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Article

Academic Behavior and Self-Determination Skills of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners in A Special Education Setting

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Abstract: This study examined the academic behavior and self-determination skills of Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners enrolled in the Special Education Program of Zapatera National High School, Cebu City. Specifically, it described the learners' demographic profile and assessed academic behavior in terms of persistence, goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring, as well as self-determination skills in terms of self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 32 learners through complete enumeration. Data were gathered using a demographic profile sheet, an Academic Behavior Instrument adapted from Lombardi, Seburn, and Conley, and a Self-Determination Skills Instrument adapted from the ARC-INICO Self-Determination Scale. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Spearman rank-order correlation were used in analyzing the data at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that most respondents were 14 to 15 years old, with females slightly outnumbering males. Filipino Sign Language and written communication were the most commonly used communication supports. Overall academic behavior was generally positive, with persistence emerging as the strongest dimension, while goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring showed areas for further improvement. Self-determination skills were also generally favorable, with self-realization obtaining the strongest result, followed by empowerment and self-regulation. A significant high positive relationship was found between academic behavior and self-determination skills. The findings indicate that stronger academic behavior is associated with stronger self-determination. Based on the results, an Academic Behavior and Self-Determination Enhancement Plan was proposed to strengthen learners' academic routines, goal setting, self-monitoring, decision-making, self-advocacy, and independence.

Keywords: Academic Behavior, Self-Determination Skills, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners, Persistence, Goal-Driven Behaviors, Study Skills

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in developing the academic habits, personal agency, confidence, and decision-making abilities that adolescents need for continued

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schooling, future employment, community participation, and independent living (Adejoke, 2025). For Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners, successful secondary education also requires accessible communication, purposeful study habits, self-advocacy, and opportunities to make meaningful choices about learning. Academic behavior is therefore important because it reflects how learners persist with tasks, set goals, apply study strategies, and monitor their own progress (Zimmerman et al., 2023). Self-determination complements these behaviors by enabling learners to regulate their actions, express preferences, recognize personal strengths, and participate actively in decisions affecting their education (Buttigieg et al., 2025). Recent research emphasizes that Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners benefit when educational environments promote autonomy, accessible participation, and opportunities to exercise personal agency in school-related experiences (Young et al., 2023; Shogren et al., 2024).

Despite the importance of these competencies, Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners may encounter barriers that influence both their academic behavior and development of self-determination. Communication difficulties, limited access to classroom discussions, inconsistent accommodations, restricted opportunities for independent learning, and dependence on adults may affect how learners organize tasks, establish goals, evaluate their progress, and make educational decisions (Maceke, 2026). When information is not fully accessible, learners may have fewer opportunities to practice self-directed learning or participate confidently in school activities. Quirke and Mc Guckin (2024) emphasized that educational and career guidance for Deaf learners should account for communication accessibility and individualized support needs. Similarly, Alsalamah and Poppen (2023) noted that educational preparation for Deaf learners requires coordinated support that addresses individual strengths, participation, and future planning. These concerns suggest that academic behavior cannot be separated from the opportunities learners receive to exercise independence, decision-making, and responsibility within the school environment.

Academic behavior becomes particularly important during adolescence because learners are gradually expected to assume greater responsibility for managing assignments, organizing study schedules, setting academic goals, and evaluating their own progress (Lane et al., 2025). Persistence enables students to continue working despite difficulty, while goal-driven behavior provides direction for academic and future plans (McMillian, 2025). Study skills assist learners in preparing for examinations and completing school requirements, whereas self-monitoring allows them to identify errors and make appropriate improvements (Nilson & Zimmerman, 2023). For Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners, these behaviors may also depend on whether instruction, feedback, and learning materials are presented through communication modes they can readily access. Recent work on deaf education stresses that teaching practices should recognize the diverse learning, language, and communication experiences of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students rather than assuming that one instructional approach is suitable for everyone (Hartman et al., 2023). Accessible and responsive instruction may therefore provide a

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stronger foundation for independent academic behavior.

Self-determination is likewise essential because it enables learners to understand themselves, regulate behavior, make choices, communicate preferences, and believe in their capacity to influence personal outcomes (Guay, 2022). The dimensions of self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization are especially relevant to Deaf and hard-of-hearing adolescents who are increasingly expected to participate in educational decisions and prepare for greater independence. Learners who understand their strengths and limitations may be better prepared to identify appropriate goals and seek assistance when necessary (White & Brown, 2024). Those who feel empowered may also become more confident in expressing opinions, requesting communication support, and participating with peers and teachers. Recent research concerning the educational experiences of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students has underscored the importance of learner voice, participation, accessible communication, and opportunities for students to communicate their own needs within educational environments (Jolly et al., 2024). These conditions may contribute to the development of stronger autonomy and more purposeful engagement with academic responsibilities.

Existing research provides further reason to examine academic behavior together with self-determination among learners with hearing impairment. Self-determination involves more than confidence; it includes planning, reflection, decision-making, goal pursuit, and the ability to act intentionally (Burke et al., 2024). At the same time, positive academic behavior requires learners to sustain effort, organize their learning, apply effective strategies, and monitor outcomes. These processes are conceptually connected because learners who can regulate themselves and make purposeful decisions may also be more capable of managing their academic responsibilities (Zimmerman, 2023). Recent studies involving Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners have highlighted the importance of communication technology, accessible instruction, and individualized support in promoting learner participation and independence (Millett & Mulla, 2025). Research on learning among students with hearing loss has also emphasized that educational performance varies according to individual learning characteristics and available instructional supports, demonstrating the importance of understanding how learners actively manage their academic experiences (Couvée et al., 2025).

Although international studies have examined academic participation, autonomy, communication access, and personal development among Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners, limited school-based evidence is available regarding the relationship between academic behavior and self-determination skills among secondary Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners in the Philippine SPED context. In particular, there is limited localized information describing learners' persistence, goal-driven behaviors, study skills, self-monitoring, self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization within one secondary school program. At Zapatera National High School, learners use different forms of communication support, including Filipino Sign Language, written communication, sign-supported speech, total communication, speech-reading, and

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visual learning materials. Differences in communication access and individual learning experiences may influence the degree to which students independently manage academic tasks and exercise personal agency. Contemporary research has shown that Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners continually negotiate communication, participation, and social demands within school environments, highlighting the importance of understanding their experiences from an educational rather than purely deficit-based perspective (Hardebeck et al., 2026).

Within the Special Education Program of Zapatera National High School, the researcher encountered differences in how Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners managed academic responsibilities and exercised independence in school activities. Some learners were able to complete tasks, follow study routines, express their preferences, and make decisions with minimal assistance, while others required frequent teacher guidance in organizing schoolwork, setting goals, monitoring progress, and communicating their needs. Variations in the use of Filipino Sign Language, written communication, total communication, speech-reading, and other supports were also observed. These conditions highlighted the need to examine learners' academic behavior and self-determination systematically and to identify areas that may benefit from more structured and accessible school-based support. This study determine the academic behavior and self-determination skills of Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners at Zapatera National High School and examine whether a significant relationship exists between these variables. Academic behavior will be assessed in terms of persistence, goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring, while self-determination will be examined through self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization. The study will also describe the respondents according to age and gender and the hearing or communication supports they use. The findings will provide localized evidence that may assist teachers and school personnel in strengthening academic routines, goal setting, reflective learning, independent decision-making, self-advocacy, and accessible classroom participation. Ultimately, the results will serve as the basis for developing an Academic Behavior Enhancement Plan responsive to the strengths and identified needs of the learners.

Literature Review

Academic behavior plays an essential role in students' learning progress, particularly among learners enrolled in Special Education programs who may require individualized instruction, structured learning activities, and additional support in completing academic responsibilities. Academic behavior encompasses persistence, goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring, which enable students to remain engaged, accomplish learning objectives, organize academic tasks, and evaluate their progress. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) explained that motivation and self-efficacy influence learners' effort, persistence, and willingness to overcome academic challenges. Similarly, Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasized that supportive learning environments foster autonomous motivation, which encourages students to

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participate meaningfully in learning activities. Howard et al. (2021), through a meta-analysis, examined student motivation and associated educational outcomes, highlighting the relevance of self-determined motivation to learning. Bureau et al. (2022) further identified factors associated with autonomous and controlled motivation, emphasizing the importance of supportive educational experiences. Meanwhile, Wisniewski et al. (2020) demonstrated the importance of feedback in improving learning outcomes, providing a foundation for understanding how students can monitor their performance and respond to instructional guidance. These findings suggest that examining persistence, goal-directed behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring can help teachers identify learners' academic strengths and areas requiring targeted instructional support.

Self-determination skills are equally important because they allow students to make decisions, regulate their actions, recognize their abilities, and participate actively in educational experiences. Self-regulation involves managing emotions, behaviors, and learning strategies to accomplish personal goals, while empowerment concerns students' confidence and capacity to make meaningful choices. Self-realization refers to understanding personal strengths, limitations, preferences, and individual needs. These competencies are particularly relevant to Special Education because learners benefit from opportunities to develop independence and participate in decisions affecting their education. Alnahdi and Schwab (2021) examined teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive education, highlighting the importance of educator preparation and supportive attitudes in meeting diverse learning needs. Dignath et al. (2022) investigated teachers' beliefs about inclusive education, demonstrating the relevance of educational perspectives to inclusive practice. Woodcock et al. (2023) explored teachers' inclusive education beliefs and self-efficacy, identifying important considerations for implementing inclusive teaching practices. Likewise, Grimminger-Seidensticker and Seyda (2022) reported improvements in prospective teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy following targeted inclusive education preparation. Franzen et al. (2024) also examined factors associated with teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive education. Although these studies primarily address teachers rather than students' self-determination, they provide supporting evidence for the importance of responsive learning environments. Consequently, assessing students' self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization alongside their academic behavior may provide valuable information for developing instructional interventions that promote independence, participation, and meaningful learning among students enrolled in Special Education programs.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between academic behavior and self-determination skills among Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners enrolled in the Special Education (SPED) Program. The descriptive component assessed academic behavior in terms of persistence, goal-

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driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring. It also examined self-determination skills in terms of self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization. The correlational component determined whether a statistically significant relationship existed between these variables without manipulating learners' educational experiences or classroom conditions. The study was conducted at Zapatera National High School in Cebu City, Philippines. It involved 32 Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners whose academic behaviors and self-determination skills were assessed by their teachers. Purposive sampling was employed to select teachers who had direct and regular classroom interactions with the learners. Two assessment instruments were utilized: the Academic Behavior Instrument, adapted from Lombardi, Seburn, and Conley (2011), and the Self-Determination Skills Instrument, adapted from the ARC-INICO Self-Determination Scale developed by Verdugo and colleagues (2015). Both instruments employed a five-point Likert scale to measure the identified dimensions. Before data collection, the researcher secured permission from the school administration and oriented the teacher-respondents regarding the study's objectives, procedures, voluntary participation, and confidentiality requirements. Teachers completed the questionnaires based on their regular classroom observations of the learners. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, coded, consolidated, and encoded using appropriate statistical software. Learners' identities were protected throughout the research process.

Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of academic behavior and self-determination skills. Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between the variables at the 0.05 significance level.

Results

Table 1. Persistence

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I allow enough time to complete multiple drafts of an assignment if necessary.	3.84	1.10	Agree
2. I refer to the syllabus or class website to prepare for and complete course assignments.	3.58	1.03	Agree
3. I complete assignments even when they aren't collected or graded.	3.61	1.09	Agree
4. I talk to adults when I have concerns about school.	3.68	0.83	Agree
5. I balance schoolwork with my other activities and commitments.	3.71	0.97	Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.68	0.91	Agree

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Table 1 shows that the respondents generally demonstrated a positive level of persistence, with an overall mean of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 0.91, interpreted as Agree. The highest mean of 3.84 was obtained for allowing enough time to complete multiple drafts of an assignment, indicating willingness to exert additional effort when academic tasks require revision. Balancing schoolwork with 29 other activities obtained a mean of 3.71, while discussing school concerns with adults recorded a mean of 3.68. Completing assignments even when they were not graded obtained a mean of 3.61. Referring to the syllabus or class website received the lowest mean of 3.58, although it remained within the Agree category. The results imply that learners possess favorable academic persistence, but continued teacher guidance, structured monitoring, and reinforcement of independent study habits may further strengthen sustained effort and task completion

Table 2. Goal-Driven Behaviors

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I take complete, organized, and accurate notes during class.	3.61	1.05	Agree
2. I am able to identify resources needed to complete a task or project.	3.55	1.03	Agree
3. I have researched educational option(s) that match my strengths or interests.	3.26	1.03	Moderately Agree
4. I participate in study groups outside of class.	3.29	1.24	Moderately Agree
5. I discussed with my guidance counselor the plans I have for after graduation.	3.06	1.31	Moderately Agree
6. I can identify steps I need to take to reach my career goals.	3.42	1.06	Agree
7. I can identify steps I need to take to reach my educational goals.	3.48	1.00	Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.38	0.99	Moderately Agree

Table 2 shows that the respondents demonstrated a moderate level of goaldirected academic behavior, with an overall mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 0.99, interpreted as Moderately Agree. The highest mean of 3.61 was obtained for taking complete, organized, and accurate notes during class, followed by identifying resources needed to complete tasks with a mean of 3.55. Identifying steps toward educational goals received a mean of 3.48, while identifying steps toward career goals obtained 3.42. Lower ratings were recorded for participation in study groups, researching educational options, and discussing post-graduation plans with a

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guidance counselor. The findings imply that learners can identify immediate academic responsibilities but may require stronger guidance in long-term educational and career planning. Schools may 31 strengthen counseling, goal-setting activities, peer study opportunities, and career exploration programs

Table 3. Study Skills

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I work in small groups during class time.	3.45	1.21	Agree
2. I have identified specific classes in high school that are a good match to my strengths.	3.71	0.86	Agree
3. I journal or blog about what I learn.	2.97	1.02	Moderately Agree
4. I analyze the questions on a test to plan my approach prior to answering.	3.33	1.09	Moderately Agree
5. I spend enough time studying for exams to learn the material well.	3.45	0.99	Agree
6. I try to predict the possible test questions in preparation for exams.	3.35	1.05	Moderately Agree
7. I use unstructured time during the school day to complete assignments.	3.23	1.18	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.35	0.92	Moderately Agre

Table 3 shows that the respondents demonstrated a moderate level of study skills, with an overall mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.92, interpreted as Moderately Agree. The highest mean of 3.71 was recorded for identifying classes that match their strengths, suggesting that learners are generally aware of subjects aligned with their abilities. Working in small groups and spending enough time 32 studying for examinations both obtained means of 3.45. Predicting possible test questions received a mean of 3.35, while analyzing test questions before answering obtained 3.33. Using unstructured school time to complete assignments had a mean of 3.23. Journaling or blogging about learning received the lowest mean of 2.97. The findings imply that learners possess some useful study practices, but these are not yet consistently applied. Teachers may strengthen structured review routines, reflective learning activities, test-preparation strategies, and productive use of available study time.

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Table 4. Self-monitoring

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I know the best environment and time of day for me to study.	3.52	0.96	Agree
2. I complete my projects and assignments without being reminded.	3.32	1.22	Moderately Agree
3. I figure out what score I need on tests or assignments in order to get the grade I want in a class.	3.39	1.05	Moderately Agree
4. I enjoy challenging myself in school.	3.39	1.09	Moderately Agree
5. I review materials ahead of time that will be discussed in class.	3.29	1.19	Moderately Agree
6. I find out what I missed on exams to make improvements.	3.19	1.11	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.35	1.03	Moderately Agree

Table 4 shows that the respondents demonstrated a moderate level of self monitoring, with an overall mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.03, interpreted as Moderately Agree. The highest mean of 3.52 was recorded for knowing the best environment and time of day for studying, indicating awareness of conditions that support learning. Determining the score needed to achieve a desired grade and enjoying academic challenges both obtained means of 3.39. Completing projects without reminders received a mean of 3.32, while reviewing materials in advance obtained 3.29. The lowest mean of 3.19 was recorded for identifying mistakes after examinations to make improvements. The findings imply that learners show some awareness of how they learn best, but their self-monitoring practices are not yet consistently applied. Teachers may strengthen reflective activities, error analysis, progress checking, advance preparation, and independent task completion.

Table 5. *Self-Regulation*

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. When I do a task, I evaluate how things turned out because I think it will help me the next time.	3.65	0.91	Agree
2. I dream about how my life will be after I finish school.	3.77	0.96	Agree
3. After doing something, I think about how I could have done something better.	3.77	0.88	Agree
4. I know what is important to me.	3.80	0.81	Agree

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5. I plan to explore many options before choosing a career.	3.58	0.96	Agree
6. I think about what is good for me when I do things.	3.61	0.92	Agree
7. I like having goals and aims in my life.	3.77	0.92	Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.70	0.83	Agree

Table 5 shows that the respondents generally demonstrated positive selfregulation, with an overall mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 0.83, 36 interpreted as Agree. The highest mean of 3.80 was recorded for knowing what is important to them, suggesting that the learners possess awareness of their personal priorities. Dreaming about life after school, reflecting on how an activity could have been performed better, and having goals and aims in life each obtained a mean of 3.77. Evaluating task outcomes received a mean of 3.65, while considering what is personally beneficial obtained 3.61. Exploring different options before choosing a career received the lowest mean of 3.58, although it remained within the Agree category. The findings imply that the respondents possess favorable self-regulation skills, particularly in identifying personal priorities and establishing future goals. However, additional career exploration activities, guided reflection, and structured decision-making opportunities may further strengthen their independence and preparation for future educational and occupational choices

Table 6. *Empowerment*

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I tell others when I have different ideas or opinions.	3.77	0.99	Agree
2. I tell people when they have hurt my feelings.	3.84	0.97	Agree
3. I can make my own decisions.	3.60	1.07	Agree
4. I can get what I want if I work hard.	3.71	0.94	Agree
5. I have the ability to do the job I want.	3.90	0.91	Agree
6. I am able to work with others.	4.23	0.84	Strongly Agree
7. I tell people when I think I can do something that they tell me I can't.	4.00	0.86	Agree
Overall Mean and SD	3.87	0.77	Agree

Table 6 shows that the respondents generally demonstrated a positive level of empowerment, with an overall mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.77, interpreted as Agree. The highest mean of 4.23 was recorded for the ability to work with others, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating confidence in collaboration and social participation. This was followed by asserting capability despite discouragement, with a mean of 4.00, and believing in their ability to perform a desired job, with a mean of 3.90. Expressing hurt feelings obtained 3.84, while

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communicating different opinions received 3.77. The lowest mean of 3.60 was recorded for making independent decisions, although this remained within the Agree category. The findings imply that the learners possess favorable empowerment skills, particularly in collaboration, self-expression, and confidence in their abilities. However, additional opportunities for independent decision making, self-advocacy, leadership, and choice-making may further strengthen their autonomy and preparation for future responsibilities

Table 7. *Self-Realization*

Statements	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. I am afraid of doing things wrong.	4.23	0.67	Strongly Agree
2. It is better to be yourself than to be popular.	4.13	0.67	Agree
3. I think I am loved because I give love.	4.23	0.76	Strongly Agree
4. I know what I do best.	4.10	0.79	Agree
5. I accept my own limitation.	4.10	0.79	Agree
6. I like myself.	4.29	0.64	Strongly Agree
7. I believe I am an important person to my family and friends.	3.94	0.96	Agree
8. I am confident in my abilities.	4.10	0.91	Agree
Overall Mean and SD	4.14	0.65	Agree

Table 7 shows that the respondents generally demonstrated a high level of self-realization, with an overall mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 0.65, interpreted as Agree. The highest mean of 4.29 was recorded for liking oneself, indicating a strong sense of self-acceptance. Being afraid of doing things wrong and believing that they are loved because they give love both obtained means of 4.23 and were interpreted as Strongly Agree. Knowing what they do best, accepting personal limitations, and being confident in their abilities each obtained a mean of 4.10. Believing that they are important to family and friends received the lowest mean of 3.94, although it remained within the Agree category. The findings imply that the learners generally possess favorable self-realization skills. However, continued activities that strengthen confidence, identity, emotional expression, and recognition of personal value may further support their development.

Table 8. *Relationship Between Academic Behavior Dimensions and Academic Performance*

Academic Behavior Dimension	rho-value	p-value	Degree of Relationship	Remarks
Persistence	0.822	< .001	Very High Positive	Significant
Goal-Driven Behaviors	0.698	< .001	High Positive	Significant

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Study Skills	0.671	< .001	High Positive	Significant
Self-Monitoring	0.799	< .001	High Positive	Significant

Significant at p < 0.05.

Table 8 reveals statistically significant positive relationships between all four dimensions of academic behavior and academic performance. Persistence demonstrated the strongest relationship, followed by self-monitoring, goal-driven behaviors, and study skills. These findings indicate that learners who demonstrate greater persistence, goal-directed behaviors, effective study skills, and self-monitoring tend to achieve better academic performance. The results imply that strengthening these academic behaviors through structured learning activities, individualized guidance, and consistent feedback may support improved academic outcomes among Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners.

Table 9. *Significant Relationship Between Academic Behavior and Self-Determination Skills*

Variables	rho-value	p-value	Degree of Relationship	Remarks	Decision
Academic Behavior and Self-Determination Skills	0.796	< .001	High Positive	Significant	Reject H_0

Significant at p < 0.05.

Table 9 reveals a high positive and statistically significant relationship between academic behavior and self-determination skills, as indicated by a Spearman's rho-value of 0.796 and a p-value below 0.001. This indicates that learners demonstrating stronger persistence, goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring also tend to exhibit higher levels of self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization. The findings imply that strengthening academic behaviors through individualized instruction, goal-setting activities, and consistent guidance may support the development of self-determination skills among Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners.

Discussions

The findings revealed that Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners enrolled in the Special Education Program demonstrated generally favorable academic behaviors, particularly in persistence, while goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring showed moderate development. Learners demonstrated willingness to complete assignments, revise academic work, balance school responsibilities, and seek assistance when necessary. However, they experienced greater difficulty with long-term educational planning, independent study routines, reviewing examination mistakes, and completing assignments without reminders. These findings suggest that although learners possess positive learning habits, they still require structured guidance to develop independent academic management skills. Regarding self-

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determination, learners demonstrated favorable self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization, particularly in recognizing personal priorities, collaborating with others, expressing opinions, and accepting themselves. Nevertheless, independent decision-making and career exploration remained areas for improvement. The findings imply that accessible instructional strategies, individualized goal-setting activities, reflective learning exercises, and career guidance may strengthen learners' academic independence and self-determination. Particular attention should also be given to developing confidence in handling mistakes and encouraging learners to recognize their abilities and personal value.

Furthermore, the findings established significant positive relationships between academic behavior dimensions and academic performance, with persistence demonstrating the strongest association, followed by self-monitoring, goal-driven behaviors, and study skills. These results suggest that learners who demonstrate consistent effort, effective learning strategies, and greater responsibility for their academic progress tend to achieve better educational outcomes. A strong positive and statistically significant relationship was also established between overall academic behavior and self-determination skills, indicating that learners with stronger academic behaviors generally demonstrated greater self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization. However, these correlations did not establish causal relationships. The findings highlight the importance of addressing academic behavior and self-determination together rather than treating them as separate developmental concerns. Consequently, the school should implement an Academic Behavior and Self-Determination Skills Enhancement Plan incorporating accessible learning materials, individualized academic goals, self-monitoring checklists, independent decision-making activities, peer collaboration, and career exploration. Such interventions may help Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners strengthen their confidence, autonomy, academic participation, and readiness for future educational and personal responsibilities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners demonstrated favorable academic persistence but moderate levels of goal-driven behaviors, study skills, and self-monitoring. They also exhibited positive self-determination skills in terms of self-regulation, empowerment, and self-realization, reflecting their ability to recognize personal goals, express opinions, collaborate with others, and demonstrate self-confidence. However, areas involving independent decision-making, career planning, study organization, and self-monitoring required further improvement. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between academic behavior dimensions and academic performance, as well as a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between overall academic behavior and self-determination skills. These relationships indicated that learners with stronger academic behaviors tended to demonstrate better academic performance and greater self-determination, although causation could not be established.

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