

The Influence of Self-Confidence on the Academic Performance of Pupils with Hearing Impairment in Special Primary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Confidence is belief or assurance in the correctness of an idea, theory or course of action toward success. Self-confidence refers to an individual's opinion of him/ herself. It is a conviction that one can achieve his/ her goals. Self-confidence has significant influence on the academic performance of pupils. Pupils that have high self-confidence have a positive and realistic perception of themselves. They can easily deal with relationships and tasks while remaining upbeat and forceful. Self-confidence is fueled by success which in return boosts belief in one's skills, ability to face challenges. Studies indicate that pupils with HI do academically perform poorly as compared to regular learners. Despite the findings, few studies have focused on the influence of self-confidence on academic performance among pupils with HI in special primary schools. This study examined the influence of self-confidence 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-confidence 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-confidence 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 regression coefficient revealed that self-confidence had a coefficient of 0.875 which implies that a unit change in self-confidence would influence up to 0.875 (87.5%) of the academic performance of the pupils with HI. This is an indication that self-confidence has a strong influence on the academic performance of pupils with HI in special primary schools in Kisii County. The positive and significant interaction term ($\beta=0.25$) suggests that teacher role impacts positively on pupils with HI self-confidence for academic success. 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-confidence, 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.

Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance outcomes. It is the confidence in one's ability and talents to influence events and control over one's environment (Bandura 1977). It is the belief in one's own abilities to perform tasks and achieve goals, while being motivated, engaged, and resilient and focused at the task amidst challenges. Its influence on learning behavior has attracted tremendous attention from educators and researchers alike. The relationship between self-confidence and learning interest is intricate yet profoundly related. High self-confidence enhances a positive attitude towards learning, encourages risk-taking, and reduces anxiety common with academic failure. Alternately, diminished self-confidence can result into fear of failure, avoidance behaviors, and declined motivation, thereby impairing enthusiasm in learning. Understanding this phenomenon is pivotal for developing effective pedagogical strategies that promote academic achievement in learners especially those with disabilities. This study seeks to establish the influence of self-confidence on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment (HI)

According to Rubio (2007) due to low self-confidence many psychological barriers such as feeling of insecurity, fearfulness, having anxiety, and feeling yourself apart from the society are possible barriers that may arise for a student during the class which can adversely affect the performance of individual. They can consequently be leading an individual being distracted from the learning process. Based on personal experiences of the researchers, it has been observed that most of students at Kandahar University having poor participation in classes. Since the participation is closely related to self-confidence, this is the major concern that students' poor performance maybe due to the lack of self-confidence which can consequently affect their vulnerability in learning process.

According to Benabou & Tirole (2002) self-confidence has its effect on motivation and can change humans' behavior and is considered as a factor for students' problem-solving skill at the university. In addition to that Palavan (2017) states that students' lack of self-confidence can cause for students' lack of motivation which in result can cause education become compulsory and make student show negative attitude toward learning.

Statement of Problem

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. Recognizing how hearing loss influences the pupils' self-confidence is important for creating learning environments that are both fair and supportive. Despite studies showing strong relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of learners *with* hearing impairment results have indicated learners with high self-esteem having low academic performance (Bunyasi, 2010). Research into the challenges of realizing self-confidence by pupils with HI provides opportunities for stakeholders in education to help students strengthen their self-belief which is pivotal in academic success.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is to establish the influence of self-confidence on the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment (HI). Pupils with HI experience poor academic performance compared to hearing pupils.

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-confidence 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

The World Health Organization Report (2018) shows a global population of 466 million people with Disabling Hearing Loss (DHL), 34 million of them are children. Disabling hearing loss is defined as a chronic condition in which the better hearing ear is greater than 40 decibels in adults and greater than 30 decibels in children. The prevalence of DHL in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 1.9 percent of children. Hearing Impairment (H.I) is defined as hearing loss, whether permanent or temporary (Disabilities Education Act American Law and Statutes, 2004). HI has an inhibiting impact on a child's academic performance but is not associated with deafness. According to Omondi et.al (2007), 2.3 % to 5.6 % of Kenyan schoolchildren have hearing loss. Failure to examine and properly address issues of hearing impairment early in life has been associated with severe permanent linguistic cognition and literacy skills (World Health Organization, 2018).

The Dictionary of Psychology (2018) describe self-confidence as a person's trust in his/her own ability, aptitude and judgments or conviction that he or she can successfully face day to day disputes and demands. It is the optimistic and mindful attitude of teachers, parents, and peers that fosters self-confidence among pupils. This study is grounded in Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977)

A study by Green et.al (2014) in the United Kingdom established that individuals accomplish greater interpersonal authority and self-confidence when engaged among the peer group. The ensuing high level of social self-confidence motivated individuals to act as a de-facto leader in the peer group.

Self-confidence positively impacts learner's competence and cognitive achievements and success at school (Shaikh (2013). Repeated experiences of success by learners enhanced their self-confidence and competence at school.

Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) study established significant impact of self-confidence on learning in Afghanistan. Self-confidence enhances peer relationships, sharing of ideas and concentration in lessons. Supporting the same view, Adekunle T. O., (2023) study showed a significant relationship between self-confidence and academic performance in English language by senior secondary school students in Nigeria.

Norhidayan (2013) study on challenges affecting the academic achievement of learners with HI in Ghana attributed the same to the prevailing learning environments (unavailability of facilities/ learning materials, and limitation of curricular contents).

Dennis et.al (2022) examination of perceptions held by teachers and pupils with HI on factors affecting the academic performance in Zambia revealed how the poor use of sign language impaired communication and learning. Other factors impacting academic performance included the pupils' negative attitude towards education, poor entry level, insufficient resources, bloated school curriculum, and inappropriate instructional and assessment approaches.

Ayiela (2012) study on factors affecting KCPE performance of learners with HI in Kenya revealed that teachers lack of effective communication skills and inadequate curriculum coverage derailed imparting of knowledge and skills to learners. The role of the teacher in the academic success of pupils can't be understated. A special education teacher is a professional who supports learners with disabilities access the education curriculum by working collaboratively with a team to design individual education plans (IEP), actively implementing the plans by providing individualized instruction, and monitoring learning progress. Special education teachers are trained to work with learners with the classifications of mild/moderate or severe disabilities (Hall, 2025). Teacher qualifications, especially in sign language proficiency and special education training, significantly impact the academic performance of learners with hearing impairments. Effective communication, including the use of sign language and total communication methods, is crucial for successful learning.

According to Hall (2025) ability of teachers to communicate effectively, regardless of whether it's through sign language or other methods, is essential for building a positive learning environment and supporting academic performance. A positive attitude towards learners with HI can create a more inclusive classroom and motivate learners to participate. Access to appropriate assistive technology, resources, and materials can further support the learning of learners with hearing impairments. Adapting the curriculum and teaching methods to suit the needs of learners with hearing impairments can also improve their academic performance. Additionally, factors like teacher attitude, availability of resources, and curriculum modifications also play a vital role in supporting these learners. Research has indicated that teachers' proficiency in sign language facilitates better communication in the classroom, leading to increased participation and self-esteem in learners with HI. Sign language is often the first language for these learners, and its use can enhance their ability to understand and engage with the curriculum.

Archan & Rekharani (2021) study on teacher's classroom behaviour and self-esteem of students in India indicated that free interaction enhanced learners' self-confidence which resulted in high academic performance. The teachers' attitude towards the learners is also significant in the academic performance of the learners (Reed et.al. 2008).

According to Hearing Solutions, North Michigan (2025) the role of the teacher in the academic performance of learners with HI includes clarity before the learners, use of visual aids, reducing background noises, providing summaries of lessons and sustaining order and discipline in the classroom.

The previous studies featured the examination of general factors influencing the academic performance of learners with HI in senior schools. This study specifically focuses on the influence of self-confidence on the academic performance of HI pupils in primary schools. The previous studies emphasize the role of teachers in the enhancement of self-confidence for academic performance of learners with HI. This study seeks to establish the role of other stakeholders other than teachers, that of parents and education officials on increasing self-confidence for the academic success of HI pupils. A synergy created by the role of all the stakeholders augurs well for the education of HI pupils.

Conceptual Framework

The Influence of Self-confidence on Academic Performance of Learners with HI in Special

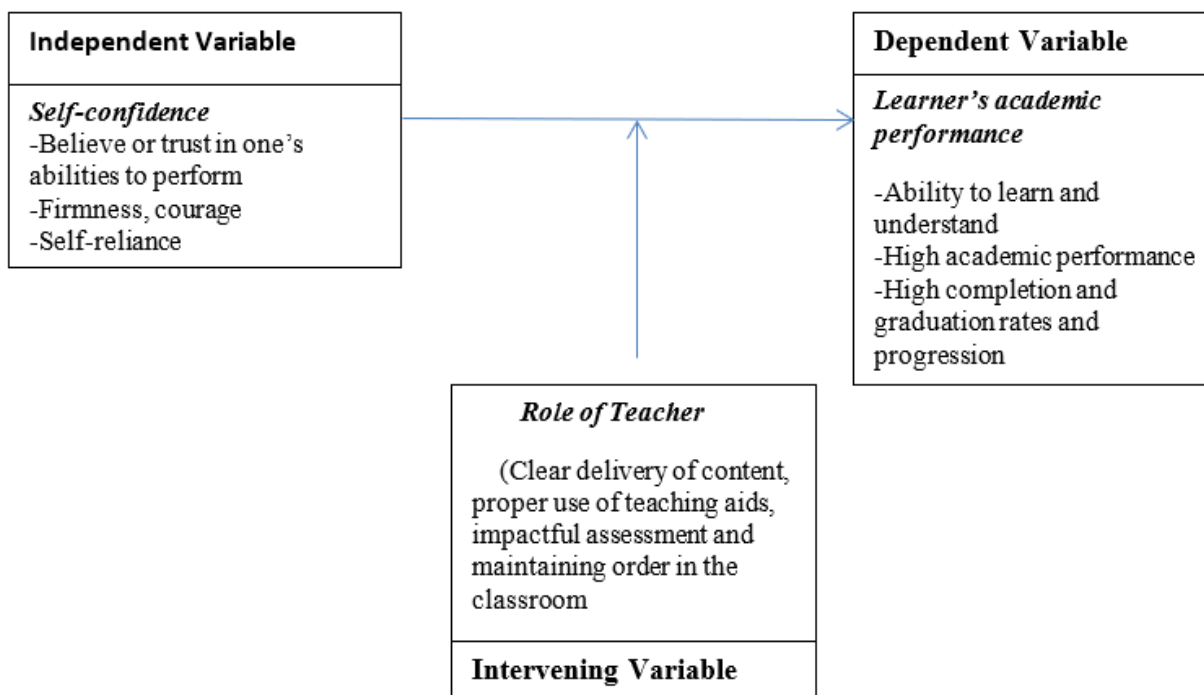


Figure 1.1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study (Researcher, 2026)

The independent variable, self-confidence endears in a learner trust in his/ her abilities to perform, firmness and courage to carry through driven by a sense self-reliance to realize high academic performance reflected in the ability to learn and understand high academic performance as well as 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 maintain of order in the classroom

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between pupils' self-confidence and their academic performance. This approach allows for the assessment of the extent to which self-confidence levels are associated with pupil's examination performance. The target population of the study was 81 class seven hearing Impairment pupils from the four special primary schools in Kisii County, Kenya. A purposive sample was used to select the 81 Class Seven HI pupils, 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.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The null hypothesis for the study was that self-confidence has no significant influence on academic performance of class seven HI pupils in special primary schools. The regression coefficient on Table 4.1 revealed that self-confidence had a coefficient of 0.875 which implies that a unit change in self-confidence would influence up to 0.875 of the academic performance. The P-value also for the model was 0.000 which is less than the standard p-value of 0.05. This is an indication that self-confidence has a significant and positive influence on academic

performance. It is therefore worth rejecting the null hypothesis that self-confidence has no significant influence on academic performance of students with HI in special primary schools in Kisii County.

Table 4.1: Regression Coefficients for Self Confidence and Academic Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.194	.123		1.572	.119
	Self-Confidence	.875	.057	.843	15.367	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance						

Source: Researcher (2025)

The role of teacher in the influence of self confidence in the academic performance of HI pupils was tested by including an interaction term between self-confidence and role of teacher in the regression model. The positive and significant interaction term ($\beta_3=0.25$) as indicated in Table 4.2 suggests that teacher role strengthens the positive effect of self-confidence on learner performance. That is, the influence of self-confidence on performance is more pronounced when learners are taught by experienced and active teachers. The regression results and supporting literature confirm that teacher role significantly moderates the relationship between self-confidence and academic performance of learners with hearing impairment. Mastropieri & Scruggs (2010) argue that teacher expertise in handling special needs learners significantly contributes to their self-perception and educational outcomes, acting as a moderating variable between learner traits and academic results. Mutua & Dimitrov (2001) also concluded that when teachers are highly qualified in special education, their instructional strategies tend to promote academic resilience among learners with disabilities, reinforcing the positive effects of high self-esteem.

Table 4.2 Effect of the Role of Teacher on the Influence of Self-confidence on the Performance of Learners with Hearing Impairment in Special Primary Schools

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Interpretation
Self-confidence	0.45	0.001	A unit increase in self-confidence is associated with a 0.45 unit increase in performance.
Teacher Role	0.30	0.020	A unit increase in teacher qualification is associated with a 0.30 unit increase in performance.
Self-confidence × Teacher Role	0.25	0.015	The interaction term is significant, indicating a moderating effect.

Source: Researcher (2025)

Bandura (1997) argued that self-efficacy (closely related to self-confidence) contributes significantly to learners' academic success, and effective teacher support is critical in shaping that self-belief. Luckner & Muir (2001) emphasized the role of teacher training in addressing the unique needs of hearing-impaired learners, asserting that qualified, experienced and active teachers provide tailored emotional and instructional support, which boosts learner confidence and outcomes. Marschark et al. (2015) found that deaf and hard-of-hearing learners performed better academically in environments where teachers had specialized training in deaf education, indicating that teacher qualification positively affects performance. Ndiku & Muhavi (2013) observed that in Kenyan special needs institutions, learners with hearing impairment achieved better outcomes when instructed by teachers who had formal qualifications in special education and sign language. Wangari & Kimamo (2020) reported that

teacher quality moderated the relationship between psychological attributes (like self-confidence) and academic achievement among special needs learners in Kenyan inclusive schools

Influence of Self-Confidence on Academic Performance

Teachers and students both expressed that self-confidence significantly impacted students' ability to perform well in academic tasks. Teachers reported that students who demonstrated high self-confidence were more likely to actively participate in class, seek help when needed, and perform better in assessments. Research by Ndurumo (2017) found that students with higher levels of self-confidence were more likely to engage with academic materials and perform better academically. Similarly, Williams (2019, as cited by Amoadu (2025) found that students who had a positive self-concept were more resilient in academic challenges.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Statistical analysis indicates that increasing pupil's self-confidence is significantly associated with heightened learning interest and improved academic performance. Educators should prioritize confidence-building strategies to foster a more engaging and successful learning environment. Enhancing self-confidence appears to be a promising strategy to foster greater engagement, curiosity, and motivation across disciplines. Educators should consider integrating confidence-building activities and supportive feedback mechanisms to cultivate more interested and confident learners. There is a clear, positive association between self-confidence and motivation among students. Educational strategies aimed at improving self-confidence may have a beneficial impact on students' motivation and overall engagement in learning. The analysis will summarize the findings regarding the relationship between self-confidence, learning interest, and academic performance, and draw conclusions based on the statistical results. The study recommends that parents and teachers should be optimistic and develop an attitude and learning environment that fosters self-confidence among HI pupils for enhanced academic performance.

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