



## Parental Support System Making a Difference on Academic Performance of Learners with HI in Secondary Schools for the Deaf

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### Abstract

*Globally, stipulation of special instruction or training to learners with HI is still challenging. The situation is not any different in Kenya where national examinations consistently show comparatively low mean scores of HI learners over recent years compared to those of learners who hear. Literature gaps points to inadequate parental support system. Specifically, the study sought to examine the parental support systems making significant impact in the educational achievements of HI learners in secondary schools for the HI. The research employed a design called descriptive cross-sectional survey. The approach used to collect data was mixed method approach. The respondents involved in the research included the principals, teachers, all form 2 and 3 learners with HI in secondary schools for HI. The technique used to draw the sample population under study was census. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedules and FGDs. Cronbach's reliability coefficient of .7143. was used as the threshold for validity and .79 for reliability of the instruments. The ethical considerations were adhered to. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data was organized, analyzed then reported in verbatim as themes emerged. The analyzed findings were later corroborated and triangulated into the discussion. Results from the study established that parents do not pay full fees for their HI learners. They do not give them enough pocket money and basic requirements. They also fail to attend their academic clinics. The study concluded that when parental support systems are appropriately implemented, it will have a strong positive ( $r = .785$ ;  $p = .297$ ) contribution on academic performance of learners with HI, though being statistically insignificant. The study recommended that parents should adequately be involved in a support system for their HI learners and this will subsequently impact positively in the academic performance of the HI learners.*

**Keywords:** *Parents, support systems, academic performance*

### Introduction

Student's educational achievement is influenced by family and friends. It is evident in Iraq. Family support system has effects that are both direct and indirect on the student's educational success but that coming from teachers, school staff and the society do not have an effect on their educational success (Saeed, Ahmed & Aziz, 2023). Learners who come from well off families or families where parents pay school fees on time and provide basic needs and scholastic materials pause promising performance in Biology. Nigerian parents who are well educated are successful and have a greater effect on the educational achievement of HI learners in sciences. Those with greater educational heights have a strong confidence in educational abilities of learners having HI (Lala, Ogunwale & Ojo, 2022).

Careers of parents enhances the educational achievement of HI learners in sciences. The educational achievements of HI learners is determined by their parents due to their economic status in the society. Therefore, the economic success of parents is a driving factor which assists some HI learners to perform well in science subjects. (Lala, Ogunwale & Ojo, 2022).

Strategies put in place in Kenya like family support program, competent and consistent administration system contributes to learning. Interaction influences incidental learning of HI learners to put them at the same level with their hearing peers on academic achievement and social advancement. It also makes HI learners to be more comfortable, self-actualized and self-esteemed hence improving the academic achievements (Owuor, Awori & Otieno, 2020).

Desires from parental have a significance effect on academic success of a learner. In Kenya, 50% of parents raising children with HI believe that elementary education is the highest educational achievement for their HI children with only 12.5% having a belief that their children with HI are capable of attending colleges (Newchurch, 2017; Sambu, 2018). With the increased parental support system, the number of HI learners proceeding to higher learning institution is likely to improve tremendously.

Learners with HI in Kenya have a right to free and compulsory basic education. Despite the high allocation of government funds to special schools, training teachers on special needs education, provision of learning resources, there is still no

evidence of a comparatively improved academic performance in special schools for the deaf. There was therefore need to look at impact of the parental support system to academic performance of learners with HI. If nothing is done, there will be a likelihood that the performance of learners with HI will remain comparatively low. Because of the comparatively lowest performance of learners with HI in Kakamega County, it provided the most suitable locale for this study.

### Research Methods

This research employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. The study used mixed method approach. The study used a survey method to answer the problem from the relevant information that was collected. The consistent comparatively poor academic performance informed this study in the study area. A census sampling was used for the purpose of drawing inferences about the entire population. The sample size comprised of 97 respondents. All the target population were involved in the study as seen from Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Population involved in the study**

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Principals	2	2	Census
Teachers	20	20	Census
Learners with HI	75	75	Census
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>97</b>	

The researcher employed questionnaires, interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) as tools for data collection. Data was collected from teachers through questionnaires. An open-ended interview schedule was employed in collection of data from the principals. Focused group discussion was employed to learners with HI.

Quantitative data was collected from the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics used to analyze data included percentages, mean ratings and standard deviations. Inferential statistics used to analyze data included Pearson's Correlation to establish how strong and direct the linear relationships are on the dependent and independent variables. The SPSS version 27 was used to the responses in respect to the study objective. Qualitative data from the interview schedules and FGDs were analyzed based on the research objective and verbal respondents' response. Data was analyzed by content analysis method, transcribed and organized into themes and reported in verbatim. Data was presented thematically according to the objectives of the study.

An introductory letter was obtained by the researcher from the Directorate of graduate studies of Rongo University which she later used to get research permit for conducting the from the Director General of NACOSTI. The respondents under the study were assured of the confidentiality by the researcher and how the collected data will be used and shared, anonymity was embraced. The researcher respected participants based on Kraft et al. (2020) and was mindful of the participants cultural backgrounds and preference.

### Results and Discussion

The research question of the study responded to was: 'What are differences made by parental support systems on educational achievements of HI learners in schools for the deaf in Kakamega County?' Responses to this research question were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Parental support systems**

N	Item Statement on Differences Made by Parental support factors	R	Level of Agreement					M	SD
			SD	D	N	A	SA		
			%						
1	When parents help with the child's assignment, the child will perform well at school.	%	5.0	15.0	15.0	30.0	35.0	3.75	1.251
2	Children with HI will perform well at school if parents discuss academic activities with them.	%	0.0	5.0	10.0	30.0	55.0	4.35	.875
3	Parental involvement significantly influence the academic performance of learners with HI.	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	60.0	4.60	.503
4	Parental involvement help to reduce anxiety related to academic performance of HI learners.	%	0.0	5.0	5.0	35.0	55.0	4.40	.821
5	Parental involvement is a significant positive predictor of early reading skills development.	%	0.0	5.0	10.0	30.0	55.0	4.35	.875
6	Parental support influences a child's discipline in school	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	60.0	4.60	.503
7	Lack of adequate parental care leads to trauma among learners with HI	%	0.0	5.0	10.0	50.0	35.0	4.15	.813
8	Challenges which hinder students with HI academic performance emanate from their parents	%	5.0	30.0	25.0	35.0	5.0	3.05	1.05
9	When parents provide fees and pocket money for HI learners, their academic performance is enhanced	%	0.0	5.0	20.0	45.0	30.0	4.00	.858
10	Positive parental support factors are key for enhanced academic performance of learners with HI.	%	0.0	0.0	10.0	50.0	40.0	4.30	.657



Table 2 show that 65% of the respondents endorsed the statement that ‘When parents help with the child’s assignment, the child will perform well at school’. The study findings support the findings of Szasz (2023) that, when parents in Central Europe help with the child’s assignment, the child will perform well at school. Therefore, the findings confirm that, when parents in Kenya help their learners with HI in their assignments, they will perform well at school.

The analyzed responses from qualitative data revealed that parents do not help their learners with HI in their assignments. However, respondents suggested that the government should create deaf awareness by funding sign language classes for parents to develop communication skills with their HI children. This will enable them help with their assignment, for them to perform well at school. Parents who are not educated should hire or assign an expert to help in the child’s assignments.

As concerns the construct ‘Children with HI will perform well at school if parents discuss academic activities with them’, 85.0% of the respondents were in support of the statement. The study findings support the findings of Olayinka (2023) that, Nigerian children with HI will perform well at school if parental support systems are involved in the discussion of their academic activities. The findings therefore confirm that, if parental support systems in Kenya are involved in discussing their academic activities, they will perform well at school.

The analyzed findings of qualitative data revealed that parents do not discuss their academic activities with their HI children. However, respondents suggested that, when their parents discuss their academic activities with them, they will perform well at school. Deaf awareness should be created for parents to attend academic clinics for their learners regularly. The family need to make continuous revisits on the educational advancement of their learners. They should emphasize the importance of working hard and passing examinations to their HI learners. They should also assign deaf role models for their learners who will help them in academic and career aspirations. Role models will inspire them to pursue higher education and diverse career paths. They will also help them understand the possibilities available to them and the strategies needed to succeed professionally.

It can be seen from Table 2 that 100% of the respondents endorsed the statement that parental involvement significantly influence the educational achievements of the deaf learners. These findings support that of Adesakon and Giwa (2022) that, parental involvement in Teso influences the educational achievement of learners having HI to a greater extend. Therefore, these findings were in tandem with the findings that, engagement of parents in Kakamega Cunty influences the educational engagement of students with HI to a greater extend.

The analyzed responses from qualitative data revealed that family members are not engaged in the educational journey of their HI students. However, respondents suggested that parents should be involved in their academics by taking necessary academic responsibilities for their HI learners. They should treat all their children equally. They should give priority to their HI learners in providing support to enhance their academic performance since they are special. They should also assure their HI learners of confidentiality after sharing sensitive information with them. This will build trust and a good parent-child relationship.

Table 2 show that 90% of the respondents endorsed the statement that ‘Parental involvement helps to reduce anxiety related to educational achievement of HI learners.’ These findings support the findings by Bangirana and Akellot (2019) that, parental involvement in Uganda helped to reduce anxiety related to educational achievement of HI learners. These results therefore confirmed that, parental involvement in Kenya help to reduce anxiety related to educational achievements of learners having HL.

The analyzed results of qualitative data showed that family members are not involved in reducing the anxiety related to academic performance of their learners. However, respondents suggested that parents should give proper guidance and counselling in academic matters by have a one-on one conversation with HI learners concerning their academic pressure and how to handle it. They should also hire a motivational speaker to motivate them academically.

As concerns the construct ‘Engagement from parents positively predicts the development of early reading skills’, 85.0% of the respondents were in support and with the statement. The study findings support the findings of Iroegbu and Igweike (2020) that, engagement from parents positively predicts the development of early reading skills in Nigeria. Therefore, the findings established that parental involvement in Kenya positively predicts the development of early reading skills of learners with HI.

The analyzed responses from qualitative data displayed that parents raising learners having HI are not involved in developing the early reading skills of their learners with HI. However, respondents suggested that parents should provide necessary academic materials and commit their time in helping them develop early reading skills. Hearing parents raising learners with HI should hire a special needs educator to help their child acquire reading skills. They should also buy them necessary reading materials.



It can be seen from Table 2 that 100% of the respondents endorsed the statement that ‘Parental support influences a child’s discipline in school’. The study findings support the findings of Mchuchury and Gwajekera (2023) that, most students in Tanzania were given direction on their self-awareness and how to manage their discipline issues. These findings established that, most HI learners in Kenya are guided well at home on their self-awareness and discipline.

The analyzed responses from qualitative data revealed that parents help in shaping the discipline of their HI learners while at home. However, respondents suggested that parents should be role models to them discipline wise. They are urged to continue guiding and counselling their HI learners who show defiance. They should also include them in their family discussions. Those disciplined should be rewarded to motivate them. They should continue embracing seclusion for defiant children to instill discipline.

Table 2 show that 85% of the respondents endorsed the statement that ‘Lack of adequate parental care leads to trauma among learners with HI’. The study findings support the findings of Ommng’ale (2022) that, in Kilifi, when learners with HL are exposed to conflicts from their families like drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and trauma, these conflicts causes defiance among them. The findings therefore confirmed that, family related conflicts in Kakamega county causes defiance among learners having hearing impairment.

The analyzed results from qualitative data displayed that there is lack of adequate parental care leading to trauma among learners with HI. However, respondents suggested that parents should love and accept their HI children to reduce cases of trauma. They should provide the personal effects for their HI learners to reduce defiance. They should avoid negative talks which might traumatize their HI children.

It can be seen from Table 2 that 35% of the respondents did not agree but 40% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement ‘Challenges which prevents the progress of students having hearing impairment educational performance stem from their parents’. The study findings concurs with the findings of Aftab, Ashfaq and Ali (2022) that, problems which prevents the academic progress of students with HI originate from their parents. Mantey, Cobbina and Hamenoo (2017) also confirmed that difficulties which prevents the academic excellence of learners with HI in Ghana root from their parents through their learning assistance they give them while at home, their duties and delegations and expectations. The results established that challenges which hinder students with hearing impairment academic performance in Kenya emanate from their parents.

The analyzed findings of qualitative data revealed that problems which prevents the educational achievements of students with HI stem from their parents only. However, respondents suggested their parents should treat them equally as the hearing siblings. The kind of punishment should not cause much harm to their physical and mental wellbeing. They should stop bullying their HI learners. Instead, they should guide and counsel them in case they go wrong. Awareness on deafness should be created for parents to understand that all learners have equal abilities. There is need for parents and other family members to be encouraged to support their HI learners because when they perform well academically, parents will benefit more.

Table 2 show that 75.0% of the study participants endorsed that ‘When family system pay fees together with giving pocket money for HI learners, their academic performance is enhanced.’ The study findings support the findings of Namara and Kato (2024) that, school fees defaulting in Ugandan schools leads to dropouts of pupils, reduces pupils’ daily attendance, demotivate pupils and teachers in school and leads to poor service delivery. It also leads to low concentration of students towards their studies hence reducing their academic performance. Morogo Kiprop and Too, (2018) also agree that, in Uasin Gishu county, when parents fail to pay school levies, the school projects and academic programs are negatively affected. Therefore, the findings confirmed that failure of parents to pay school levies for learners studying in institutions for HI in Kakamega negatively affect educational programs and school projects. It also leads to low concentration of students towards their studies hence reducing their academic performance.

The analyzed findings of qualitative data revealed that parents do not provide fees and pocket money for their learners with HI. However, respondents suggested that parents should pay school fees and provide pocket money for them on time to ensure smooth running of the school programs. They should be encouraged to pay fees for their HI learners without looking at their academic performance. They should be made aware that learners having HL are entitled to education and providing necessary academic support is their responsibilities. The schools should come up with rules guiding the fee payment and provision of pocket money for the parents to abide by before admitting their HI learners.

As concerns the construct ‘Positive parental support factors are key for enhanced educational achievements of learners with HI.’, 90.0% of the respondents were in support of the statement. The study findings concurs with the findings of Zahida, Muhammad and Muneeba (2023) that, parental support has a positive effect on learners’



academic experience and their development generally in Pakistan. The findings established that Positive parental support factors are key for improved educational achievement of learners having HL in Kenya.

The analyzed responses from qualitative data revealed that parents do not give learners with HI necessary support to perform well academically. However, respondents suggested that parents should give the necessary parental support on time to improve the educational achievement of students having HI. They should also understand that learners are entitled to basic learning and that it is their responsibility to provide a conducive environment for their children in school. They should positively respond to the basic requirements of their learners suffering from HL.

**Table 3: Parental support factors.**

Independent Variable	Inferential Statistical Test	Correlation with dependent variable (Positive parental support systems are key for enhanced educational achievement of learners having HL.)
Parental Support Systems	Pearson Correlation	.785
	Set Sig. (2-tailed)( $\alpha$ )	.05
	Observed P value	.297

When all the views of the respondents were correlated with the dependent variable (Positive parental support systems are key for enhanced educational achievement of learners having HL), it can be noted from Table 3 that it will have a strong positive ( $r = .785$ ;  $p=.297$ ) influence on educational achievement of learners having HL. This shows a strong association between the independent and the dependent variables. A change in positive parental support system affects the educational achievement of learners having HL. This means that it has a direct influence on the variable that is dependent.

### Conclusions And Recommendations

The study concluded that when all parental support systems are implemented, it will have a strong positive difference on educational achievement of learners having HI ( $r=.785$ ;  $p=.297$ ), though not statistically significant due to the small sample size ( $N=97$ ). It means there is a strong relationship by chance but lacks reliable evidence that this relationship exists in larger population. Therefore, results cannot be used for generalizability. Parents should establish a strong parental support system to enhance educational achievement of learners having HI.

This research recommended that, there is need for parents to be actively engaged in the educational journey of their HI students.

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