



Evaluating Educational Outcomes of Students Fitted with Hearing Aids at African Bible College Hearing Clinic, Malawi

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Background

- ✓ The use of technology in educational settings has increased in recent years, particularly for students with hearing impairments worldwide. However, this is not the case in developing countries like Malawi.
- ✓ Hearing loss is one of the factors affecting the academic success of students, even in well-developed countries. Additionally, the lack of accessible hearing care services is huge in Malawi, especially in rural areas, affecting even those students fitted with hearing aids in maintenance and follow-ups.



Research Question

What are the challenges faced by schoolchildren in Malawi in accessing audiological care, and how does this affect their educational outcomes?

Method

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological approach

Participants

6 learners from various secondary schools and universities across Malawi.

Data Collection

- Interviews with students, parents, and teachers.
- Open-ended questions

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis

- Identify common themes in people's descriptions of their experiences.

Research Objectives

- ✓ To identify the impact of hearing aids on the student's ability to communicate effectively in the classroom
- ✓ To identify the impact of improved communication skills in contributing to better learning outcomes for learners with hearing loss.
- ✓ To find out the challenges faced by students in Malawi in accessing audiological care and how this affects their educational outcomes.

Result & Discussion

Educational Outcomes

- The findings showed that hearing aids greatly improved classroom engagement, understanding, and participation.
- Students experienced better academic results and greater confidence during both formal lessons and peer interactions.

Barriers

- Nonetheless, the study identified significant barriers, including a lack of follow-up support, inconsistent institutional support, discomfort with the devices, students' own attitudes towards hearing aids, and ongoing social stigma.
- Teachers lack expertise in the inclusion of hearing-impaired students in regular schools

- These issues hindered some participants from gaining the full educational advantages of hearing aids.

Recommendations

- To adequately assist students with hearing impairments, Malawi should embrace a coordinated, multi-faceted approach. Schools ought to progress beyond mere basic accommodations by adopting universal learning design (UDL) and equipping teachers with specific training on hearing loss.
- Clinics need to expand outreach programs and strengthen follow-up mechanisms, particularly in underserved rural communities.

Call for Multi-level Interventions

- **School-based:** Teacher training and awareness, classroom acoustics modifications, and peer sensitization.
- **Clinical:** Strengthened follow-up systems, especially for rural students.
- **Policy-level:** Subsidized hearing aid programs for students and mandatory inclusive education policies.

Conclusion

- ✓ Hearing aids greatly improve education access and academic achievement for students with hearing loss; however, their success depends on ongoing audiological support and inclusive school practices.

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