



Theoretical and conceptual frame work for factors that lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment in the national examination at grade nine (9): A case of ChilesheChepela Special School and Musakanya Special Unit in Kasama and Mpika district

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript is an extract of a theoretical framework and conceptual framework from a Master's an on-going study on factors that lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment in the national examination at grade nine (9): A case of Chileshe Chepela Special School and Musakanya Special Unit in Kasama and Mpika district. The work is an attempt to identify the factors affecting learners with hearing impairment in the national examination at Chileshe Chepela Special School and Musakanya Special Unit in Kasama and Mpika district in Zambia. Among the factors that can affect these learners during the national examinations are such as identification of learners' relevant predispositions, specification of appropriate objectives and sequence, utilization of appropriate instruction procedure, assessment of learner's performance. It is argued that if these factors are identified and implemented learners with hearing impairment can benefit a lot from national examination through obtaining better grades.

Keywords: National Examinations, Factors, learners with hearing impairment, Special Unit.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children with hearing impairment have not been performing well during the national examinations as reflected in the pass rate results. This is supported by Katwishi, S.C.M [5] who has shown that learners with hearing impairment have consistently trailed behind their hearing counterparts in academic performance as reflected in their examination results. For instance, regional mock examination pass rate for learners with hearing impairments in Grades 10, 11 and 12 at Solwezi and Munali Secondary

Schools from the year 2010 to 2012 ranged between 34% and 43% (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education; Planning Unit, [6].

A lot of support has been on record towards learners with hearing impairment at international level. For example, there has been academic support from parents towards learners with hearing impairment and this is revealed by the research conducted by Shamai, S. [14] in Israel and the finding of the study was that, parents got involved in the education of their children with hearing impairment, besides the family environment. Learners with hearing impairment receive support through their parents' involvement. Despite the study by Shamai, S. [14] concerning the education support, the study by Shamai, S. [14] remained silent on factors which lead to poor performances of the learners with hearing impairment during their examinations.

There have been various supports in Africa towards learners with hearing impairment. For instance in South Africa according to Bell, D.[1], learners with hearing impairments are given support in form of counseling, healthcare, accommodation and career guidance in Western Cape. The research by Bell, D.[1] has also revealed that the learners with hearing impairment have been given service support however, the study did not reveal the factors which lead to poor performance of learners with hearing impairment during the national examinations.

Furthermore, in Zambia, learners with hearing impairment receive different kinds of support from the government. For instance, Serpell, R and Folotiya, J.J. [13] in their study stated that, learners with special needs which include learners with hearing impairment receive support from government in form of a policy on formal education. In the study of Serpell, R and Folotiya, J.J. [13] the issue concerning the factors which lead to poor performance of learners with hearing impairment during the national examinations was not considered.

There has been various support towards learners with hearing impairment from international level for instance in Israel, also support from Africa for example in South Africa and Zambia. However, despite the support from various countries which learners with hearing impairment receive their performance during the examinations still remain poor. Thus this study will aim at assessing the factors which lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment during their national examination at grade nine (9) levels.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been various support towards learners with hearing impairment from international level for instance in Israel, also support from Africa for example in

South Africa and Zambia. However, despite the support from various countries which learners with hearing impairment receive, their performance during the examinations still remains poor. Thus this study will aim at assessing the factors which lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment during their national examination at grade nine (9) levels.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the factors which led to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment during their national examination at grade nine (9) levels.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

- a) To identify the problems that leads to poor performance by grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment in the national examination.
- b) To explain how the performance in national examinations affect grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment.
- c) Identify the measures that can be taken to improve the poor performance by grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment in the national examinations.

2.3 Research Questions

- a) What problems do grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment face in national examinations?
- b) How does the performance in the national examinations affect grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment?
- c) What measures can be taken to improve the poor performance by grade nine (9) learners with hearing impairment in the national examinations?

2.4 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that, the findings of the research work might identify factors that lead to poor performance of learners with hearing impairment in their grade nine (9) national examinations. The findings might also be added to the body of knowledge on factors that lead to poor performance of learners with hearing impairment during the grade nine (9) national examinations.

2.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study will have the population which will be comprised of learners with hearing impairment, teachers handling the learners with hearing impairment and the administrators. The delimitation will be that, only the learners with hearing impairment, teachers handling the learners with hearing impairment and the administrators will be chosen by the researcher during data collection at

ChileheChepela Special School in Kasama and Musakanya Special Unit in Mpika. Despite the fact that, there will be other teachers who will be handling other learners with other disabilities who may have the required information for the study but will be left out.

2.6 Limitation of the Study

The limitation that will occur when conducting this research is that, some of the respondents might be unwilling to provide the required information to the study in the questionnaire that will be distributed to them. However, the researcher will use the triangulation of instruments in order to address the limitation. This will be done by using instruments such as interview schedules, questionnaires and focus group discussion so that what will be missed in the questionnaire will be captured in the interview schedule and focus group discussion.

2.7 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

The following theoretical framework and conceptual framework would be used while assessing the factors which lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment during their national examination at grade nine (9) levels.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be guided by instructional model for children with special educational needs by (Frew, T.W and Klein, N.K [4]). Instructional model is a model that uses many approaches and instructions to good teaching of learners with special needs. The approaches and instructions involved include identification of learners' relevant predispositions or needs, specification of appropriate objectives, curriculum, instructional materials and assessment of learner's performance.

3.1 Identification of learners needs

Frew,T.W and Klein,N.K. [4] state that, identification of learners needs is the process used to decide if a child have a disability or not. When a child has a disability the needs have to be identified and addressed through Individualized Education Program (IEP). According to Frew,T.W and Klein,N.K. [4]identification of learners needs, assists in responding to the diverse needs of learners with special needs.

In case of learners with hearing impairment, a learner has to be identified as having hearing problems. After being identified with hearing problem the needs of a learner have to be further identified. For instance a child may have a problem of acquiring academic skills, concepts and knowledge for all the academic subjects such as mathematics, integrated science, social studies, English, computer studies, and

business studies. Other needs that need to be identified apart from academic needs are the needs for personal development such as social needs. For example, the child's needs in developing friendship with other learners, the need of respect for others. If the needs are not identified and addressed they affect the child's performance during their examinations.

3.2 Specification of appropriate objectives

According to the model, specification of appropriate objectives is one of the approach and instructions to good teaching. Objectives are the foundations which an educator can use to build lessons and assessment of learners and can prove to meet the overall course or lesson goal (Frew, T.W and Klein, N.K. [4]). Furthermore, objectives ensures that, learning is focused and clearly understood by the learners and a teacher teaching them. Objectives can also help in addressing the needs of learners by designing relevant activities and assessment.

In the event of teaching and assessing learners with hearing impairment educators should derive their objectives based on addressing learner's needs as pointed out earlier on. The educator can also set objectives which can help in achieving the intended goal of passing the examinations. Educators can also set objectives for the lesson that can help learners with hearing impairment clearly understand the skills, concepts and knowledge being taught. If objectives are not set according to this model, performance of learners with hearing impairment can be affected negatively during their examinations. Educator's curriculum content have to match with the learner's capabilities in order to enable the learners manage their examination.

3.3 Curriculum

According to the model the term curriculum refers to all the organized and planned experiences that are being provided in schools and the classroom to help learners develop holistically (Frew, T.W and Klein, N.K. [4]). The model further argues that, curriculum is the key component which consists of subjects taught, subject content, school and classroom environment and activities that take place in and out of the classroom.

When educating learners with hearing impairment they should be taught subjects which are examinable for example subjects like mathematics, integrated science, social studies, English, computer studies, and business studies. The educator should consider the grade level and deliver the lessons within their subject matter or content of each subject. The school and class environment should also be conducive for learners with hearing impairment for example, the sitting arrangement, ventilation and

the classrooms have to be acoustically treated, classrooms should have talking walls with visual aids materials.

Educators should offer different activities in and outside the classroom to learners with hearing impairment that are tailored to their needs which helps them in physical and academic performance. For instance, academic classroom activities include exercises, group work, pair works just to mention a few. The physical activities may comprise of sports, drama, cultural dances and practical skills that may help them refresh their minds and learn effectively and possibly do well in their examination.

If the curriculum is designed in this manner, it can be of benefit to learners with hearing impairment resulting in passing of their examinations. However, if the curriculum lacks some of these components, academic performance of learners with hearing impairment may be affected.

3.4 Instructional Materials

The understanding of the model concerning the instructional materials is that, these are tools used in education lessons which include active learning and assessment. Basically, any resource a teacher uses to help teach learners is an instructional material Frew, T.W and Klein, N.K. [4]. When educators are handling learners with hearing impairment, the teacher may use many types of instructional materials under traditional resource, graphical organizers and teacher made resource as explained below.

Traditional resource includes textbooks and worksheets. Graphic organizers are presentation of information such as diagrams, charts, flow charts and graphs. Instructional materials such as diagrams, pictures, graphs and flow charts are very essential in the teaching and learning process and more so to a learner with hearing impairment as they reduce language and reading demands. This is because visual methods of teaching and learning create a more lasting experience and relate most readily to other sensory experiences. Then the teacher can make resources which may include anything that the teacher creates for instance, handouts, worksheets, quizzes, projects and tests materials. All instruction materials used by educators when teaching learners with hearing impairment should be appropriately related to the learning objectives for each lesson and this will also determine the level of performance on a given assessment to these learners.

3.5 Assessment of learner's performance

According to the model, assessment of learners' performance is one of the approach and instructions to good teaching. The understanding of the model is that, assessment is a process that involves the systematic collection and interpretation of a wide variety

of information on which to base instructional intervention decisions. This is because assessment which is summative is primarily a problem solving process which determines a child's specific learning strength and needs (Frew, T.W and Klein, N.K. [4]).

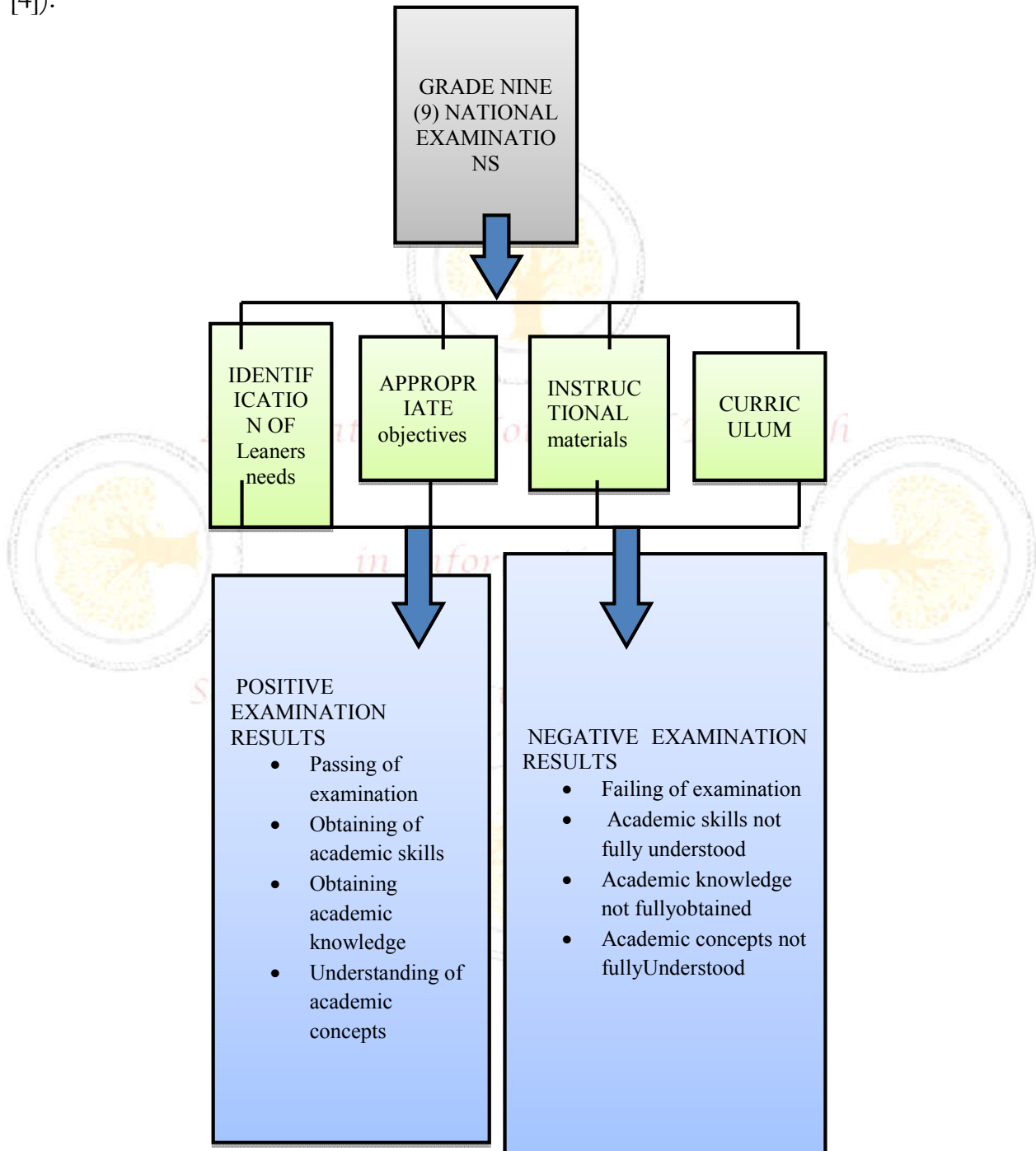


Figure 1.1: A diagrammatic representation conceptual framework of obtaining good and poor results during Grade Nine (9) National Examinations.

Source: Researchers

Assessment which is carried out during examinations is regarded as summative. Educators need to assess learners with hearing impairment using correct instruction interventions such as the use of total communication, individualized education approach, question and answer method, experiments, role-play, and fieldtrips. Before assessing learners with hearing impairment preparations have to be intensified with the use of remedial work, revising the work already covered, the use of activities such as debate and formative assessment such as classroom exercises, weekly and monthly tests in order to make the learners to be fully prepared for their examination or summative assessment. Learners ability have to be taken into account by educators such as the performance levels of being below average , average and above average in order to help them according to their abilities. If instructional intervention such as remedial work, revision, formative assessment and learner's ability are not addressed, it may affect the performance of learners in their examinations or during summative assessment.

This model will fit well with the current study because of having the aspects of identification of learners' relevant predispositions, specification of appropriate objectives and sequence, utilization of appropriate instruction procedure, assessment of learner's performance which will help the researcher by acting as a guide in assessing factors which lead to poor performance to learners with hearing impairment during grade nine (9) examination.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

A conceptual framework is a set of coherent ideas or concepts organized in a manner that makes them easy to communicate to the others. In principle, conceptual framework consists of concepts that are placed within a logical and sequential manner (Msabila, D. T, and Nalaila, S. G,[8]).

This conceptual framework is on understanding of Grade Nine (9) Examination Results. The arrows show a reflective path that the researcher will adopt throughout research process. The framework starts with the exploring the meaning of Grade Nine (9) national Examination Results, then followed by its four approaches namely, identification of learners needs, appropriate objectives, appropriate instructional materials and the curriculum and it will end with an explanation of positive and negative examination results.

4.1 Grade Nine (9) National Examination Results

National examinations are regarded as summative assessment which is a process of obtaining valid, reliable and useful information concerning the learner's achievement or data that is used for making decisions. Assessment requires determining what is to

be measured and then defining it precise so that tasks evoke the desired performance. Furthermore, assessment is used to evaluate student learning, skills acquisition and academic achievement at the conclusion of defined instruction period (Reynolds, C. R, Livingstone, R. B, and Willson, V [11]). However, several steps need to be followed in order to assess learners academically so that good results can be obtained. Grade nine national examination results are born out of summative assessment. Grade nine national examination results are results which are obtained when a learner with hearing impairment reaches grade nine level and sits for the examination. A learner with hearing impairment can obtain positive or negative results. When a learner with hearing impairment obtain positive results it makes a learner proceed to another grade level and this is grade ten (10). On other hand when a learner with hearing impairment fails the examinations a learner is barred to go to another grade level or it means a learner has to repeat the same grade level. Some learners with hearing impairment after failing examinations drop out of school completely.

4.2 Identification of Learners Needs

Learners with disabilities or suspected disabilities are evaluated by schools to determine whether they are eligible for special education services and, if eligible, to determine what services will be provided. In many states, the results of this evaluation also affect how much funding the school will receive to meet the learners' special needs which include examination needs (Reschly, D.J. [10]). Identification of learners needs according to this research means, identifying the learners with hearing impairment abilities such as the ability to perform above average, on average and below average which is obtained from national examinations or assessment results. It also means identifying problems learners with hearing impairment are faced with while learning such as problem of acquiring academic skills, knowledge and concept. Identifying learners needs help the educators to respond to the diverse needs of the learners with hearing impairment.

4.3 Appropriate Objectives

Objectives exist to provide a focused mind set for learners engaged in content and are the foundations which an educator can use to build lessons and assessment of the learners (Mitchell, K. M. W. and Manzo W. R.[7]). This will ensure that learning is focused, clearly understood and consequently do well in their examination. In other words objectives are steps that are taken in order to achieve a goal of teaching learners with hearing impairment and obtain positive examination results. Objectives in education circles aim at equipping learners with hearing impairment with academic skills, knowledge and concepts, because it is oriented on outcome based results. It is very vital to come up with appropriate objectives that will fit with the learners needs.

4.4 Appropriate Instructional materials

Instructional materials enhance the teaching and learning process by exhibiting information necessary to acquire knowledge and skills. It focuses on printed forms of instructional materials and provides detailed information (Campbell, C.P.[2]). When the educator is handling learners with hearing impairment, there is need to use instructional materials which will benefit the learners with hearing impairment by way of relating to their needs, set objectives, curriculum content and their level of understanding. Learners with hearing impairment learn well by using visual materials or aids such as diagrams, charts, flow charts and graphs. Others materials include computers, tablets, phones, television and power point technology. If these types of materials are used, learners with hearing impairment will be able to acquire academic skills, knowledge and concepts and have positive examination results

4.5 Curriculum

According to Egan, K. [3] Curriculum is the study of any and all educational phenomena. It is a condition of studying and producing knowledge that may have educational value. It includes the subject taught, the content, the school environment and other activities that take place outside the classroom. It provides guidelines on the content, sequence of activities, teaching methods, time schedules, educational resources and evaluation procedures. Its framework aims at reaching those below, on average and above average (Savolainen, H [12]). It is vital to have an appropriate curriculum for education to be meaningful for all learners with hearing impairment

4.6 Assessment of learner's performance

The National Research Council [9] identifies the practice of educational assessment as that which seeks to determine how well learners are learning and is an integral part of the quest for improved education. It provides feedback to learners, educators, parents, policymakers, and the public about the effectiveness of educational services. Especially relevant to assessing the academic achievement of deaf learners, this perspective assumes that the scores attained on standardized examinations of academic achievement are valid and reliable indicators of what these students have learned; that the assessment results allow learners as well as their families, teachers, and other interested parties to recognize their strengths and weaknesses; and that by identifying these strengths and weaknesses, families and schools have information that assists in designing and implementing programs and services that may improve the academic performance of these deaf or hearing impaired learners.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the paper concludes that the instructional model for children with special educational needs by (Frew, T.F and Klein,,N.K.[4] and conceptual-

framework can be used as one of the model in identifying factors that lead to poor performance for learners with hearing impairment in the national examination at grade nine (9): at ChilesheChepela Special School and Musakanya Special Unit in Kasama and Mpika district of Zambia. It involves identification of learners' relevant predispositions or needs, specification of appropriate objectives and sequence, curriculum, instructional materials and assessment of learner's performance. Thus the aspect of indemnification of learners needs will be a guide in identifying those learners having problems in acquiring academic knowledge, concepts and skills. The aspect of specification of appropriate objectives will be a guide in identifying if these objectives are set or not in the study sites. Furthermore, the aspect of the curriculum will be a guide in identifying the curriculum is designed and how it is taught. Then the aspect of instructional materials will be a guide in identifying if these learners are taught using traditional resource, graphical organizers and teacher made resource. Finally, the aspect of assessment of learner's performance will be a guide in identifying learners performance.

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