

International Journal of Applied Psychology Relationship between Pupils' Self Concept and Academic performance of Primary School Pupils in Kenya.

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Abstract This study sought to identify the influence of pupils self concept to their academic performance. The study targeted the 3543 standard eight pupils in 147 primary schools in Nyamira South sub-county. Stratified sampling was used to get a sample of 355 pupils. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the pupils and was analyzed using inferential statistics. A Bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between the two variables; pupils level of self concept and the academic performance to establish the relationship between the two with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that there was no significant relationship between pupils self- concept and academic performance ($r = .062$ $p = .311$). However since there was a weak correlation between pupils self concept and academic performance the study recommended that pupils should be given guidance and counseling so as to raise their self concept that would raise their academic performance. The results obtained may help the government and the community to make necessary changes and improvements so as to improve the education performance in the sub county.

Key Words: Pupil, Self concept, Academic performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a concentrated global effort has been made to increase the number of children in school. (Wasanga 2010). In 1990, a world conference in Jomtein Thailand, urged all nations of the world to adapt policies that would ensure Universal basic education by the year 2000. A new focus is towards a broader approach to education that would create high quality learning opportunities in the face of a rapidly changing global environment (Care 2017). Since Jomtein conference, considerable progress has been made in expanding the capacity of primary school systems in all regions of the world. Primary education in some developing countries has expanded to the extent that it reaches nearly all school age children. In Kenya, the introduction of Universal (Free) primary education program in the public schools in January 2003 by the government of Kenya (GOK) has raised the total primary school enrolment from 5.99 million to about 8.5 million children which is a tremendous improvement so far. (Economic Survey, 2009) While giving all children the opportunity to attend school is obviously an important priority, it is but a first step towards the goal of Education For All (EFA goals). Once pupils find seats in a classroom, they need quality instruction, otherwise there will be little motivation to persist in school (Wasanga, 2010)

The Government of Kenya has also employed and posted trained teachers in these schools. However, pupils in these schools continue to perform poorly in the national examination. There is reliance on scores and transition rates as measures of achievement in Kenya examinations are generally accepted as valid measures of achievement (Maiyo 2009). Secondary school placement and to some extent admission depend on performance of Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination in standard eight (Michael, Miguel and Rebecca 2004). The marks a student achieves in K.C.P.E determines which secondary schools they will join. Those who score 350 marks and above have the privilege of joining National schools and top performing County schools where they are assured of passing very well in K.C.S.E. On the other hand those who score below 300 marks can only join Sub-County secondary schools where the majority of the students score grade c and below. Most pupils in Nyamira South Sub County has an average mean score of 220 for the last six years, (see Table 1.1) and end up in the local schools where they do not pass highly and therefore cannot join competitive careers in future.

The self concept of the learner is how he or she feels about the self. If a pupil believes that he is capable of passing he will pay attention to what the teacher is teaching and work hard to pass the exam but if he

believes that he is not capable of passing he will just go to school for the sake of it and will put no effort to understand what the teacher is teaching. Nyamira South District (now Sub-County) was in the lime light when 2011 K.C.P.E results were announced and a school from the region was the last among all the schools in Kenya with a mean score of 119.36. Also among the private schools category the last school came from the District with a mean score of 137.55. It is against this background that the current research was undertaken to find out whether the pupil's self-concept has an influence to the academic performance of primary school pupils in Nyamira South Cub-county.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by the goal setting theory by Edwin Locke (1968) which states that goal setting is essentially linked to task performance. It involves development of an action plan designed to motivate and guide a person or group towards a goal. Specific and clear goals lead to greater output and better performance. Edward further said that the more challenging the goal, the greater is the reward generally and the more is the passion to achieving it. This theory informs this study in that the pupils have to set the goals that they want to achieve and hence work hard towards that.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies reviewed from different authors revealed contrasting findings. Yang(2012) revealed that the academic self concept played a major role in influencing academic achievement. Similarly Dambuzo (2009) Othon ,Yanti \$ Ishak (2011), Aryana (2010) and La Shawn (2011) found positive relationships between self concept and academic performance. On the same note In Kenya Mwania, Ogola, Nduati and Mbugua (2009) and Okoko (2012) reported that there was a significant positive relationship between self concept of students and academic performance. In contrast to the above findings kenner and Dixon (2010), Lui (2009), Ioni(2008) found no relationship between self concept and academic performance of students. midgely Ishak (2010) examined students' self concept among 16-17 year old adolecents in Malysian secondary schools. The study used a survey design and 1168 students as the

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed method approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. A questionnaire collected data from the pupils while an interview schedule was used to collect from the head teachers. Combining both methods enabled the researcher to best understand and explain a research problem (Creswell, 2014). Document analysis was also used to get data on pupils' academic performance in the district mock.

Reliability was test through piloting involving two schools in the same sub-county that were not part of the sample and a coefficient of 0.796 was found. Permission to collect research was sought from the county's office and went to the schools and explained to the head teachers the intention to carry out the research in their schools. After creating a rapport, the participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their information as they were not to write their names anywhere. The null hypothesis was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

V. RESULTS

The Table 4.1 below shows SSPS output of descriptive statistics of level of self-concepts among the standard eight pupils in Nyamira South-Sub-county. It reveals that the mean level of self-concept was slightly above average, with mean of 57.9, standard deviation of 8.4 and standard error of .462.

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Pupil's Self-Concept	334	57.8592	.46184	8.44049
Valid N (list wise)	334			

4.6.2: Relationship between pupils' self-concept and academic performance

To establish the relationship between pupils' self-concept and academic performance, the hypothesis "there is no statistically significant relationship between the pupils' self-concept and academic performance of standard eight pupils" was tested. This investigation was done by conducting a Bivariate Pearson correlation analysis between the two variables; pupils' level of self-concept and their academic performance. Table 4.2 shows a Pearson moment correlation coefficient, SSPS output.

		Pupil's Self-Concept	Pupils' Mean
Pupil's Self-Concept	Pearson Correlation	1	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.311
	N	334	334
Pupils' Mean	Pearson Correlation	.062	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.311	
	N	334	334

The findings show that there was weak positive ($r=.062$) correlation between self-concept and academic performance of the pupils in Nyamira South sub-county. However, the relationship was not significant ($P=.311$).

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that there was a slight positive correlation established between pupils self concept and academic performance This implied that the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there was no significant relationship between the pupils self concept and academic performance of primary school pupils in Nyamira county. This is in line with what Vialle (2005) found in his study of 900 students demonstrated that there was no correlation between self esteem and academic achievement of the gifted and non gifted students. Kenner and Dixon (2010) found similar results that there was no significant relationship between self concept and GPA exam results. However since the study revealed that there was some positive correlation ($r=.062$) between self concept and academic performance of pupils in Nyamira South Sub- County, it is beneficial for a student to have a positive academic self concept as it is associated with a variety of academic behaviors and attitudes. Caplan (2009) concurs with this study as demonstrated in what he found in his study that children with more positive self confidence had higher academic achievement. Young (2012) concurs with this study as he found that the academic self concept played a major role in influencing academic achievement. Moreover, of the head teachers interviewed only a few said that their pupils have high self esteem and the majority said that their pupils have low self esteem. The head teachers said that low self esteem leads to low academic performance. Similarly Lui (2009) reported that low academic self concept results into less self confidence and students with low self concepts are less motivated to put in an effort to learn and achieve less satisfying results. Due to failures in academic achievement, under achievers loose their self confidence in respect to learning and as a result demonstrate a poor self concept. This poor relationship between academic self concept and academic achievement becomes a vicious cycle. Lui (2009) concluded that a positive self concept is associated with academic achievement. It means that if a child has a high self concept will do well in exams and if he has a low self concept will achieve very little, if a child achieves higher grades in exam he will have higher self concept and if he performs poorly will have low self concept. Sanchez and Sanchez (2014), Ghazvini(2011), Augusti(2014) Oluwatayo(2011) and Gwirayi(2014) found that there was a slight to moderate relationship between self-concept and academic performance of students. Therefore I conclude this discussion by saying that self concept and academic achievement are mutually related and support Ghazvini(2011) who said that it is necessary to give adequate and sufficient attention to self concept and self esteem so as to improve academic performance.

The study concluded that the self concept of primary school pupils to a small extent influenced the academic performance of primary school pupils. There was some positive ($r=.062$) correlation between self concept and academic performance of primary school pupils in Nyamira South Sub-County. Pupils in private and public boarding schools believed they could perform better and so they got higher marks. Majority of pupils in public day primary schools had low self concept as they believed that they could not achieve much and therefore set for themselves low marks (average 200). The self concept determined how hard they work and finally the marks they will get at the K.C.P.E.

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