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Accessibility and Equity in Online Learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT This empirical study examines accessibility and equity in online learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students in Saudi Arabia, where digital education has rapidly expanded under Vision 2030. Despite advances in assistive technologies, many DHH learners continue to face systemic barriers related to captioning, sign-language interpretation, platform design, and instructor preparedness. Using a mixed-method design, data were collected from 52 DHH university students and 15 online-learning instructors across three Saudi public universities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling from disability support centers in Saudi Arabia. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively to measure accessibility frequency, perceived inclusion, and satisfaction, while qualitative interviews explored lived experiences and institutional support. Results revealed that although 68 percent of DHH participants accessed online classes weekly, only 41 percent reported reliable captioning, and 56 percent experienced communication delays with instructors. Qualitative findings indicated that institutional awareness and staff training strongly predicted students' sense of inclusion.