

The Availability and Use of Assistive Technology to Children with Mental Retardation in Schools Found in Buea Municipality

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Abstract

This study set out to investigate the availability and use of assistive technology for children with mental retardation in the Buea municipality of the south west region in Cameroon. The main research question was; *How does the availability and use of assistive technology for the mentally retarded influence the teaching learning process?* Three specific research questions were passed thus:

1. What are the types of assistive technologies available in schools?
2. Do trained personnel handle or use these assistive technologies?
3. Does the use of assistive technologies affect the teaching learning process of children with mental retardation?

The survey research designed was use in carrying out this study. The population of this study was made up of all the schools and teachers of the Buea Sub-Division. A sample of 32 randomly selected teachers and schools were used for the study. From the questionnaire administered, descriptive statistical method with percentages to describe responses and opinions were used to analyze the collected data. The results obtained showed that about 90% of the respondents' answers and opinions proved the near absence or lack of assistive technology devices for mental retardation children in most of the schools. This would likely affect the smooth teaching and learning process for both teachers of and pupils with mental retardation.

Some recommendations were made thus:

- Basic special education courses should be included in the curriculum of all teacher training colleges.
- Special education teacher should be parts of the curriculum planning for schools.
- Schools administrator and the government should organize seminars, workshops and inservice training to help regular teachers acquire knowledge and skills in special needs education.

Keywords: Cameroon; research question; Schools; Study; Teachers