

# Influence of Self-Efficacy on the Academic Adjustment of Learners in Public Junior Schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya.

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## ABSTRACT

The ability of learners to undertake school tasks and perform self-driven activities influences their capacity to adjust academically. This study examined the influence of self-efficacy on the academic adjustment of learners in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya. The study was guided by the Need-Based Theory. A descriptive research design employing a mixed-methods approach was adopted. The sample comprised 251 students and 7 school counsellors, drawn from seven public junior schools with a total student population of 674. The Taro Yamane sampling formula was used to determine the sample size. Simple random sampling was employed to select student participants, while purposive sampling was used to select the school counsellors. Data collection instruments included structured Likert-type questionnaires for students to gather quantitative data and interview schedules for school counsellors to collect qualitative data. The questionnaires were distributed proportionally across the selected schools. The collected raw data underwent validation, coding, and tabulation before being analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The validity of the research instruments was ensured through expert consultation with faculty from the Department of Psychology and the research supervisors. A pilot study involving 25 respondents (representing 10% of the main sample size) was conducted to test the reliability of the instruments. Findings revealed that self-efficacy had a statistically significant positive influence on the academic adjustment of learners. Students with higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrated better academic motivation, engagement, and adaptability to school demands. Furthermore, qualitative data from school counsellors supported the quantitative findings, highlighting that learners with strong self-efficacy exhibited resilience, confidence, and positive coping mechanisms in the face of academic challenges. The study concluded that enhancing students' self-efficacy is critical for improving their academic adjustment. It recommended that schools implement targeted interventions such as mentorship programs, self-efficacy training workshops, and counseling services to strengthen students' belief in their abilities, thereby promoting better academic outcomes.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, Academic Adjustment, Junior Schools, Students, Kenya, Mixed-Methods, Need-Based Theory.

## INTRODUCTION

Attainability of knowledge by learners while in school is directly associated with their ability to sufficiently adjust to the school set up. While learners possess different personalities, their school adjustment largely depends on their self-efficacy and ability to complete given tasks within a given time. Moreover, self-efficacy is the certainty that an individual can significantly impact the world (Jahan, 2020). Such learners operate with a strong sense of empowerment, are open to change and creativity in relevant fields, are resolute when necessary, persevere in carrying out their mandate, and possess a high degree of self-belief. Additionally, they can suppress unpleasant conditions with ease, while individuals who believe they are powerless to change things feel depressed and uninspired. (Farmer, Xu, & Dupre, 2022)

Students with high self-efficacy beliefs have strong feelings of wellbeing accompanied with high self-esteem. Such students are eager to take the lead, put in the work when necessary, and stick with their opinions as long

as they think their opinions are right and that they will work. Highly self-efficient learners have reduced personal uneasiness in potentially difficult situations (Tahira & Jami, 2021) .

While self-efficacy serves as a stress-reduction strategy, it can also unintentionally increase stress by inspiring extremely ambitious learners to take on more obligations than they can handle because of too much self-belief (Jahan, 2020). Furthermore, higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs are associated with better academic success. On the other hand, academic failure inhibits lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs, partly because of an individual's personal belief ,(Grera, Abdallah, & Hamed., 2022). Interestingly, research has repeatedly demonstrated in a variety of cultural contexts that students who are content and in good health have a tendency to overestimate their ability in most circumstances (Sarif & Ngasainao, 2021).

In Turkey, a study conducted on student wellbeing, social operational and psychological adjustment in high school adolescents found out that educational purpose and academic efficacy are relatively significant on students' subjective wellbeing, social functioning and psychological functioning of students. On student independent wellbeing, social functioning and psychological adjustment in high school adolescents, the study found out that educational purpose and academic efficacy were significant for adolescent outcomes in school i.e., school achievement, academic motivation, prosocial behavior and psychological health problems were all significant determining the adjustment ability of the students through their hypothetical presentation. The study recommended for the importance of holding students' well-being by facilitating better school functioning and taking guard against psychological adjustment problems. (Arslan & Coşkun, 2020)

An analysis of the impact of blended learning, motivation, and self-efficacy on students' achievement was done in an Indonesian study. The results showed that blended learning had a positive and significant effect on achievement learning, while motivation, self-efficacy, and blended learning together had a significant impact on the students' academic adjustment. Self-efficacy had no significant effect on students' achievement. The study suggested that students practice self-affirmation as a flexible stress-reduction strategy to help them capitalize on their unique good features. (Navarro-Mateu, Franco-Ochoa, Valero-Moreno, & Prado-Gascó, 2020)

In Ghana, a study the impact of academic stress on senior high school students' academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy was done using descriptive research design to collect data According to the study's findings, senior high school students' academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy were impacted by academic stress. The study also discovered that exam results were the primary cause of academic stress among students. The study further discovered a large gender gap in the amount of academic stress experienced by students, with male students reporting higher levels of stress than female students. Based on the results, the study suggested that head teachers, educators, and parents support students in reducing the amount of academic stress they experience and implement educational initiatives that will enhance the students' academic self-efficacy, (Esenam, 2020)

In another study in Tanzania which was conducted to investigate psychological maltreatment, its relationship with self-esteem and psychological stress among adolescents found out a strong positive correlation between psychological distress and self-esteem. Further, the research demonstrated that childhood psychological maltreatment associated with psychological distress and low self-esteem at school. The study recommended for urgent intervention targeting the reduction of occurrence of childhood psychological maltreatment to reduce the incidence of low self-esteem and psychological distress among Tanzanian adolescents. (Mwakanyamale & Yizhen, 2019)

In Kenya, research was conducted using a correlational research method to gather data in order to determine whether academic performance in secondary schools is influenced by self-efficacy. The study used self-efficacy theory as its theoretical framework. The study's findings showed a substantial correlation between academic achievement and self-efficacy. The study suggested that in order to increase learners' self-efficacy, educators should be equipped with sufficient instructive skills relevant with the educative curriculum so as to

enable substantial learner involvement in the learning process and increase their academic performance and adjustment. (Njega, Njoka, & Ndung'u, 2019)

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of self-efficacy on academic adjustment among learners in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive survey design to collect data from students through structured questionnaires, allowing for statistical analysis of the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment.

The qualitative component employed a phenomenological approach through interviews with school counsellors, aimed at capturing in-depth insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding learners' academic adjustment and the role of self-efficacy. The mixed-methods approach enabled triangulation of data, enhancing the validity, depth, and richness of the findings. This design was chosen because it allowed for both objective measurement of variables and subjective exploration of participants lived experiences, thus providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The target population was 681 which comprised of 7 public junior school teachers and 674 students from of 7 public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya annexed within public primary schools. The participants were 251 students selected using simple random sampling from a total population of 674 students. Purposive sampling was used to select 7 school counsellors from the target population. Cronbach's alpha used in this study was  $\geq 0.7$ . The study used five specially designed Likert questionnaires to sample primary quantitative data from students on self-efficacy. The questionnaires intended to find out if self-efficacy influences the academic adjustment of learners in public junior schools. An interview schedule was used to collect primary qualitative data from school counsellors in the target population. The interview schedule intended to find the correlation between the learners' responses and counsellors' responses on the influence of self-efficacy on learners' academic adjustment.

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including, but not limited to analysis of mean, and standard deviation. In order to identify significant themes in the qualitative data collected from seven public junior school teachers, the researcher employed the data condensation mode of analysis. The researcher examined topics in relation to the study's goals. By compiling the data related to each topic and documenting the parallels and discrepancies in respondents' answers within each category, the study brought attention to minute distinctions within the themes. Inferential statistics was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. To determine how self-efficacy influences learners' academic adjustment, the study regressed each of the transformed variables on academic adjustment as given in the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where,

Where Y is the learners' academic adjustment

X<sub>1</sub> is self-efficacy factors

The statistical significance of the regression equation above were tested using the ANOVA test which check for goodness of fit. The academic adjustment practices that gave statistically significant regressions equations were regressed on learners' academic adjustment using a multiple linear regression equation of the form.

The study strictly adhered to ethical principles throughout the research process to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Participants (students and school counsellors) were fully informed about the nature, purpose, and procedures of the study. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and

parental consent was secured for students under the age of 18. All data collected were treated with strict confidentiality. Participants' identities were protected by assigning unique codes instead of using their real names. Data were securely stored and only accessible to the research team. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the relevant ethics review committee of Kisii University and the Ministry of Education to ensure compliance with institutional and national ethical guidelines.

## RESULTS

The mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD), for all the measurement items related to self-efficacy, and learners' academic adjustment were computed and analyzed. These descriptive statistics were used for estimating the extent of self-efficacy influencing learners' academic adjustment in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya.

On qualitative analysis, the study used thematic analysis (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017)

Table 3.1 Respondent's gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	143	64.4
	Female	79	35.6
	Total	222	100.0

Table 3.2 Respondents Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	10-12 years	12	5.4
	12-13 years	91	41.0
	Above 13 years	119	53.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3.3 Descriptive Statistics on self-efficacy

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am self-assured in my ability to understand and complete my assignments.	222	1	5	4.51	.881
I can successfully learn and apply new academic skills.	222	1	5	4.59	.754
I believe I can perform well on my exams.	222	1	5	4.66	.801
I feel confident when participating in class discussions.	222	1	5	4.27	1.042
I can effectively manage my study schedule and workload.	222	1	5	4.23	.917
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.88</b>

Source ;( Field data, 2025)

Table 3.4: Descriptive Statistics for Learners' Academic Adjustment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I attend all my classes regularly and on time	222	1	5	3.38	1.056
I easily adjust to changes in the learning environment such as new subjects, teachers, or classroom settings	222	1	5	3.41	1.046
I feel comfortable interacting and collaborating with my classmates during school activities	222	1	5	3.56	1.026
I actively participate in class discussions and contribute to classroom activities.	222	1	5	3.64	.973
I am satisfied with my current academic performance and the grades I receive	222	1	5	3.61	.968
I complete and submit my homework and assignments on time	222	1	5	3.54	1.005
I remain calm and positive when faced with difficult academic tasks	222	1	5	3.59	1.088
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>3.53</b>	<b>1.23</b>

Source ;( Field data, 2025)

The findings presented in table 3.4 established that respondents are self-assured in their ability to understand and complete assignments (mean = 4.51, SD = .881). indicating that the majority of respondents strongly believe in their ability to comprehend and successfully complete academic tasks. Besides, the learners can successfully learn and apply new academic skills (mean = 4.59, SD = .754). This is crucial for academic growth, especially in adapting to new subjects, technologies, or teaching methods. Similarly, learners believe they can perform well on their exams (mean = 4.66, SD = .801). The learners also feel confident when participating in class discussions (mean = 4.27, SD = 1.042). The findings revealed that learners can effectively manage their study schedule and workload (mean = 4.23, SD = .917).

Overall, the items on self-efficacy realized a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.88, suggesting a high level of self-efficacy among learners meaning they believe in their ability to succeed academically, handle school tasks, and overcome learning challenges.

These findings were also supported by respondents who were interviewed, 4 of the 5 affirmed that self-efficacy among learners is essential. respondent 1 said *'through organizing for individualized education program'*. Similarly, respondent 3 supported by saying *"guiding and counselling them. Encouragement is done to ensure they do not give up"* Respondent 4 asserted that *"Know why the learner underperformed and assist the learner in improving the weak areas"*. These findings are in agreement with Tahira & Jami, (2021) who attests that Students with high self-efficacy beliefs have strong feelings of wellbeing accompanied with high self-esteem. Such students are eager to take the lead, put in the work when necessary, and stick with their opinions as long as they think their opinions are right and that they will work. Further, (Arslan & Coşkun, 2020) recommended for the importance of holding students' well-being by facilitating better school functioning and taking guard against psychological adjustment problems.

## Correlation Statistics

To determine whether there was a relationship between the variables, the researcher conducted the correlation matrix prior to performing the regression analysis. To help establish a correlation between the study variables of interest, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was employed. The degree and direction of the association between the variables under study are indicated by the correlation coefficient. The purpose of the study was to determine the degree of correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment. This was



accomplished by measuring the strength of the association using Pearson's moment correlation, as indicated in table 3.5

Table 3.5: Correlations matrix

		Self Efficacy	Academic Adjustment
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	222	
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.663**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	222	222
**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The study findings depicted that there is a strong, positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment ( $r=.663$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Therefore, an increase in self-efficacy will lead to an increase in learners' academic adjustment in public junior schools in Kisii central ward, Kenya.

### Regression Analysis

Regression analyses were performed to test the model fit and to establish the predictive power of the study models. Sileyew (2019) observes that there are a number of methods of regression such as forced entry. This study used the Enter (forced entry) method to test the direct effects of predictor variables on the predicted variable (academic adjustment).

### Influence of Self efficacy on Learners' Academic Adjustment

The study analyzed how self-efficacy factors influence learners' academic adjustment in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward. Using simple regression, the findings were generated as indicated in table 3.5a.

Table 3.5a: Model Summary for Self-Efficacy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.663 <sup>a</sup>	.440	.437	.40941
a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy				
b. Dependent Variable: Academic Adjustment				

Source ;( Field data, 2025)

Results in Table 4.13a showed that self-efficacy had ( $R^2 = .440$ ), meaning that, self-efficacy, explain up to 44% of the changes in the academic adjustment (dependent variable)

The ANOVA results were presented in table 3.5b

Table 3.5b:ANOVA<sup>a</sup> for Self-Efficacy

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.958	1	28.958	172.761	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	36.877	220	.168		
	Total	65.835	221			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Adjustment						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy						

Source ;( Field data, 2025)

The ANOVA model showed model fitness for effect of self-efficacy on academic adjustment was statistically significant ( $F = 172.761, p=.000$ ). Thus, the model was fit to predict academic adjustment using self-efficacy.

The regression coefficients in table 4.5c established the mean change in academic adjustment for one unit of change in self-efficacy.

Table 3.5c: Coefficients for Self-Efficacy Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.015	.228		4.450	.000		
Self-Efficacy	.707	.054	.663	13.144	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Adjustment

Source ;( Field data, 2025)

Findings on table 3.5a showed that self-efficacy had coefficients of estimate which was significant basing on  $\beta_1 = 0.663$  ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000$  which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). This suggested that there was up to 0.663-unit increase in self-efficacy for each unit increase in academic adjustment. The results answer the research question by concluding that self-efficacy plays a strong role by influencing learners' academic adjustment in public junior schools.

Based on the above results the results derived the following simple linear regression model as shown below.

$$Y = 1.015 + 0.707 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

## DISCUSSIONS

The study established that learners in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward exhibit a high level of self-efficacy, which significantly supports their academic adjustment. Overall, the self-efficacy items produced a strong mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.88, indicating that learners possess a strong sense of academic self-efficacy. This positively contributes to their academic adjustment, as it reflects their confidence in navigating academic challenges, engaging in classroom activities, and achieving academic success.

The study findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment among learners in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya ( $r = .663, p < .01$ ). This implies that as learners' self-efficacy increases, meaning their confidence in their academic abilities, task management, and capacity to overcome learning challenges their ability to adjust academically also improves significantly.

The findings from Table 3.5c indicate that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of academic adjustment among learners in public junior schools in Kisii Central Ward, Kenya. The regression coefficient  $\beta_1 = 0.663$  with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.000 (which is less than the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) confirms that the relationship is statistically significant.

## CONCLUSION

The findings provide clear evidence to answer the research question, affirming that self-efficacy factors strongly influence learners' academic adjustment in public junior schools in Kisii central ward, kenya. The strength and significance of this relationship highlight the importance of fostering self-belief and confidence among learners to enhance their academic success and adaptability.

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