

Predictors of Academic Disidentification among Form Three Secondary School Students in Mombasa County, Kenya

Otanga Habil Ferd

Abstract

The study investigated the extent to which gender, type of school, academic achievement and causal attributions predict academic disidentification of secondary school students. The extent to which academic self-esteem mediated the relationships with two specific aspects of disidentification, discounting and devaluing was also studied. The study employed correlational and exploratory designs. Martin Covington's Self-worth Motivation Theory and Carl Rogers' Self Theory of Personality Development anchored the study. Failure and inappropriate attributions were hypothesised to reduce students' academic self-esteem and result in self-worth protection through discounting feedback and devaluing academic achievement. The study was conducted in Mvita subcounty, Mombasa County, Kenya. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 449 students (206 male and 243 female) and 11 teachers from 12 schools. Research instruments included document analysis, a students' questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. For the students' questionnaire, the State Self-esteem Scale, Multidimensional-Multiattributational Causality Scale and the Intellectual Engagement Inventory were adapted to measure academic self-esteem, causal attributions and academic disidentification respectively. Teacher interviews were done in the respective schools. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. All the hypotheses were tested at $p < .05$ level of significance using regression analysis and ANOVA. Findings show that female students reported higher discounting while male students reported higher devaluing. There was a significant interaction effect of gender and type of school on academic self-esteem and discounting. Academic self-esteem was positively related to academic achievement and negatively related to both discounting and devaluing. Academic achievement negatively predicted both discounting and devaluing and significantly predicted devaluing and not discounting. Stable attributions significantly positively predicted discounting. Stable and unstable attributions significantly positively and negatively predicted devaluing respectively. Internal attributions to success and external attributions to failure negatively and positively predicted discounting respectively. Internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure negatively and positively predicted devaluing respectively. Academic self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between academic achievement and devaluing. Academic self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between attributions and both discounting and devaluing. Overall, the findings of the study supported the guiding theory of the study - the Self-worth Motivation Theory. Based on the findings, it was recommended that schools institute mentoring programs and educational guidance and curriculum developers strike a balance between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced evaluation.

Full text: <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/15035>