs into regular school does not solve the problems unless special service is given. The study reveals that, learners with HI who were placed in special units for

mental handicap special/ integrated schools and regular primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, their service provision was questionable.

4.2.3 Adherence to Classroom Placement guidelines for Learners with HI

It was necessary to inquire from the expert largely special trained teachers on the extent to which they felt that there was adherence to the placement guidelines of learners with hearing impairment especially those pursuing learning in mainstream schools. 2(8.6%) of the special trained teacher respondents pointed out that, to some great extent, there was some adherence to guidelines on the placement of learners with hearing impairment in mainstream schools. One special trained teacher representing (4.3%) of the respondents was convinced that guidelines on the classroom placement of learners in mainstream schools was at an extent being adhered to. However, respondents who noted that these guidelines were at least extent followed and no extent followed were 10 (43.5%) and 10 (43.5%) respectively. One (4.3%) special trained teacher who participated in the study could not tell whether the guidelines on placement of learners with hearing impairment in mainstream schools were being adhered to or not as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Adherence to Classroom Placement of Learners with HI

Response	Frequency	Percent
Great extent	2	8.6
Extent	1	4.3
Neutral	1	4.3
Least extent	10	43.5
No extent	10	43.5
Total	24	100.0

The study revealed that, most learning institutions where learners with hearing impairment were placed did not adhere to the guidelines on how such learners ought to be placed in the classroom environment. Table 4.4 findings of the study support Ndurumo (1993), who observed that learners with disabilities were largely misplaced, a situation that he advised should be re-assessed and reviewed. The Ministry of Education also in support of the study, about a decade ago had raised this concern, when it argued that integration was seen as an attempt to modify the learners with disabilities to fit in the ordinary schools, classroom placement but the mode of communication did not favour learners with hearing impairment (MoEST, 2003). The need to adhere to the guidelines on placement of learners with hearing impairment equally support IDEA (2004) which states that, learners with HI should be placed in positions with least restrictions and have access to their teachers given their unique communication needs, which places them apart from other learners without hearing impairment.

In support of this study, Jannette (2006) asserts that deafness involves the most basic of human needs, the ability to communicate with other human beings. It is essential for the well-being and growth of deaf and hard-of-hearing children that, educational programs recognize the unique nature of deafness and ensure that all deaf and hard-of-hearing children have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible classroom environment and educational opportunities. Faeza (2008) claims that, many deaf and hard-of-hearing children use an appropriate communication mode, sign language, which may be their primary language, while others express and receive language orally and aurally, with or without visual signs or clues. Still others, typically young deaf and hard-of-hearing children, lack any significant language skills. Jannette (2006) concluded that,

given their unique communication needs, deaf and hard-of-hearing children would benefit from the development and implementation of educational programs for children with low-incidence disabilities. It is worth noting that the study revealed there was lack of sign language interpretation in any of the institutions in Kajiado North sub-county.

4.2.4 Satisfaction with Placement Options by Parents

How respondents felt satisfied with the placement option was considered in the study as an important aspect for analysis. Results in Figure 4.5, revealed the respondent's response on their perceived satisfaction with placement options for learners with hearing impairments in Kajiado North Sub-County. The results showed that 4 (19.1%) and 9(52.50%) of the respondents were very satisfied and satisfied with placement practices for learners with hearing impairments in the Sub-County. About 2(12.70%) and 3(15.70%) of the respondents were least satisfied and not satisfied respectively.

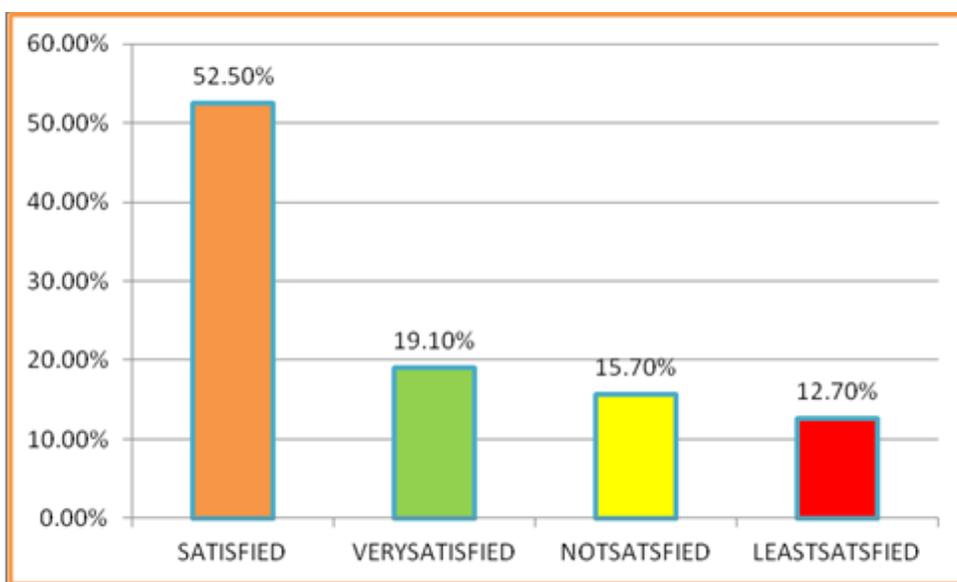


Figure 4.5: Perceived Satisfaction with Learners Placement by parents

It is apparent from figure 4.7 that about two thirds of the parent/guardian respondents were satisfied with placement options of learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County. The study has equally established that some of the learners with hearing impairments were placed in non- special education institutions in Kajiado North Sub-County which were least restrictive environment, thus revealing a shortage of special schools in the Kajiado North Sub-County.

Summary of findings on Placement Options

Findings from the study revealed that there was no special school for learners with HI in Kajiado North Sub-County and special units for learners with HI were limited. For example, data indicated that, all the assessors, the head teachers and about 85% of special trained teachers agreed that there was only one special unit for learners with HI in the whole of Kajiado North Sub-County, with 2.5% who indicated that was only one integrated special private school which parents found to be very expensive. Other options were the mainstream classrooms but which were affected by untrained manpower. The learners were normally placed in schools depending on parental preference, locality of the school and availability of special education despite the degree of hearing loss, age, communication and ability of the learner.

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