

**Educational challenges and coping strategies among students with hearing disability in  
Tanzania inclusive public secondary schools**

**Vincent Jalang'o Cosmas**

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The purpose of this study was to analyse the educational challenges and coping strategies among students with hearing disability in Tanzania inclusive public secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to accomplish the following objectives: (i) Investigate the educational challenges faced by students with hearing disability (HD) in inclusive public secondary schools; (ii) Find out the available teaching and learning facilities for students with HD; (iii) Examine the kind of support services available for students with HD that exists at secondary schools; and (iv) Discover coping strategies employed by students with HD in inclusive public secondary schools. The study employed qualitative research approach with a descriptive case study design. The research data were collected using open-ended questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observations. Three inclusive public secondary schools were purposively chosen from three districts in Mainland Tanzania. The respondents were 108, who included three heads of schools, 27 inclusive classroom teachers, three school counsellors, three academic masters/mistresses, two heads of special needs education (SNE) units, and 70 students with hearing disability (HD). The findings revealed that academic inclusion and participation of students with HD in inclusive public secondary schools were hindered by acute shortage of SNE teachers specialising in area of HD, lack of competence in sign language interpretation skills among teachers, and acute shortage of key teaching and learning resources and SNE services. Other challenges included communication problems, language barrier created by the use of English language as a medium of instruction, and inflexible curriculum. The main coping strategies employed by students with HD, included seeking help and guidance and emotional support under seeking social support as well as active coping and problem solving under problem focussed coping strategies. Besides this, the findings showed that the studied inclusive public secondary schools lacked characteristics of inclusiveness. In light of the findings of this study, it has been generally concluded that the sampled inclusive public secondary schools had several educational challenges which denied them the chance of meeting the requirements and quality of

inclusive schools for students with HD. The schools did not provide the necessary and equal teaching and learning grounds as well as social adjustment for students, with and without HD. The present study therefore, recommends a number of actions for the improvement to make the schools more inclusive. The study further recommends future directions and research on inclusive education for students with HD as well as other disabilities in secondary education and other levels.