

## **Factors Influencing Academic Performance and Achievement of Students with Disabilities**



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**ABSTRACT:** Students with disabilities face diverse challenges which greatly affect their access and full participation in academic programmes at academic institutions of all levels. Therefore, the aim of the current empirical study is to identify the factors influencing the academic performance and achievement of disabled students. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Based on the review of the relevant literature, the study concluded that there are several factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities such as: emotional factors such as the disabled students' fear, depression, low self-confidence, feelings of shame, withdrawal, low self-concept, and feelings of inferiority. Moreover, other factors include the disabled student' family background along with their socio-economic status, the educational level of the parents, the lack of the parents' encouragement and motivation, the authoritarian nature of some families of students with disabilities, the negative attitudes of some teachers towards the students with disabilities and the weakness of the instructional strategies implemented by the teachers, the societal attitudes towards disabled students and well as the students' attitudes towards themselves, the physical barriers within the academic institutions' environment, etc. finally, multiple detailed solutions and recommendations were suggested by the study.

**KEYWORDS:** learner with disability, academic performance, special needs education, parents' contribution, school facilitation contribution, Self-efficacy.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Maingi-Lore (2016) demonstrated that Special Needs Students (SNS) is defined, according to the United Nations Convention on the Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), as those students who have physical, sensory or chronic health impairment which hinder them from their full, active participation in the society on equal basis with the others and hinder them from benefit fully from learning instructions in the regular settings. Furthermore, SNS is termed to have a special educational need if their capacity to participate in and benefit from education and benefit fully from the school curriculum are restricted due to enduring physical, sensory and mental health or learning disability SNS may have one or a combination of disabilities (disability is defined as a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, including any visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation). Hence, several appropriate adaptations (also referred to as educational accommodations) and modifications on the curriculum content, mode of delivery as well as the physical amenities are required. Actually, these adaptations and modifications are carried out in the field of Special Needs Education (SNE) which is defined as the individual educational requirements of a student suffering from any of wide range of physical disabilities, medical conditions, intellectual difficulties and emotional problems, and/or a student with a disadvantaged background, with a disability of an intellectual, sensory, physical, emotional or behavioral nature, and with a mental emotional or physical disability. SNE is further defined as the special educational requirements of students with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, emotional or behavioral problems.

So, the field of Special Needs Education (SNE), in general, is one of the most topics that has received attention at all educational levels and in all scientific fields, as it studies individuals whose needs vary greatly. In fact, the category of people studied by SNE includes: gifted, people with learning difficulties, people with language disorders, and mentally disabled people, etc. Additionally, this category has developed to include all psychological, social, educational, and other groups of individuals with disabilities (Al-Qamsh and Al-Saeeda, 2008).

On the other hand, disability has been, and still, an obsession that is inherent in all human societies since ancient times until now. Conjointly, those societies varied in their view of the disabled individuals and in their treatment of them according to the religious and social values, norms and ideas prevailing in each of them. However, with the progress of human civilization, and the development of research and studies, this category has begun to take its natural right of interest, guidance and rehabilitation for a life that they can live happily, within the framework of their capabilities and abilities, trying to transform these crippled human

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forces and energies into productive forces that contribute effectively to the process of progress. The social role played by this group has become effective and positive, not negative and indifferent, as the view has shifted from being a helpless person who is unable to adapt with himself and with his society, and that his help lies in merely providing him with a helping hand and assistance in his material and moral form, to A person who appreciates and has many potentials, energies and abilities remaining after disability, which must be developed, invested and employed for the benefit of the disabled, his family and society (Al-Adra, 2016).

Furthermore, the interest in caring for disabled students has increased significantly in recent years, not only at the international level, but also at the local and Arab levels. This may be due to the challenges faced by these students, their teachers, and those who care for them in order to obtain appropriate care for them (Al-Alwan, 2006).

All international and Arab covenants have affirmed that disabled individuals have the right to obtain a comprehensive and specialized set of services that include health, educational, psychological, social, rehabilitative, professional, cultural and media aspects that guarantee the members of these groups' opportunities for integration and balanced growth. In other aspects, disabled students are the responsibility of an integrated team of physicians, nurses, technicians, teachers, psychologists, social workers, occupational trainers, rehabilitation and speech pathologists, as well as parents and others (Cozenave, *et al.* 2006).

Al-Khatib (2011) indicated that the most important rights of persons with disabilities are their right to full and equal participation in all aspects of life in society as the value and dignity of the individual are not measured by his personal effectiveness and ability to compete, but rather as a citizen with basic rights, the most important of which is the right to receive education in an appropriate, non-isolated and supportive educational environment.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

*“Historically, there has been a persistent negative attitude and social rejection of people with disabilities across all cultures. Ancient Roman and Greek cultures viewed disabled people as burdens on society and less than human. In African and Asian context, disability was viewed as a curse or punishment for sin and caused great shame and feelings of guilt on the family. The result was to hide the disabled person from the public eye”* (Balal & Rehan, 2012 in Maingi-Lore, 2016: P. 13).

Weidner (2013 in Maingi-Lore, 2016) stated that disabled students are often stigmatized and often have a tougher time learning to feel good about themselves. Moreover, disabled students feel they are often treated as socially inferior and vocationally undesirable. Hence, many of them are ended up with a ‘can’t-do attitude’, low confidence and self-esteem, especially when they constantly realize that their body does not work like everyone else’s, so it can be difficult for them to build a positive sense of self-worth.

On contrary, nowadays Special Needs Education (SNE) globally has not received the required attention from the all avenues of education to enable learners with disabilities access the desired academic achievement compared to their peers without issues of their kind (Toroitich, 2019).

Additionally, Ibrahim (2002) indicated that disabled students suffer from many psychological effects, the most important of which are: 1) Feelings of inferiority; 2) Introversion because of its negative effects on adjustment and adjustment; 3) Lack of self-reliance, dependence, inability to lead, and a constant desire to depend on others; 4) Weak sense of belonging, which makes students with in a state of incompatibility with society; 5) Difficulty of building a relationship with ordinary students; 6) Feeling of internal tension and emotional imbalance; and 7) The need to resort to the sympathy of others and try to attract their attention in different ways.

On the same line, Ghabari (2003) indicated that students with special needs suffer from many social problems, such as family problems, friends, recreational problems, economic problems, educational problems, medical and rehabilitation problems, most of which are unfair to students with special needs. On the other hand, there are several burdens on others in providing all the requirements of daily life for disabled students, starting with the students’ home and the surrounding environment in the community, especially at schools.

The category of students with disabilities in general faces many obstacles in their adaptation and integration with society, especially in Arab societies that still lack a lot of legislation and regulations that enable this category to live a decent life and interact according to their capabilities. Qualification and development to transcend the view of pity, kindness, and dependence on society.

The observer of the lives of disabled students discovers the extent of the academic, social and financial difficulties they suffer in the academic life in general, and the extent to which these students suffer from negative psychological hardship and suffering from these difficulties, which may leave effects on them, including the inadequacy of the natural environment of the schools, in addition the lack of awareness of the needs of these students which may hinder their creativity and superiority, despite their scientific abilities that deserve attention (Al-Adra, 2016).

To sum up, there are several factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of the students with learning disabilities in classroom environments. The study therefore aims at investigating the factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of disabled students.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Various disabilities affect the physical, health, cognitive, psychological and social aspects of the individual with a disability, and the impact is not limited to the family, but also includes those disabilities on the disabled individual himself and the society in which

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he lives. In order to effectively meet the special needs of persons with disabilities, and to reach them to the maximum degree of growth allowed by their energies and abilities, various programs must be implemented at different levels that take into account the aspects affected by disability, including special education programs, therapeutic intervention and various rehabilitation programs. The success and effectiveness of these programs depends on the extent to which they eventually achieve for individuals with disabilities the adaptation and ability to live independently in an understanding family and a supportive community (Al-Smadi, 1999).

Hence, the significance of this study comes to shed light on students with disabilities and how to care for this category and provide assistance to them by diagnosing the factors that affect the performance and achievement of students with special needs, and with the increase in the number of students with disabilities in the world, there is an urgent need to activate and develop the services provided to enable them overcoming and reducing the problems and difficulties they face. The importance of the study also comes from the lack of specialized studies to identify the difficulties, problems and factors that face this group of students, because these problems have significant effects on the progress of the students' academic level, as they weaken the productivity of these students. This study also presents a perception of the size and nature of the problems and difficulties that students with disabilities suffer in order to use more scientific and objective methods of positive interaction with them, which will enable them to learn and acquire knowledge in pursuit of a respectable and decent life.

It is hoped that the findings of the current study would help the academic institutions to ensure that the good policies are being implemented fully in the teaching process of students with disabilities and special needs, formulate and implement practices that are geared towards improving the academic performance and achievement of students with special needs. The institutions may use the findings of the current study to prepare programmes that aim at sensitizing and equipping the staff with knowledge and skills needed to effectively cater for students with special needs. The findings may also be important to student with disabilities by establishing and pointing out how social justice, social inclusion and attitudes play a part in the learning potential of disabled students in their midst.

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Special education is concerned with educating students with special needs, who suffer from shortcomings or a chronic illness that affects their abilities, whether the disability is physical, sensory, mental or social, which prevents the individual from taking full advantage of the educational and professional experiences that the ordinary individual can benefit from. It also prevents them from equal competition with other ordinary individuals in society, and therefore they are in dire need of a special kind of educational programs, retraining and developing their abilities despite their shortcomings so that they can live and adapt to the society of like ordinary people as much as possible and integrate them with them in social and academic life, which is a natural right for them (Al-Maqtari, 2017).

On the other hand, Al-Khatib (2011) indicated that the most important factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities are the lack of accurate statistics that limit proper planning for the provision of educational programs and services for students with disabilities, the poor quality of the programs and services provided to them and not being subject to evaluation, and the weak control over the quality of service provided. In all areas, the lack of specialized and trained educators in the field of providing educational programs and services for students with disabilities, reliance on unqualified and trained public education educators, and the lack of diagnostic and educational psychological assessment services due to the unavailability of qualified and trained specialists to make such diagnosis, the lack of standardized tools and standards, the restriction of diagnosis to the medical aspect, and the lack of the appropriate schools' buildings and their non-conformity with the standards and specifications for students with disabilities, the lack of research in the field of education for students with disabilities and the lack of support from the relevant government institutions, in addition to the absence of the media's responsibility for the field of education for students with disabilities in raising community awareness, changing misconceptions, broadcasting educational programs for students with disabilities, and supporting education programs for workers in the field, including teachers, managers, supervisors, and specialists.

Mohamed (2020) reported that there are more factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities, which include the inability of some teachers to employ educational activities to meet the needs of students with special needs in the integration program as a result of the poor academic preparation received by teachers. Further, the academic preparation does not sufficiently contribute to teaching special education teachers how to employ e-learning that meets students with special needs. Mohamed added that some teachers do not train disabled students to use the electronic teaching aids - to a sufficient degree - so that students with special needs do not benefit from advanced technology in the educational process.

Jaber (2012) stated that there are many factors that affect the student's achievement level and performance, some of them are related to the student himself, some are related to the school environment, others are related to the family, the process of socialization, the economic and cultural level of the family and the extent of social interdependence among its members. Particularly, these factors are:

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1. Subjective factors and causes that are specific to the students with disabilities, which refer to a group of psychological and emotional factors such as fear, low self-confidence, feelings of shame, withdrawal, low self-concept, or feelings of inferiority, which negatively affect the students' academic performance and may also affect them, chronic diseases and frequent absenteeism, and malnutrition that may prevent the students from performing the activities and duties required from them.
2. Negative attitudes of some teachers towards the students with disabilities, which include the harsh treatment that the students may be subjected to by some teachers through accusing them of failure and insulting them in front of their colleagues without investigating the causes of such failure and treating it in a correct manner, which leads the students to not accept the teacher as well as the study material. In addition, if the study material is inappropriate to the student's tendencies and abilities, it will lead to the students' failure and create a negative attitude among them towards their school and their teachers. And sometimes exaggeration in giving the students with disabilities grades that are not commensurate with the level of their abilities which leads to their failure in other subjects and in the future higher school stages and which will affect their future performance.
3. The authoritarian nature of some families of students with disabilities. While these families confiscate the student's freedom to live their lives without strict rules, this might create unjustified anxiety and tension among those students, which affects their achievement and may generate introversion, shyness and fear, and may sometimes make them not interested in studying, which leads them to academic delay and failure. The extent of family bonding and the nature of the relationships between the father, mother and brothers play a key role in supporting the students with disabilities, while the ongoing disputes and the disjointed relationship negatively affect the student's achievement and performance.

It is worth noting that the teacher is one of the factors that affect the academic achievement of disabled students and the achievement of the student. a. Taking into account the individual differences between students, their general mood, personality style, and the extent of their ability to generalize and use achievement choices in a good and objective manner. The following is a presentation of the role that the teacher can play in advancing or reducing students' school achievement: for the different teaching aids. This discrepancy also appears in the teacher himself, as he/she may not use the appropriate strategy and appropriate teaching aids that take into account the individual differences among students while they are not the same for the rest of the students; b. The extent of the teacher's ability to deal with the personal and psychological patterns of different types of students, i.e. the extent of the teacher's ability to use appropriate incentives in teaching that suit different students; c. Students are affected by the teacher's psychological state and mood. If the teacher suffers from family or school problems or suffers from depression and mood swings, this negatively affects the students' achievement performance through the student's distraction in the class session and his focus on the teacher's emotions and not the content of the lesson, which creates a gap wide among students in achievement; d. The extent of the teacher's ability to design and use comprehensive and objective achievement tests. If the exam is not comprehensive and does not take into account the individual differences among students in terms of difficulty, this may lead to fluctuation of the student's scores from one exam to another, as well as lead to the discrepancy between the students' scores in the same class; e. Objectivity in the school grades given to students in light of their results on school tests. There is no doubt that if the teacher gives more marks than the student deserves or less than he deserves, this does not give a true picture of the student's achievement performance and leads to large gaps between the student's abilities and his real marks, especially if he moves from his current class to another class (ibid).

Jaber (2012 further added that curricula, school activities, exams, schoolmates, and the school's administrative system are among the factors that affect the educational attainment and performance of students with special needs. With regard to the curricula, it may be not designed for the average abilities of the students and devoid of elements of suspense and excitement, or the syllabus may be incoherent, and it deals with different topics that affect students' achievement and shows the discrepancy between their abilities, preparations and school grades. As for school activities, if the classroom program is devoid of the majority of activities and focuses on one sports activity during the week or any one activity only, this creates an atmosphere of boredom without the student enjoying the study and leads to a decrease in his motivation towards achievement. And there are factors that affect the student's achievement performance, which include the school exams, which have to take basic considerations in evaluation, objectivity and appropriate conditions for its application, and do not forget in this urgency the role of the student's colleagues in influencing his performance in terms of motivation for achievement. As for the administrative system prevailing in the school, it affects either negatively or positively on the students' achievement performance. If the relationship between the work team of the administration and the teachers is good, the effect is positive and vice versa. Also, the management style, if it is dictatorial or moderate, has an indirect effect on the students' achievement.

Similarly, Kamal, *et al.* (2014) confirmed that it is commonly believed that the disabled student' home background along with their socio-economic status affects a lot the activities and functioning of both the teachers and students with disabilities. Researchers point out that home background influences academic and educational success of students with disabilities and schoolwork, while socio-economic status reinforces the activities and functioning of the teachers and students with disabilities. The nature and quality of parents and home background of students with disabilities play a vital role in his/her academic development. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of student with disabilities, usually yield poor academic performance of those students.

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Furthermore, the academic performance of students with disabilities tends to be weak due to the basic reasons determining academic performance, i.e., a) special-children depression (DC), b) teachers' contribution (TC), c) parents' contribution (PC), d) school facilitation contribution (SFC), and e) contribution of poverty (CP) (ibid).

Moreover, factors associated with the academic performance of students with disabilities are analyzed from four perspectives: 1) Student level factors, including the disabled student's own physical health and social and emotional wellbeing; 2) Carer level factors, such as socioeconomic status, and the physical and mental health of carers; 3) Family and household environment factors; and 4) School environment factors.

The academic motivation is another factor that might influence the academic achievement of disabled students and their performance. The academic motivation is defined as an individual's tendency to approach, to accomplish, and to master various tasks in the academic setting (Stinnett, Oehler-Stinnett, & Stout, 1991). When dealing with the school setting, academic motivation involves curiosity and persistence as well as accomplishing and mastering an academic task or activity. While the attitudes of the students with special needs towards school, self-concept, and ability to master academic content affect academic achievement (Hoffman, Paris, & Hall, 1994). The related area of motivation also plays a critical role in this academic achievement of students with special needs which resulting in grade retention or special education placement may be particularly at risk for motivation difficulties. Actually, the academic achievement motivation is an area in which educators and school psychologists should take a special interest because it affects academic performance as well as emotional functioning of the students with special needs. Educators and school psychologists must also be able to exclude motivation as the sole factor contributing to the learning difficulties of the students with special needs (Mast, 1995).

According to Reschly (1996), many regular classroom teachers report they were not prepared to address the individual learning differences in their classrooms. This was also found to be true for certain special education teachers. Problems in special education services include difficulty in diagnosing learning disabilities (LD) and limited school funding to support the assessment process.

In the same line, Maingi-Lore (2016) asserted that students with disability are unable to fully access to education due to various barriers they encounter within and outside the academic institutions. Some of the barriers include family background, inaccessible environment, and discriminative practices and policies. Maingi-Lore added that these factors are associated with the academic performance and achievement of the students with disabilities. These factors include:

1. The influence of the family background on disabled students' academic performance and achievement: actually, parents' socio-economic condition, which includes parents' academic and professional qualification, revenue and occupational affiliation, are also associated with the academic gain of the disabled students (Ali, *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, Reichman, *et al.*, (2008) confirmed that due to the fact that families who are raising a disabled child also suffer and have far reaching and profound impacts such as emotional and physical demands, financial costs, and logistical complexities which can affect the entire aspects of family functioning. Hence, these children with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the poor and accordingly tended to be poorer than their counterparts without disabilities.
2. The influence of the educational level of the parents: unquestionably, parents are considered important partners in the provision of Special Needs Education (SNE) since they provide home, support, love, nurturing environment, stimulation, essential life experiences that are necessary for their disabled child's development, and above all prepare their children for school and support their learning process (Makoko & Chimutu, 2007). Davis-Keans (2005) and Grolnick & Slowiacek (1994) asserted that the parents' level of education is related to their disabled children's involvement in education. Admittedly, the parents' amount of schooling has a direct influence on how they interact with their disabled children in order to promote their academic achievement. Consequently, educated parents tend to try to make a difference in their disabled children's academic performance and achievement through their active involvement in the educational process such as their participation in planning of activities for their disabled children (Georgiou, 2007).
3. The influence of the parents' encouragement to the disabled students' academic performance and achievement: undoubtedly, the performance of the disabled students is influenced by the guidance of their parents as the parental interest in their disabled child's education is considered as the most powerful indicator of achievement. For example, a disabled student will perform well in any exams if he/she properly encouraged and guided by his/her parents (Feinstein & Symons, 1999; Hussain, 2006). Incontrovertibly, the parental involvement in their disabled child's literacy practices is a most influential factor than other variables concerning the family background such as the family's social class, size, and its educational level (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Assuredly, the involvement of the parents in their disabled children's learning extend beyond the realms of literacy. It influences their academic performance in a positive way which eventually lead to enable those children to achieve a higher academic performance level, show greater cognitive competence, show greater social adjustment and social competence, show greater self-direction and self-control, show greater social and emotional development, show greater problem solving skills, show more resilience to stress, show positive and supportive peer relations, show greater mental health, show

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better school attendance, show greater life satisfaction, and show more tolerance as well as fewer behavioral problems (Desforjes & Abouchaar, 2003; Allen & Daly, 2002; Fan & Chen, 2001).

Weidner (2014 in Maingi-Lore, 2016) asserted that parents may inadvertently compound the problem by becoming overprotective, being negative or pushing their disabled child too hard. Parents fear that other people do not know how to interact with their children and will therefore not treat them properly. This parental fear contributes greatly to the exclusion and segregation of disabled people. As a result of a desire to protect them, many disabled people are kept inside the household at all times. Parents often want their children to attend special institutions, as they believe that they will receive specialized education and care and be protected from the ill treatment or abuse they fear in the community. Shut away in the household and in special institutions, disabled people are often invisible outside their immediate family. This can contribute further to segregation as most people don't see any disabled people within their community, so they continue to believe that disabled people cannot function outside. By focusing on building confidence, can-do attitudes and a healthy self-esteem, parents can help their children become better achievers in every aspect of life.

4. The influence of the societal attitudes towards disabled students: indeed, the societal attitudes towards disability is considered as the major barriers regarding the disabled students' full participation and one of the most influential, negative, and potent stressor in their lives in a way that inasmuch as negative attitudes towards the disabled students persist, the rightful acceptance of them in the society is far-fetched. In other words, the negative attitudes and stereotyping of the society, including the showing a sense of awkwardness, fear, and pity toward disabled students, as well as showing low expectations about what they can contribute would hold disabled students' academic performance back (Voh, 1993; Nowicki, 2005; Massie, 2006). The influence of societal stereotypes, across all cultures, and its impact on the disabled students' academic performance and achievement: stereotypes and negative beliefs plays a significant role in creating an ingrained prejudice towards disabled students which is reflected in the negative behavior (such as social rejection and the increase of social distance towards disabled students) and negative attitudes that impede the disabled students' participation in educational, social, and vocational context (Shapiro, 1999; Antonak & Livneh, 2000).

5. The influence of the students' attitudes towards themselves on their academic performance and achievement: the self-esteem level of disabled students, their attitudes towards the difficulties they experienced throughout their lives, and their attitudes towards what they can and they cannot have a critical impact on their learning outcomes (Pajeras, 1992; Bandura; 1986). On contrary, Hallum (1995), Pollock & Stewart (1990), Resnik & Hutton (1997), and King *et al* (1993) emphasized that disabled students are at a risk of social isolation and their leisure pursuits tend to be solitary and passive as they rate themselves as particularly low in social acceptance, which leads to social isolation and feelings of loneliness.

It is noteworthy that attitude, in psychology, is defined as a mental state of readiness and a set of emotions, manner, beliefs, and a learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way (often positive, negative and/or uncertain), and the predisposition and the direction of this predisposition as well as and behaviors toward a particular object, person, thing, issue, circumstances, or event, which come as a result upbringing and experience. Attitudes have a strong influence over the human beings' behavior. Forsooth, the components of attitude include: 1) cognitive component: a person's thoughts and beliefs about the subject; 2) affective component: how the object, person, issue, or event makes a person feels; and 3) behavioral component: how attitude influences a person's behavior. Moreover, attitudes are classified into two types, namely: 1) explicit attitudes: which are those a person is consciously aware of and they clearly influence his/her behaviors and beliefs; 2) implicit attitudes: which are those unconscious but still have an effect on a person's beliefs and behaviors. Further, there are various factors that can influence how and why attitudes form, including: 1) experience; 2) social factors; 3) learning; 4) conditioning; 5) and observation (Cherry, 2021). Finally, according to Iedunote (2022), the characteristics of the attitude include the facts that: 1) an attitude is a complex combination of elements that is called personality, beliefs, values, behaviors, and motivations that can fall anywhere along a continuum from very favorable to very unfavorable; 2) every human being, irrespective of his/her status or intelligence, holds attitude/s; 3) an attitude exists in every individual's mind which contributes to define this individual's identity, guide his/her actions, and influence how h/she judges others; 4) despite the fact that the attitude's components of feelings and beliefs are internal to a person, however a person's attitude can be viewed from his/her resulting behavior; 5) an attitude assists a person to define how to see situations and define how to behave toward these situations; 6) an attitude provides a person with internal cognitions about people and objects and hence causes the person to behave in a particular way toward those people and objects; 7) since the attitude represents a summary of an individual's experience, therefore, it is grounded in direct experience and the individual's point of view which allow predicting the future behavior of the individual more precisely; 8) an attitude includes certain aspects of a human being's personality such as interests, appreciation, inclinations, and social conduct (ibid).

6. The influence of the physical facilities on the disabled students' academic performance and achievement: Hart & Williams (1995) and Johnson (2014 in Maingi-Lore, 2016: p. 15-16) stated that disabled students, on average, show concerns regarding the physical barriers within the academic institutions' environment that have not been addressed by these institutions. Johnson added that the issue of providing accessible environments across academic institutions' campuses is often restricted by

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architectural and budgetary constraints. Besides, these institutions sometimes do not consider the immediate disabled students' needs (2014). Furthermore, the Persons with Disability Act, Section 22- Act 14, (PDA 2003 in Johnson, 2014) stated that persons with disabilities are entitled to a barrier free and disability friendly environment to enable them have access to buildings, roads and other social amenities and assistive devices and other equipment to promote their mobility. The previous mentioned act also confirmed that disabled students should not be excluded from participation in any instructional program due to the fact that these facilities are inaccessible or unusable by disabled students. Hence, academic institutions should be made accessible to and useful for disabled students. In addition, they operate each program or activity so that, when viewed in its entirety, it is readily accessible to students with disabilities. Similarly, Singh (2003) asserted that even in new constructed facilities, alterations must be done to existing facilities as the students are often limited to where they move on campus and what instructional event they may attend. Additionally, the process of accommodating disabled students requires a precise and careful examining of the institutions' buildings and areas for the sake of making these buildings and areas accessible and safe as some barriers that can be found such as doors that are too narrow for wheelchairs to go through, steps leading to buildings, impassable pathways that are too slippery and narrow, vehicles that are too high or steep, toilets without grab bars, nonslip, surfaces and seats, light switches that are too high or low, inaccessible places of worship, shops or other public places. To sum up, the previous mentioned physical barriers lead to frustration to the disabled students because they make them dependent on others and lead them to ask for assistance all the time.

On the same line, Kiat (2014), Agarwal (2014), and Borland & James (1999) pointed out that rooms at educational institutions should be arranged in such a way that the disabled students can move around easily. The building should also be equipped with interconnecting areas to allow for seamless movement of the disabled students. In addition, non-slip materials should be used and the buildings floors' finishes for the sake of enhancing safety and mobility are recommended. It is also recommended to equip these buildings with special toilets for disabled students as well as an accessible car parks. Moreover, ramps at the entrances of buildings should be available which can make an institution accessible to the disabled students. Finally, Borland & James (1999) concluded that access issues for disabled students are extremely complex and need to be addressed more frequently and the existing facilities at the academic institutions need to be adjusted in such a manner that they will be made accessible to the maximum extent feasible.

7. The influence of the instructional strategies on the disabled students: an influential factor to the success of the disabled students in the classroom lies in carrying out an appropriate adaption, modification, and accommodation to the instructional process. However, many obstacles are faced by disabled students who attend mainstream schools or any educational institutions. These obstacles include: the accessible contents are unavailable and the lack of trained staff. Even the available staff lacks awareness that is related to the developments in enabling technologies' access for disabled students. In fact, the educational goals for disabled students are fundamentally similar to the goals assigned for all students. These goals include: the social competence, effective communication, employability and personal independence (A.F.B., 2014 in Maingi-Lore, 2016).

## SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

The right to education is now accepted as a fundamental human right for everyone and important developments have taken place which aim at addressing the educational needs of persons with disabilities. Students' academic performance plays a crucial role in producing the best quality leaders and manpower for the country (Ali, *et al.*, 2009).

To address the factors that affect the academic performance and achievement of students with special needs, consideration must be given to the availability of the general competencies necessary for teachers to be able to teach students with special needs, which include: 1) The ability of the teacher to observe and record students' behavior in different classroom situations; 2) The ability of the teacher to work as an active member of the multidisciplinary team that designs, implements and evaluates inclusion programmes; 3) The teacher should have an acceptable level of knowledge about the categories of special needs and their causes and psychological educational dimensions; 4) The teacher should be aware of the characteristics of normal growth in childhood; 5) The teacher should also have the knowledge of the principles and methods of developing individual educational programs; 6) The teacher should have the ability to interpret the most important information contained in the medical and psychological-educational reports about students with special needs; 7) The teacher should build appropriate working relationships with associations and institutions concerned with training and educating students with special needs; 8) The teacher should further have the ability to adapt the various tests and assessment tools to suit the nature of special needs; 9) The teacher should have sufficient knowledge about the desirable and prohibited activities for each category of special needs; 10) The teacher should have the ability to build constructive and beneficial working relationships with families of students with special needs; 11) The teacher should have the ability to organize the classroom environment in a way that allows students with special needs to benefit and participate in educational activities to the fullest extent possible; and finally 12) The teacher should have the ability to adapt educational aids to suit the medical needs of the student (Educapsy, 2014).

Additionally, special counselors should be made available in each of the institutions of disabled students who are specially assigned the duty of lowering disabled students' anxiety and depression. Besides, special care should be given to appoint administrative and

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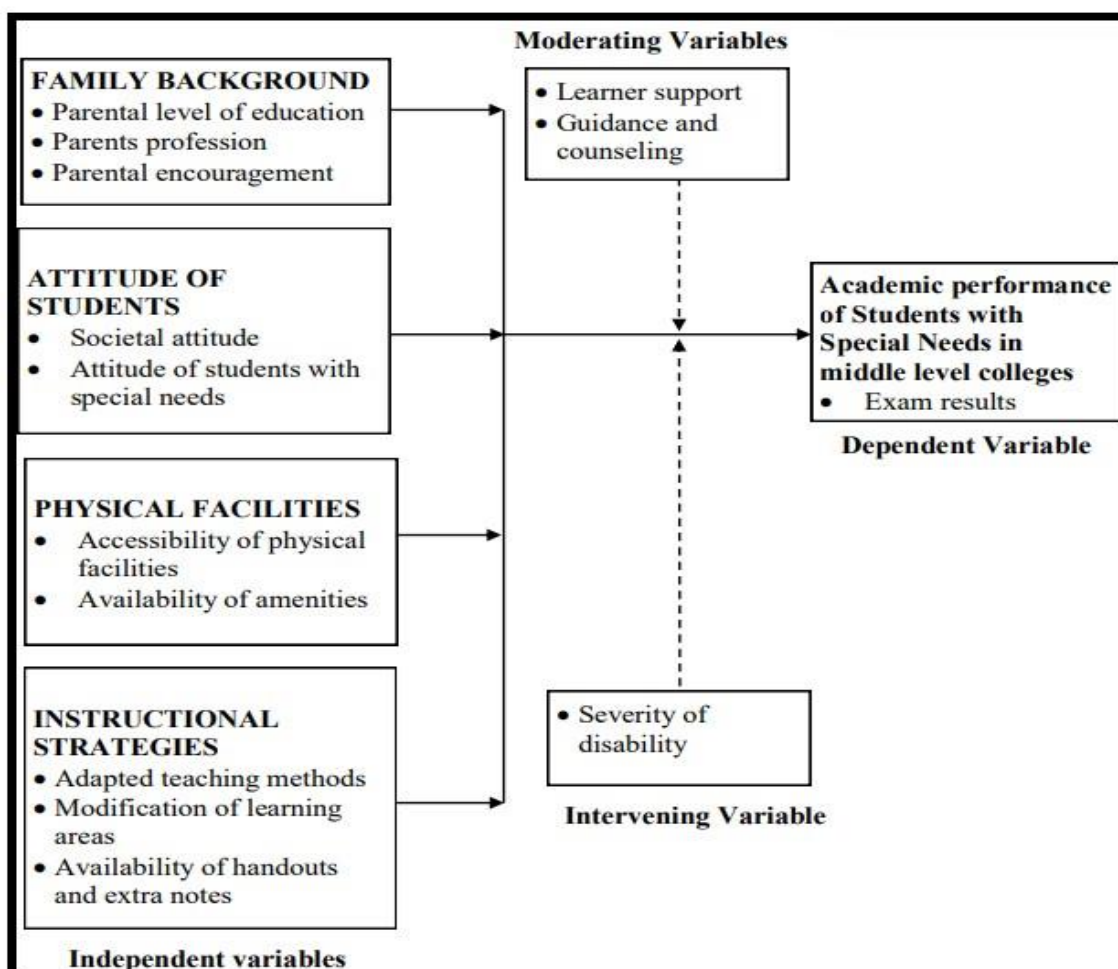
teaching staff who give particular care to teaching and also provide due respect to the disabled students. Parents of the disabled students should be aware to educate their children without discrimination of male and female and normal/abnormal. Further, a good learning environment at school should be provided to disabled students, and teachers should be aware to teach according to the needs of disabled students' psychology (Kamal, *et al.*, 2014).

Maingi-Lore (2016) indicated that in order to mitigate the influence of the factors that affect the academic performance and achievement of students with special needs, various legislations to be enforced in all learning institutions. Maingi-Lore also added that distance education as a flexible mode of study be utilized as one way of addressing the specific and unique educational needs of students with disabilities so as to improve accessibility. In addition, lecturers and support staff be given mandatory basic training on disability training and that library contents be availed in electronic formats as well as braille. It was also recommended to assist in creating a disability friendly learning and physical environment as well as helping to create confidence as well as a can-do attitude in the students with special needs. This will lead to more students with disabilities enrolling and excelling in the educational process successfully.

In fact, learning institutions must take into their consideration that the special needs of individuals with disability with respect to the entry requirements, pass marks, curriculum, examinations, auxiliary services, use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other similar considerations education institutions are mandated by law to ensure that they take specific steps to make physical adjustments in buildings and their surroundings, avail assistive technology and other adapted learning equipment in order to make the environment accessible to students with special needs. It is also recommended that the chances of students with special needs should be improved to upgrade the academic performance and achievement of the disabled through empowering them by imparting the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively participate in development, decision-making and the democratic process. Actually, effective education takes place when students with disabilities are able to participate fully and benefit from that education (ibid).

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The conceptual framework on the current study is demonstrated in (Figure. 1) below, which shows the interrelationship between the factors that are influencing the disabled students' academic performance and achievement.



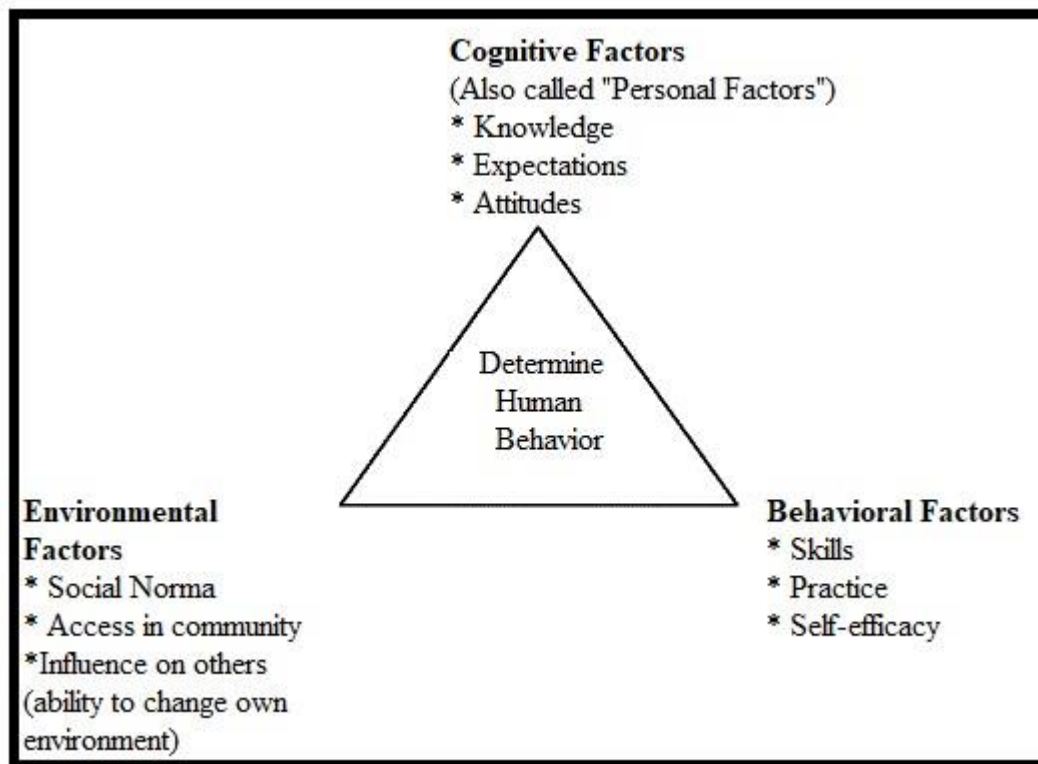
(Figure 1: The conceptual framework on the current study. Source: Maingi-Lore, 2016: p. 24)



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### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) advanced by Albert Bandura (1986) emphasizes on self-belief as critical elements in the human being's motivation and behavior. In addition, the Social Cognitive theory is precisely relevant to disabled students who often view themselves as lesser than others due to the fact that they generally suffer from a low self-esteem level which extremely influences their academic performance and achievement (LaMorte, 2019). SCT posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. Additionally, SCT's emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement is considered as a unique feature of the theory. SCT considers the unique way in which individuals acquire and maintain behavior, while also considering the social environment in which individuals perform the behavior. The theory takes into account a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur. These past experiences influences reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, all of which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behavior and the reasons why a person engages in that behavior (ibid). (See Figure 2 for more clarification).



(Figure 2: Social Cognitive Theory: Bandura. Source: Jeonghwan, 2009).

The theory, which is an extension of his social learning theory in the 1960s, states that when a person observes a model performing a behavior and the consequences of that behavior, he/she remembers the events' sequence and use this information to guide subsequent behaviors. The theory also states that the observation of a model can also prompt the viewer to engage in behavior he/she already learned. In other words, a person does not learn new behaviors solely by trying them and either succeeding or failing, but rather, the person depends upon the replication of the actions of others. Depending on whether the person is rewarded or punished for his/her behavior and the outcome of the behavior, the observer may choose to replicate behavior modeled (Bandura, 1986 and Bandura, 2008).

LaMorte (2019) indicated that the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior.

The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement. SCT considers the unique way in which individuals acquire and maintain behavior, while also considering the social environment in which individuals perform the behavior. The theory takes into account a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur. These past experiences influences reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, all of which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behavior and the reasons why a person engages in that behavior.

It is worth mentioning that many theories of behavior do not consider maintenance of behavior, but rather focus on initiating behavior. On contrary, the goal of the Social Cognitive Theory is to explain how a person regulates his/her behavior through control and reinforcement to achieve goaldirected behavior that can be maintained over time. Five constructs were determined as part of the SCT. These constructs are (LaMorte, 2019):

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1. Reciprocal Determinism: this is the central concept of SCT. This refers to the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of person (individual with a set of learned experiences), environment (external social context), and behavior (responses to stimuli to achieve goals).
2. Behavioral Capability: this refers to a person's actual ability to perform a behavior through essential knowledge and skills. In order to successfully perform a behavior, a person must know what to do and how to do it. People learn from the consequences of their behavior, which also affects the environment in which they live.
3. Observational Learning: this asserts that people can witness and observe a behavior conducted by others, and then reproduce those actions. This is often exhibited through "modeling" of behaviors. If individuals see successful demonstration of a behavior, they can also complete the behavior successfully.
4. Reinforcements: this refers to the internal or external responses to a person's behavior that affect the likelihood of continuing or discontinuing the behavior. Reinforcements can be self-initiated or in the environment, and reinforcements can be positive or negative. This is the construct of SCT that most closely ties to the reciprocal relationship between behavior and environment.
5. Expectations: this refers to the anticipated consequences of a person's behavior. Outcome expectations can be health-related or not health-related. People anticipate the consequences of their actions before engaging in the behavior, and these anticipated consequences can influence successful completion of the behavior. Expectations derive largely from previous experience. While expectancies also derive from previous experience, expectancies focus on the value that is placed on the outcome and are subjective to the individual.
6. Self-efficacy: this refers to the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform a behavior. Self-efficacy, which is unique to SCT, is influenced by a person's specific capabilities and other individual factors, as well as by environmental factors (barriers and facilitators) (ibid). Actually, Bandura (1986) indicated that self-efficacy has been prominent in the educational research as self-efficacy beliefs represent a critical determinant of the life choices that students make and the course of action they pursue. In addition, self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for disabled students' motivation, well-being and personal accomplishments. Based on that, self-efficacious disabled students, while having lesser anxiety, they work harder, achieve more, persist longer, persevere and have greater optimism. Further, they engage in activities in which they feel competent and avoid those in which they do not. In addition, self-efficacy is crucial in the formation of a 'can-do' attitude among disabled students which is later translated into personal accomplishments. On contrary, Pajeras (2006) mentioned that self-efficacious disabled students who are confident anticipate successful outcomes and those who are also confident in their social skills anticipate successful social encounters. Additionally, self-efficacious disabled students who are confident in their academic skills expect high marks on exams and expect the quality of their work to reap academic benefits. The opposite is true for those who lack self-efficacy, they often envision rejection or ridicule even before they achieve academically or establish social contact. To sum up, unless disabled students believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Effective education provided for students with special needs includes a number of sequential and interrelated steps, the most important of which are (ibid):

- a. The relationship between the teacher and the student with special needs: It is the need for the teacher to show realistic trends, adopt supportive attitudes and understand and take into account individual differences. One of the most important factors in this regard is expressing confidence in the disabled students' ability to learn and grow, and taking care to organize the classroom environment in a warm and cooperative growth.
- b. Quick execution of teaching: Effective teaching necessarily takes into account the speed of transition from one educational task to another. It is known that the teacher must provide sufficient opportunities for the student with special needs to acquire and generalize the skill, and this is necessary in special education in particular. Repetition and additional opportunities for learning, so the teacher should adjust the speed of teaching implementation based on the student's performance and progress.
- c. The use of assistive and adaptive tools: Although the general principle in special education is the use of natural tools in training students with disabilities, teachers and therapists often need to employ assistive and adapted tools to achieve educational goals or design new technological or non-technological tools to help the disabled students to use it functionally and usefully.
- d. Adopting appropriate teaching method/s: The varying difficulties and problems faced by students with special educational needs prompted their teachers to develop different strategies, design various educational settings, and adopt different educational philosophies. It is not possible to rely on one method and provide educational contents to all students with special needs or to all students who belong to the same disability category. In any case, teachers adopt teaching methods in light of three variables:
  1. The disability category: The methods and tools that are employed in the educational process often differ from one category to another. For example, normal reading is not acceptable with blind students, and oral-based methods are not suitable for dealing with the deaf. Likewise, students with severe physical disabilities are not expected to participate in traditional sports educational programs. In fact, it is not appropriate to teach mentally retarded students by traditional group methods.

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2. The severity of disability: The severity of the student's disability is no less important than the disability category in terms of adopting the appropriate teaching methods. It is not expected that the student who suffers from a very severe disability will benefit from the methods that are used with the student with simple disabilities. Actually, the more severe the disability, the greater the student's need to education in a special educational setting.
3. The chronological age: The third variable that must be taken into account when choosing teaching methods is the chronological age of the student with special needs. The desired methods and objectives of the curriculum are determined in light of the developmental needs and tasks of each age stage. In general, programs for young children focus on a developmental approach, and programs for students at different school levels focus on basic academic, personal and social skills, while after school programs focus on professional and functional skills.
- e. Diagnostic-Therapeutic Curve: Although the various special teaching methods are generally based on the diagnostic-therapeutic curve, this model includes diagnosing the problem and developing a plan to treat it. This curve includes the following four steps:
  1. Students' assessment: Before starting the teaching process, the teacher should evaluate the student's performance, collecting information about him/her using observation or the known formal psychological tests.
  2. Teaching implementation: Based on the information collected about the student's performance, teaching plans are drawn up by the teacher to implement the student's individual educational plan.
  3. Execution of the teaching plan: Where the teaching plan is put into practice and the educational strategies are employed and implemented by the teacher, and these strategies may include direct education (skills analysis model or direct education, skills training model).
  4. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness: After completing the implementation of the teaching plan, the student's performance is evaluated again to see the extent of progress that has occurred in the students' performance, in light of the criteria that have been approved in the plan.

In addition, it is worth noting that special education includes the development of corrective programs that aim to overcome disability and any existing barriers through training and education and implement compensatory programs that aim to give students with special needs alternative means to coexist with their disability, and in both cases, the aim is to teach the student with disabilities the basic skills necessary for independence. Further, these skills may be academic, social, or personal. The disability may limit the student's ability to learn through regular teaching methods, which requires providing the student with special educational programs that include the use of adapted and modified teaching aids, tools and methods. Accordingly, a disability may impose one or more of the following procedures:

- a. Modify the teaching content.
- b. Changing educational goals.
- c. Changing the educational environment.

Furthermore, when discussing teaching strategies in special education, the following facts must be taken into consideration (ibid):

- a. There is no method, educational style, environmental organization, tools, or methods that will suit all students with disabilities in the classroom.
- b. Educational environments (educational alternatives) are more diverse for students with disabilities.
- c. The severity and type of disability are two factors that influence teaching planning and the choice of educational placement.
- d. Teaching is considered ineffective if the student's behavior is not under control.
- e. The philosophy a teacher has toward students with disabilities influences the type of teaching strategies the teacher uses.

## RELEVANT LITERATURE

In their study titled '*Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Special Students: A Case of Peshawar District*', Kamal, *et al.*, (2014) reported that the disabled students' home background along with their socio-economic status affects a lot the activities and functioning of both the teachers and students. Researchers also concluded that home background influences the academic and educational success of disabled students and schoolwork, while socio-economic status reinforces the activities and functioning of the teachers and students. The nature and quality of parents and home background of disabled student play a vital role in their academic development. Finally, poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a disabled student usually yield poor academic performance of the student.

Lytton (2010), on his study entitled '*Problems and Issues in Education*', stated that good parenting supported by strong economic home background could enhance strong academic performance of the child with disability. Further, Lytton's argument assists in the process of predicting the child courses and vocation that matches his/her mental ability, interest and capability differences in

## Factors Influencing Academic Performance and Achievement of Students with Disabilities

performance and achievement. Lytton added that poverty alone does not account for all the differences in the performance of the students. Poverty of parents has elastic effects on their children with disability academic works as they lack enough resources and funds to sponsor their education and good schools, good housing facilities, medical care and social welfare services. Poverty of the parents also makes education and learning impossible for children, especially disabled children in the rural areas. Besides, poverty causes other problems, such as disease, frustration, poor performance, and psychological problems, etc.

On contrary, Davis (1994 in Kamal, *et al.*, 2014) mentioned that there are other factors that compliment environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievements and performance of the disabled students. These factors include good teaching, counseling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidating buildings, lacking mental stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangement will also be destructive.

Reschly (1996) pointed out that there are two factors that affect the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities within the field of special education. First, disabled students that are diagnosed with a disability may not be getting the help that they need, due to varying rules according to their geographic location. Second, there is the lack of funding that is available for the students. In other words, funding for services is insufficient to meet the need of disabled students. Hence, Reschly asserted that there is a need to revise the funding system to adequately support the specialized education of disabled students. Besides, Reschly described the identification and assessment of students with disabilities for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Reschly described the (10) stages of diagnosis, classification, and then finally treatment. Firstly, Reschly mentioned that there are (13) disabilities, including autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disturbance, learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment. Secondly, the (10) stages on diagnosis, classification and treatment are “pre-referral, referral, preplacement evaluation, eligibility determination, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) development, determination of placement, provisions of services, annual evaluation of progress, and triennial reevaluation” (Reschly, 1996, p. 45). However, Reschly argued that there are problems with these stages, such as parents do not want their children stigmatized by a label, there is no clear understanding of the time frame that a child needs assistance, and in terms of testing, many tools have limited reliability for assessment purposes. Finally, categorization and treatment options are inconsistent (1996).

Kunnen & Steenbeek (1999) pointed out that children who have special needs have below average motivation compared to their peers. In fact, there are ways that teachers can help to motivate children with disabilities, particularly those who may not have the motivation and self-discipline to persist a task independently, which became an educational issue in many classrooms. There are two different types of motivation, low motivation and perceived control. They state that these different motivations are aligned with different strategies, to help motivate students and keep them focused on the task at hand. Hence, Kunnen & Steenbeek recommended that discussions with parents and teachers faced with this type of situation in a classroom or at home, can work together. Actually, parents and teachers who are new to taking an active role in working together, with some options or strategies that may be useful in school and home settings, they can gain the knowledge that is needed and become more aware the factors that affect the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities.

Maingi-Lore (2016) carried out a study titled “*Factors influencing academic performance of students with special needs in institutions of higher learning*”. The study aimed to find out factors influencing the academic performance of students with special needs in middle level colleges in Machakos County in Kenya. The study concluded that students with disabilities face diverse challenges in institutions of higher learning which greatly affect their access and full participation in academic programmes. The factors include family background which influences the academic performance of students with special needs, the attitudes of students with special needs which influence their academic performance, and the infrastructural facilities as well as the instructional strategies which influence the academic performance of students with special needs. The findings of the study also indicated that adapted classrooms and extra notes and hand-outs influence the academic performance of students with special needs.

## CONCLUSION

Students with disabilities face diverse challenges which greatly affect their access and full participation in academic programmes at academic institutions of all levels. Therefore, the aim of the current empirical study is to identify the factors influencing the academic performance and achievement of disabled students. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Based on the review of the relevant literature, the study concluded that there are several factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities.

The study has concluded that disabled students are often stigmatized and often have a tougher time learning to feel good about themselves. Moreover, disabled students feel they are often treated as socially inferior and vocationally undesirable. They also suffer from many psychological effects such as feelings of inferiority, introversion, lack of self-reliance, dependence, inability to lead, and a constant desire to depend on others, weak sense of belonging, difficulty of building a relationship with ordinary students, feeling of internal tension and emotional imbalance; and the need to resort to the sympathy of others and try to attract their attention in different ways. Likewise, disabled students suffer from many social problems, such as their inability to adaptation and integration

## Factors Influencing Academic Performance and Achievement of Students with Disabilities

with society, family problems, friends, recreational problems, economic problems, educational problems, medical and rehabilitation problems. Further, they suffer from shortcomings or a chronic illness that affects their abilities, whether the disability is physical, sensory, mental or social, which prevents the individual from taking full advantage of the educational experiences that the ordinary individual can benefit from. Additionally, the societal attitudes towards disabled students which is considered as the major barriers regarding the disabled students' full participation and one of the most influential, negative, and potent stressor in their lives in a way that inasmuch as negative attitudes towards the disabled students persist, the rightful acceptance of them in the society is farfetched. Educationally, the study has further concluded that disabled students also suffer from the lack of the lack of academic motivation and encouragement as well as the lack of appropriate school environment including the schools' buildings and their non-conformity with the standards and specifications for students with disabilities, as well as the poor quality of the programs and services provided to them and the lack of specialized and trained educators who often have negative attitudes towards the students with disabilities. Additionally, disabled students also suffer from the inability of some untrained teachers to design and use comprehensive and objective achievement tests for disabled students and employ educational activities to meet the needs of disabled students in the integration program and the inability of the teachers to allow disabled students to use the electronic teaching aids - to a sufficient degree - so that students with special needs do not benefit from advanced technology in the educational process. Furthermore, some teacher may not use the appropriate strategy and appropriate teaching aids that take into account the individual differences among disabled students. actually, the curricula, school activities, exams, schoolmates, and the school's administrative system are among the factors that affect the educational attainment and performance of disabled students. similarly, the academic performance of students with disabilities tends to be weak due to disabled students' depression, teachers' contribution, and school facilitation contribution. Moreover, students with disability are unable to fully access to education due to various barriers they encounter within and outside the academic institutions. Some of the barriers include the inaccessible environment and discriminative practices and policies in some academic institutions. By the same token, some academic institutions' buildings and areas are not accessible and safe for the disabled students due to some barriers that can be found such as doors that are too narrow for wheelchairs to go through, steps leading to buildings, impassable pathways that are too slippery and narrow, vehicles that are too high or steep, toilets without grab bars, nonslip, surfaces and seats, light switches that are too high or low, inaccessible places of worship, shops or other public places. The previous mentioned physical barriers lead to frustration to the disabled students because they make them dependent on others and lead them to ask for assistance.

The study has further concluded that other factors associated with the academic performance and achievement of students with disabilities are their own physical health and social and emotional wellbeing, the carers' socioeconomic status, the physical and mental health of carers, and the family and household environment. For example, the authoritarian nature of some families of students with disabilities represents a factor that has an influential and negative impact on the disabled students. Besides, the disabled students parents' socio-economic condition, which includes parents' academic and professional qualification (i.e., the educational level of the parents), revenue occupational affiliation, and the lack of parents' encouragement to the disabled students are also associated with the academic gain of the disabled students.

In addition, the findings of the study reported that the influence of the students' attitudes towards themselves on their academic performance and achievement. The self-esteem level of disabled students, their attitudes towards the difficulties they experienced throughout their lives, and their attitudes towards what they can and they cannot have a critical impact on their learning outcomes. Hence, many of them are ended up with a 'can't-do attitude', low confidence and self-esteem, especially when they constantly realize that their body does not work like everyone else's, so it can be difficult for them to build a positive sense of self-worth.

Based on the previous mentioned factors, the study asserted that disabled students have the right to obtain a comprehensive and specialized set of health, educational, psychological, social, rehabilitative, professional, and cultural services. Besides, they have the right of having a full and equal participation in all aspects of life in the societies where they reside. The study also asserted that appropriate adaptation, modification, and accommodation to the instructional process should be carried out. Such procedures must be built on the fact that the educational goals for disabled students are fundamentally similar to the goals assigned for all students. These goals include: the social competence, effective communication, employability and personal independence.

As mentioned before, the current study was guided by Albert Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The findings on the current study go in line with the theory in a way that the findings reflected the purports and implications of the theory. In fact, the findings agree with the contents of the theory that emphasizes on self-belief of a disabled person which is a critical element in his/her motivation and behavior. Similarly, the findings, based on the theory, demonstrated that disabled students who often view themselves as lesser than others due to the fact that they generally suffer from a low self-esteem level which extremely influences their academic performance and achievement especially as learning occurs in a social context (on external and internal social reinforcement) with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the disabled person, environment, and behavior. Hence, a disabled person regulates his/her behavior through control and reinforcement to achieve goal-directed behavior.

Finally, the study suggested several solutions and recommendations to help disabled students, their parents, and academic institutions to encounter the factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of the students with disabilities.

## Factors Influencing Academic Performance and Achievement of Students with Disabilities

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study recommends the following procedures to be fulfilled in order to reduce the influence of the factors, discussed earlier, that effect the academic performance and achievement of the students with disabilities:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive long-term education plan that clarifies the concept of special education in line with international standards.
- Take the necessary measures to provide individual support for disabled students.  
Involve children with disabilities and their parents or family members in consultations, decision-making and monitoring processes, as well as develop strategies to increase community and family participation.
- Train and support parents of children with disability, including through regular parent meetings to share information and provide peer support.
- Employing personnel with the necessary competence and experience to ensure that a quality education is provided to disabled students.
- Develop guidelines and standards for teachers and principals and establish procedures to ensure that they are met.
- Allocate adequate funding for special education for disabled students, including targeted funding for development assistance.
- Adaptation of the curriculum for special education. Develop appropriate curricula and assessment systems.
- Ensure that all exams meet the needs of all disabled students.
- Ensure that each school has a team dedicated to developing individual education plans and discussing accommodations and modifications when needed to meet disabled students' needs.
- Review teachers' training materials to reflect special teaching methods and raise awareness about disabled students.
- Training of all teachers and school principals on special education methods and practical skills, including the ways and means of communication, such as basic sign language.
- Develop or strengthen early detection and intervention programs consistent with a comprehensive approach to education and take steps to ensure that disabled students have access to development programmes.
- Train teachers and school principals on how to avoid and address bullying, teasing, or other discriminatory and degrading treatment of children with disabilities in classrooms.
- Provide ongoing training, support, and guidance for teachers and assistants of disabled students, through resource centers and professional exchanges.

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