

Self-Identity and Academic Performance of Pupils with Hearing Impairment in Special Primary Schools in Kenya

Margaret Kwamboka Nyaata, M.E.d (PhD Scholar), Dr. Washington Wachianga, Dr. Owino Cleophas Owiko

Jaramogi Oginga University of Science and Technology

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11060124>

Received: 08 June 2026; Accepted: 14 June 2026; Published: 29 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment (HI) in Special Primary Schools in Kisii County, Kenya. Self-identity is considered a key factor in emotional development and motivation and is significant in academic success. Self-identity refers to an individual's ability to define his/her identity and connect himself/herself to society. Studies indicate that learners with HI academically perform poorly in schools as compared to regular learners. Despite the findings, few studies have focused on the influence of self-identity on academic performance among pupils with HI in special primary schools. This study examined the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of learners with hearing impairment in special primary schools in Kisii, Kenya. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of learners with hearing impairment in special primary schools in Kenya. The study also sought to establish the role of teacher on the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of pupils with HI. The study used a quantitative correlational research design. The target population for this study comprised of 81 class seven pupils with HI, 20 Parents, 26 class seven teachers, 4 head teachers, 4 Curriculum Support Officers. The study was guided by Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977). The coefficient for self-identity was 0.288, with a t-value of 2.796 ($p = 0.007$). This suggests that learners with a stronger sense of self-identity performed better academically. The study recommends that parents and teachers should be optimistic and develop an attitude that fosters self-confidence among students for enhanced academic performance.

Keywords: hearing impairment, self-identity, pupil, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

The quest for education has been in the rise given that it is the proof of one's level of knowledge, competence and ability to perform fully in the highly innovative and competitive society. The ensuing value of education has necessitated investment in the best education everywhere. However it is hypothesized that within academic circles, HI pupils tend to underperform academically more often than not, a phenomenon to a great extent attributed to the pupils' lower levels of self-confidence. This is evident in the HI pupils' lower language, cognition and communication skills. Despite the remarkable poor academic performance of HI pupils The Rights of Persons With Disability ACT (RPWD Act) 2016 emphasizes the right for quality education for the affected pupils. The ACT defines Hearing impairment as persons with 70 DB hearing loss in both ears within speech frequencies (considered deaf), while the persons with 60 DB to 70DB hearing loss in both hearing loss in both ears within speech frequencies is referred as hard of hearing. The speech and language disability is considered as permanent disability.

The World Health (WHO) report (2011) reported that people with disabilities make up around 15% of the global population. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), hearing loss will affect 900 million people by 2050, which is 5% of the world population. Although it is the responsibility of the state to ensure equal opportunities to education for persons with disabilities it is important to research the factors that

influence the education of this affected population. This is focused at helping the government and stakeholders with innovations and policies which will ensure equitable access to education by persons with disabilities.

It has been recognized that the academic performance of the hearing impaired learners has attracted the attention of so many researchers. Results have pointed to the difficulties experienced by both the HI learners and teachers in their academic work. Hearing impairment through schooling causes a serious decline in academic achievement, which is aggravated by their inability to speak or to express themselves and the lack of language to communicate. As such, the HI pupils suffer drawback due to inability to communicate in the chosen language effectively. The effect is direct on teachers who find it hard to communicate ideas and other abstract concepts which utilize verbal communication. This has greatly derailed their ability to comprehend abstract concepts.

In his study of academic and social problems of hearing impaired students Nwazuoke (1993) agreed that they suffer academic drawbacks which attributed to the lack of skills of teaching the HI learners by most teachers. American speech language hearing association (ASLHA) affirms that the HI learners have difficulties with all areas of academic achievement especially reading and mathematics. ASLHA (2005) presents four major ways in which HI affects the hearing impaired academically. These are:

- Delayed development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language)
- Language deficit which causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement
- Communication hurdles that lead to social isolation and poor self-concepts
- An impact on vocational choices.

Statement of Problem

Identity has always been a major theme of debate and discussion with respect to deaf people. Hearing loss impacts many pupils in schools, yet its effect on learning is often overlooked by the society. Pupils who are not fully able to follow classroom activities and engage positively with classmate will have their academic path more difficult. The listening challenges of HI pupils make comprehension and performance in school work difficult. The pupils with HI not only have it difficult hearing a teacher's words but also find it harder to develop language skills and even take part in group work.

The Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is to establish the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment (HI).

Justification of the Study

A quick glimpse of the academic performances of pupils with hearing impairment in Kenya reveals inhibited academic performance, a clear indicator that the pupils' academic performance is poor (Omutsani, 2011). This study seeks to establish the influence of self-identity on the academic performance of class seven pupils with HI in special primary schools in Kisii County, Kenya

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study have both theoretical and practical benefits for the academic success of pupils with hearing impairment. Theoretically, it will add to the knowledge base about how pupils with hearing impairment recognize and leverage their inherent abilities for academic success and life in general. It will also help those in charge of the pupils with HI identify behaviours supportive in the learners' quest for academic achievement. The study will be of practical benefit to government, parents, non-governmental organizations and researchers in ensuring that interventions necessary for the academic success of pupils with HI

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hearing impairment is damage to the ability to hear sounds partially or fully. The characterization of a hearing impairment and level of its severity are expressed in the intensity one requires to hear different sounds that his/her ears can absorb and to which he/she can respond. According to Dunn et.al, (2012)) accommodations for learners with HI can be classified as visual or aural. Visual accommodations rely on a learner's sense of sight, while acoustical accommodations depend on the learner's hearing ability. Visual accommodations include sign language translators, lip reading, and captioning. Aural accommodations include amplification gadgets such as FM systems. Some learners who are hard of hearing may hear only specific oscillations or sounds within a certain volume range. They may rely steadily upon hearing aids and lip reading, without which they may have difficulty following lessons where acoustics cause echoes or if the speaker whispers rapidly or unclearly. Learners with hearing impairments find it difficult to watch demonstrations and prescriptions. If they are watching a sign language translator, a captioning screen, or a speaker's lips, they must concentrate one at a time. When two or more demonstrations are used simultaneously, the learners may be frustrated, and their self-competence could likely be higher (Bunyasi et.al, 2010). This study is anchored in Glickman's Deaf Identity Model (1993, 1996) which aims at measuring the cultural identity in deaf individuals.

Hearing Impairment and its Implications for Pupil's Development

Deafness and hearing disabilities are as a result of genetic factors or by pregnancy related, childbirth, or abnormal postnatal development, traumas, viral and bacterial diseases, traumas and medications (Wiesel & Zandberg, 2002). The attitude to pupils with special needs has been characterized with the cruel approach which denied their right to exist to the level of accepted humanitarian standard of acceptance, education and integration into regular society. The urge to address the injustices against children with special needs originated special education in Europe in the 19th century. The 20th century saw a breakthrough in science, technology, medicine and research in dealing with challenges of disabilities.

Hearing loss has an immense influence on a child's development. The severer the disability, the greater is the difficulty in absorbing language. This difficulty in language acquisition affects the ability of the hard of hearing children to establish social ties and attachment, which is accompanied by emotional difficulties (Eliyahu, 2007). Language, which is a basic tool for creating interpersonal and social relations, creates social and emotional difficulties for the hard of hearing children (Katz & Schery, 2006).

Glickman's Deaf Identity Model (1993, 1996)

This study is anchored in Glickman's Theory of Deaf Identity (1993, 1996) which aims at measuring the cultural identity in deaf individuals in the deaf identity development, Glickman (1993) emphasized the aspect of cultural difference between deaf people and hearing people, and emphasized that the Deaf culture must be acknowledged in the society, just as other minorities' culture. Glickman constructed a Deaf Identity Development Scale and also proposed a model with four major developmental stages. The model was focused on the "cultural difference" between the hearing and the deaf community. This model proposes 4 stages that inform how a deaf individual conceptualizes about himself/herself, the community and the hearing world. The stages are as follows:

- i) **Bicultural Identity:** The deaf attribute regard equally to both the cultures – the hearing and the deaf to the extent that the person is fairly enabled in appreciating and rationally determining the differences between the two cultures.
- ii) **Immersion Identity:** The deaf are completely immersed in the deaf world and unable to note/accept/adjust to the hearing world, finding their own culture the best
- iii) **Culturally Hearing:** The deaf people try to become more like the hearing people. They avoid the deaf in general and associate themselves more with the hearing world.

iv) **Culturally Marginal:** The deaf people though having a sense of isolation try to fit themselves in both cultures but never become comfortable in either.

Influence of Self-identity on Academic Performance of Learners with Hearing Impairment

The concept of self-identity refers to an individual's ability to define his/her identity and connect himself/herself to society (Epstein, 2002). Self-identity is an individuals' state of cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally consistent interpretation of themselves, the environment and all factors of their lives, which is specific but also in compliance with the society. Self-identity profoundly shapes how learners with HI engage with education.

Pupils with a positive deaf or hard-of-hearing identity do build vital **self-advocacy** and **resilience** which fuels academic persistence. Conversely, internalized stigma can lead to isolation, reluctance to take hold of support services, and lower academic achievement. Self-identity crisis development has high chances of affecting the pupils' academic success by impacting their cognitive reasoning skills. More specifically, if positive achieved identity crisis ensues then pupils are able to embrace the plans and strategies for academic success (Carducci, 2009).

Positively living self-identity crisis by pupils with HI may enables them realize high self-esteem, optimistic and energetic approach to life. However, those with an identity crisis are prone to negative attitude and pessimism in life. They find it hard to accept criticism without defensiveness and hostility and tend to overreact (Reichman, 2008). They have a strong need for re-assurance and praise from parents and peers.

Kroger and Marcia (2011) study showed self-identity development constituting a stage in ego growth. The ego's primary function is to mediate between internal states and the demands of the external reality to function effectively in the world. As such, if an identity is achieved, ego processes becomes more robust, efficient, and able to deal with complex tasks even in the face of disruptive feelings. Individuals with higher or more mature identity status are likely to perform better on tasks.

Studies of Mahaffy (2004) and Gonzalez-Pienda et.al, (2015) have indicated that parental interactions make major contribution to the development of positive identity crisis necessary for academic success for pupils with HI. Alternatively the researchers noted that disappointment in school is a significant factor in the negative self-image of HI pupils.

Bar-On (2011) study in Texas, USA discusses emotional self-identity crisis which he refers to as a set of skills and abilities that enables a person adapt to an environment for success. The values embodied in crisis emotional self-awareness are decisiveness, self-honor, self-actualization, independence, sympathy, interpersonal communications, responsibility, problem solving, judgment, resilience, pressure tolerance, impulsive control, happiness and optimism.

Researchers have identified strong relationship between emotional identity crisis and academic achievement (Adeymo, 2007; Furnham, 2004 & Parker et.al, 2006). Further research has been done on emotional identity intelligence role in academic success (Petrides et.al, 2004).

Gonzalez-Pienda (2015) argues that parental support is vital in mitigating the life and education HI pupils. Educated parents have a better understanding of how to solve learners' identity crises, especially among adolescents' whose life is impacted by parent-child relationship. The children's self-identity is greatly influenced by parent's background, parenting styles, achievement-related credit, and interaction with parents and teachers (Yaacob, 2006). Studies show that pupils with HI, who are raised by HI parents often have advantages over those who are born to hearing parents (Monteiro & Peixoto, 2012), a condition attributed to an environment where communication depends on visual, not oral, cues. This phenomenon promotes understanding of each other's needs and feelings, thus strengthening self-identity (Crowe, 2003).

In recent years a lot of research in relation to academic success and self-esteem is done, but in a less degree of self-identity influence on academic performance of pupils with HI is examined. Therefore, the specific

objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-identity and academic performance of class seven pupils with HI in special primary schools in Kenya.

The Conceptual Framework

The Influence of Self-identity on Academic Performance of Pupils with HI in Special Primary Schools

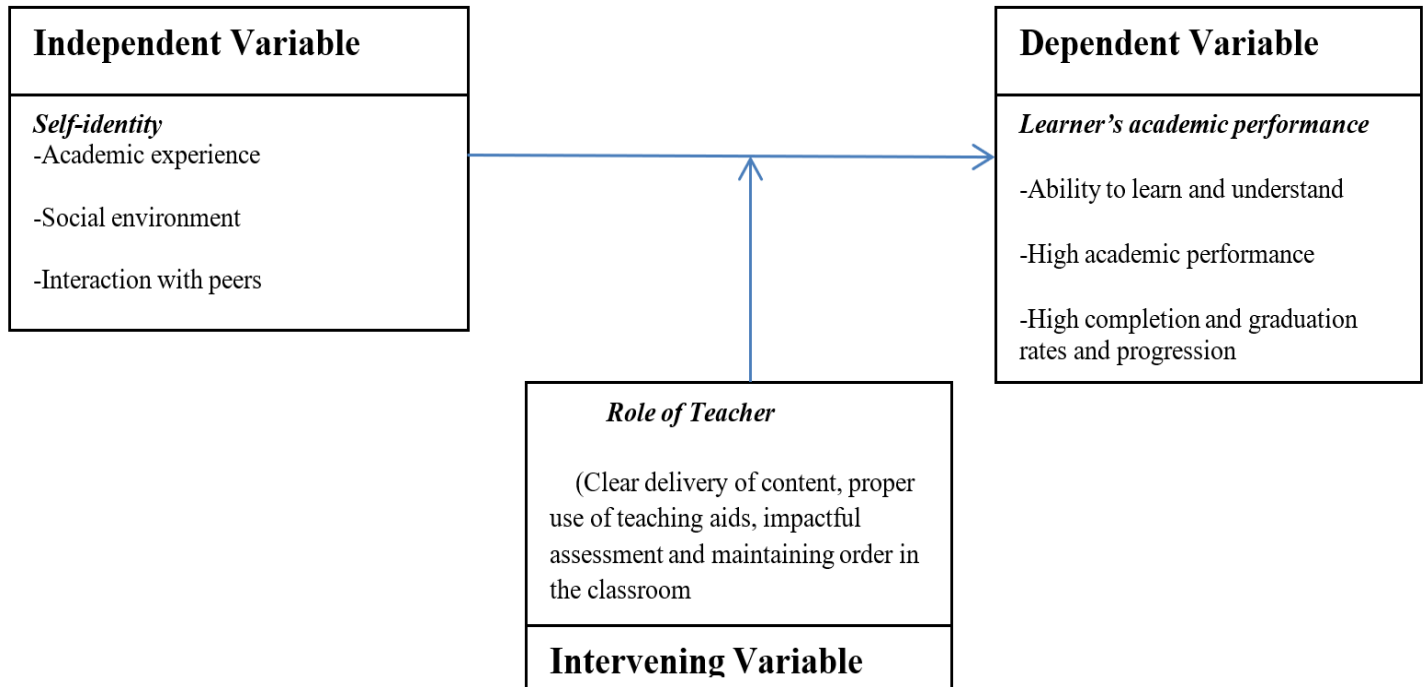


Figure 1.1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study (Researcher, 2026)

The independent variable, self-identity endears in a learner trust in his/ her abilities to perform, firmness and courage to carry through, driven by a sense of self-reliance to realize high academic performance reflected in the ability to learn and understand as well as result in high completion and graduation rates and progression. The intervening variable is the role of the teacher in the academic success of pupils with HI through clear delivery of content, proper use of teaching aids, impactful assessment and maintenance of order in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between pupil with HI self-identity and their academic performance. This approach allows for the assessment of the extent to which self-identity levels are associated with pupil's academic performance. The target population of the study was 81 class seven pupils with hearing Impairment in the four special public primary schools in Kisii County, Kenya. A purposive sample was used to select the 81 Class Seven pupils with HI, 20 parents/guardians of pupils with HI, 26 Class Seven teachers, 4 head teachers, and 4 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs). A questionnaire was administered to the 26 class seven teachers. An interview was administered onto the parents, Head teachers and Curriculum Support Officers

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The null hypothesis for the study was that self-identity has no significant influence on academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools. The model summary, ANOVA and regression coefficients were used to test for the hypothesis. The results are as shown in Table 4.1. As the model summary results reveal, the R^2 for the variable is 0.620. This indicates that the 62% of the variation of academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools is as a result of self-identity. This strengthens the ground that self-identity plays a critical role in enhancing academic performance of students with HI in special primary schools

The ANOVA results as shown in Table 4.2 revealed that the F-statistic was 156.942 at a significance level of 0.000. This is an indication that the model could significantly predict the relationship between self-identity and academic performance of students with HI in special primary schools.

The regression coefficients on Table 4.3 revealed that Beta coefficient for the variables was 0.920. This is an indication that a unit change in self-identity could influence up to 0.920 of academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools. The findings also revealed that the P-value for the variable was 0.000 which implies that self-identity could statistically significantly influence academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools. To this end, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis that self-identity has no significant influence on academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools.

Table 4.1: Model Summary for Self-Identity and Academic Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.788 ^a	.620	.617	.37286

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Identity

Source: Researcher (2026)

Table 4.2: ANOVA Results for Self Identity and Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.819	1	21.819	156.942	.000 ^b
	Residual	13.347	121	.139		
	Total	35.166	122			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Identity

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 4.3: Regression Coefficients for Self Identity and Academic Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.151	.154		.983	.328
	Self-Identity	.920	.073	.788	12.528	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Source: Researcher (2026)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Self-identity culture of people with HI is grounded on the unique language (sign language) which helps them to express themselves, and their ideas and thoughts. At the age of 12, children become sensitive about their community, culture, nationhood, and societal interactions making them conscious about their identity (Piaget, 1968; Emler and Reicher, 1995). However if not handled well identity consciousness translates into identity crises due to conflicts (Erickson, 1968). The children with HI when growing up in a hearing society, with no contact persons with HI may face identity crises resulting lower levels of self-esteem (Spence, 2010). Poor language development in the pupils with HI hampers their academic performance due to inadequate communication, learning and sharing. This study indicates that increasing students' self-identity significantly improves learning interest and improved academic performance among pupils with HI. Educators should prioritize self-identity enhancement strategies to foster a more conducive and successful learning environment. Enhancing self-identity appears to be a game changer in self-engagement, interest, and motivation in academic life. However, the role of teachers, parents and the community in entrenching the culture of self-identity among pupils with HI has been dismal, given the lack of knowledge, skills (sign language), passion for the

calling and hearing aids Educators are urged to integrate the culture of self-identity activities and nurturing of positive behaviours in education to cultivate interest and motivation of the learners in education. The role of teachers and parents in cultivating self-identity among pupils with HI through guidance, recognition, assigning roles and rewards is significant in the academic performance of the pupils. Stakeholders in education will appreciate and understand the process of identity development of individuals with HI, and help their pupils with HI have positive attitude and behaviours to enable them have positive self-image and self-concept for academic success. The study recommends teachers should use positive reinforcement through application of clear teaching approaches and devices, and emphasis on accommodative behaviours to motivate and promote pupils' self-identity towards active participation for enhanced academic performance. The Government of Kenya should make hearing aids affordable to enable as many pupils to use them for enhanced hearing and learning

REFERENCES

1. Adeyemo, D. A. (2007). Moderating Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Link Between Academic Self-Efficacy and Achievement of University Students. *Psychology and developing societies, Vol.19 Issue 2:199-213.*
2. Bar-On, R. (2011). The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Health and Wellbeing. *Emotional Intelligence. Rijeka, Croatia.*
3. Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control. Freeman, New York:
4. Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. *Psychological Review, Vol.84, Issue: 191–215.*
5. Bin Yaacob, M. J. (2006). Parent-adolescent Relationships and its Association to Adolescents' Self-esteem. *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences: MJMS, Vol. 13, Issue 1: 21.*
6. Bunyasi, B.A., Mugo, J., Orodho, J.A., Karugu, G.K (2010). The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement of Girls with Hearing Impairments in Secondary Schools for the Deaf in Kenya
7. Carducci, B. J. (2009). The Psychology of Personality: Viewpoints, Research, and Applications. John Wiley & Sons.
8. Crowe, T. V. (2003). Self-esteem Scores Among Deaf College Students: an Examination of Gender and Parents' Hearing Status and Signing Ability. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, Vol. 8, Issue 2:199-206.*
9. Dunn, C., Rabren, K. S., Taylor, S. L., & Dotson, C. K. (2012). Assisting Students with High-incidence Disabilities to Pursue Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. *Intervention in School and Clinic, Vol.48 Issue1, 47-54.*
10. Gonzalez-Pienda, J.A, Nunez, J.C., Gonzalez-Pumariega,S, S., Alvarez, L., Roces, C. and Garcia, M. (2018).A Structural Equation Model of Parental Involvement, Motivational and Aptitudinal Characteristics, and Academic Achievement. *The Journal of Experimental Education, Vol.70, Issue 3:257-287.*
11. Glickman, N. S. & Carey J. C. (1993). Measuring Deaf Cultural Identities: A Preliminary Investigation. *Rehabilitation Psychology, Vol. 38 Issue 4: 275–283.*
12. Glickman, N. (1996). The Development of Culturally Deaf Identities. In: N Glickman & M Harvey (Eds.), *Culturally Affirmative Psychotherapy with Deaf Persons*, pp.115–153. Mahwah, NJ:Lawrence Erlbaum.
13. Koger J, & Marcia J. E. (2011). The Identity Statuses: Origins, Meanings, and Interpretations. In *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* pp. 31-53. New York, NY: Springer New York.
14. Luckner J.L & Muir S. (2002) Successful Students Who Are Deaf in General Education Settings. *American Annals of the Deaf Vol. 146 Issue 5:435-46*
15. Marschark, M., Shaver, D. M., Nagle, K. M., & Newman, L. A. (2015). Predicting the Academic Achievement of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Students from Individual, Household, Communication, and Educational Factors. *Exceptional Children, Vol.81, Issue 3: 350-369.*
16. Ndurumo, M. (2017). Exceptional Children, Development Consequences and Interaction. Nairobi, Kenya: Longman Limited.
17. Nwazuo, I. A (1993). Academic and Social Problems of Clearing Impaired Students. In A Comprehensive Textbook of Special Education Ed Onwuchekwa J. N Ibadan Agbo Areo publishers.

18. Parker, J. D., Hogan, M. J., Eastabrook, J. M., Oke, A., & Wood, L. M. (2006). Emotional Intelligence and Student Retention: Predicting the Successful Transition from High School to University. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 41, Issue 7: 1329-1336.
19. Petrides, K. V., Frederickson, N., & Furnham, A. (2004). The Role of Trait Emotional Intelligence in Academic Performance and Deviant Behavior at School. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 36, Issue 2: 277-293.
20. www.aanviihearing.com (2026). Hearing Loss's Effects On Academic Performance