ADOPTION AND USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY BY PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to gather information on the adoption and use of Information and Communication Technology by Persons with visual impairments (PWVI) in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study incorporated various data collection methodologies which included semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, observation and content analysis. These mixed method approach enriched the study by providing information from different perspectives. An exploratory study design was used, as it was deemed the most suitable in a research area that was relatively new without much literature to refer to. Snowballing sampling methodology was used, and, through a chain of referrals, sixty (60) potential respondents were identified and contacted. However, about half of these could not take part in the research due to a variety of reasons. Thirty three (33) respondents took part in the study.

Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in frequency distribution, graphs, percentages and thematic narratives. The results of the study showed that ICT had been adopted and used by a considerable number of PWVI. Access to ICT by PWVI was achieved through the use of assistive technologies. ICT has opened up many opportunities to PWVI, thus enhancing their independent living. However, assistive technologies were found to be very expensive, thereby curtailing more widespread use of ICT among PWVI. A major challenge to ICT use among members of this group was accessibility due to poorly designed websites that do not adhere to set international guidelines.

The Government should subsidize the current cost of assistive technology to allow more PWVI utilize ICTs. Web developers on the other hand, should adhere to internationally set standards for web accessibility to ensure that everyone can access information posted on the various websites with ease.