

# **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF GIRLS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN KENYA**

**Beatrice Bunyasi Awori – Ph.D**

**Department:** *Special Needs Education*

**Supervisors:** Dr. Geoffrey K. Karugu  
Dr. John K. Mugo  
Dr. John Aluko Orodho

The problem addressed in this study was that although several factors such as school environment, family status and/or communication barriers had been cited as contributing to the perpetually dismal academic achievement of girls with hearing impairments, personal esteem factors, especially interest, competence, value and responsibility had not been adequately explored. Consequently, their achievement had been low and continued to be low despite the government's effort to increase educational opportunities for all its citizens through legislative and policy frameworks. The researcher postulated one null hypothesis  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference between self-esteem and academic achievement of girls with hearing impairment. The study was guided by Carl Roger's person-centered or client-centered theory. The theory states that factors, which predicted later behaviour in human beings were self-understanding. The study used an Ex-post facto design. Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used to measure self-esteem dimensions whereas school academic scores were used to measure academic achievement. Participants for the study were drawn from schools for girls with hearing impairment in Central and Western provinces of Kenya constituting a sample of fifty-three girls. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences programme. The results obtained indicated that girls with hearing impairments possessed high self-esteem yet their academic achievement was low. The correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement on Pearson Product Moment Correlation was at a moderate level. It was concluded that girls with hearing impairments placed more value on relational aspects (grooming), music and dance. They lagged behind in terms of provision of quality education due to lack of specialized technological devices. The study recommended that teachers should make deliberate use of positive reinforcement that would encourage girls' participation and promote their self-esteem towards academic performance. Principals of schools should initiate active collaborations with parents, teachers, students and other interested partners in developing constructive projects. The government to make curriculum to be flexible as the current curriculum was quite wide, rigid, examination oriented, had fixed timeframe and totally lacked diversity. Another recommendation was for the curriculum developers to reconsider curricula adaptation to allow diversity. The examining body to focus on practical assessment through strategies like observations, demonstrations and/or use of sign language interpreters for all required examinations. Provision of assistive devices is a necessity. The government should increase disability fund to cater for girls' exceptional needs as a very vulnerable group of learners and provide opportunities for capacity building for assistive devices technicians. Further intensive research to investigate the crucial emerging issues that contributed to the moderate correlation which occurred yet the academic achievement was low and self-esteem was high.

Another recommendation is further research in the area of communication proficiency in Kenya Sign Language for all teachers in schools that admit learners with hearing impairment.