

Influence of Self Esteem on Students' Discipline and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Self-esteem is a significant attribute that connects to the affective, cognitive and the psychomotor domain of every individual and can contribute to individual development in various aspects if it is effectively nurtured amongst learners in secondary schools, not only in Kenya, but globally. This study examined the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline and academic performance in secondary schools in Tharaka -Nithi County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline, to determine the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance, to find out whether there are gender differences in relation to self-esteem and students' discipline and to find out whether there are gender differences in relation to self-esteem and students' academic performance in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population was form three students in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. To ensure schools of all categories were represented, stratified sampling technique was used. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select a sample size of 302 students. Purposive sampling was used to select the 12 heads of curriculum, 12 deputy head-teachers and 12 heads of guidance and counseling. Data was collected using questionnaires for students and interview schedules for head of counselling, heads of curriculum and deputy head teachers. The validity of instruments was confirmed by my two research supervisors and other experts. The instruments were piloted to establish their reliability using students from Meru Central sub-county which was not under study and had similar learner and teacher characteristics as Tharaka-Nithi County. Reliability of research instruments was found to be 0.846 and was deemed reliable basing it on the threshold set at 0.7, using Cronbach coefficient alpha method. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential statistics included Pearson correlation analysis, Chi-Square test and t-test. The findings showed that there was weak relationship between self-esteem and students' discipline (Pearson coefficient=0.027 and P-value =0.655). This implies that there is a weak relationship between boys and girls in relation to self -esteem and students' discipline in secondary schools. Analysis of the results addressing **Ho₂** established that self-esteem has statistically significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools (Pearson coefficient=0.120; P-value =0.047). This implies that low or high self-esteem influences students' academic performance. Testing of **Ho₃** revealed that there is statistically significant gender difference of the influence of self -esteem on students' discipline in secondary schools (t-value= 4.773; P-value=0.000). The findings established that there was no significant influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance based on gender (**Ho₄**), chi-square value 13.92, df = 8, and P- value=0.084. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will inform policy makers, academicians, students, teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders on the strategies that can be put in place to improve learners' self-esteem which in turn would strengthen desirable discipline and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Kenya. This will guarantee good discipline and academic performance in secondary schools and will help to minimize cases of strikes, drug and substance abuse among others and in overall there will be value for money spent in education sector.

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