Influence of Teacher's Self-Worth on Secondary School Learners' Academic Performance in Kakamega County, Kenya

Esther Sila[1]
Prof. Peter Odera[2]
Prof. Moses Poipoi[3]

[1]esilastar@gmail.com
[2]podera@mmust.ac.ke
[3]poipoi@mmust.ac.ke

[1,2,3]Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

ABSTRACT

Teachers are charged with the responsibilities of leadership management in schools in Kenya. Teachers, as decision-makers, are continually faced with problems managing school resources and funds. Since principals have a lot of responsibilities, it is necessary that they be well informed on aspects of good leadership. Despite the government's efforts to ensure that there is effective management of schools, several cases of uninformed decision-making, poor leadership approaches, and dishonesty have been reported in several learning institutions, which may influence the final academic performance of the learners. Some of the substandard academic students' performance has been linked to the lack of self-efficacy of teachers in their profession. Self-efficacy is one of the eight core competencies in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Other studies have addressed the issue of teacher leadership approaches in schools, however. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the level to which teachers' self-efficacy affects learners' academic performance. The study adapted the non-experimental research design, which is the ex-post-facto survey research design and correlation research design. Data was collected through questionnaires, interview schedules, document analysis, and focus group discussion. Qualitative data was received in verbative, transcribed, and reported in themes and sub-themes. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while inferential statistics involved Pearson correlation. The study revealed a statistically significant result between components of teachers' self-worth and secondary school learners' academic performance (r=.68, p<.05). The study recommends that school leaders, especially principals, should cooperate with teachers to create and reform the school environment so that it can foster students' interest in learning and improve their academic performance. In addition, school heads need to adopt a transformational leadership style—a kind of leadership that inspires people to attain greater or amazing outcomes.

Keywords: *Teacher's Self-Worth, Secondary School Learners, Academic Performance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-worth is an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth. According to Murphy et al. (2013), self-worth entails the trust a person has in himself or herself to properly and effectively manage given tasks or responsibilities. Self-worth affects how students perform academically. Students can assess themselves based on their own ability to organise and implement learning behaviours to achieve the chosen level of academic achievement (Vilas and Lakhani, 2019).

According to a US study, Hallinger and Murphy (2016) discovered that academic self-worth causes students to constantly consider the most efficient ways to complete each job. In China, Grayson et al. (2015) showed that students' sense of self-worth can have a positive influence on their academic success. High self-worth, according to Halawah (2015), permits youngsters to behave well with fewer personality problems.

In Uganda, Cherian and Gaikar (2020) discovered that students who had teachers with a strong sense of worth scored higher on tests than students who had teachers with lower efficacy. He also discovered that students tend to be more conservative and careful in exams the more successful they are in extracurricular activities like performance art. In contrast to children with low self-worth, Kenyan students with high levels of self-worth have a favourable and significant association with vocabulary learning and memorization strategies, according to Kelley et al. (2015). These results showed how crucial it is to boost students' self-confidence in order to maximise their learning and success.

Bush (2020) found that self-worth is an assessment of one's ability to accomplish a specific activity under given conditions. Vilas and Lakhani (2019), on the other hand, stated that academic self-worth causes students to always consider the most effective approaches to complete any work that was not mentioned. Gaikar and Sameer (2020) posit

that self-efficacy boosts a student's level of confidence and self-belief in completing a task. Halawah (2015) observes that teenagers with high self-esteem will always have good behaviour and will not exhibit any undesirable personality traits.

Despite the many attempts at leadership outlined above, student performance has not improved to competitive levels (Gyasi, Xi, & Ampomah 2016). Therefore, the goal of this study was to determine the extent to which instructor self-efficacy affects learner academic achievement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-worth, often known as self-esteem, refers to a belief that a person has in their ability to accomplish specific activities or obligations accurately and efficiently (Abdel-Khalek, 2016). Self-worth is an evaluation of the ability to perform a certain behaviour in certain circumstances. Academic self-worth refers to students' ratings of their own academic ability to organise and implement learning behaviours to achieve the chosen level of academic achievement, for example, passing the exam (Bush, 2020). Vilas and Lakhani (2019), on the other hand, argue that academic self-worth makes students always think about the most effective ways to accomplish each task. It refers to the level of confidence and self-belief of a student to complete a task and produce something at its best according to their respective capabilities. Self-worth is also an important aspect of achieving outstanding achievement in all areas explored by students, including academics. Many studies have proved that self-worth or optimism (self-confidence) can have a positive impact in many aspects, including students' academic achievement (Gaikar &Sameer, 2020). High self-worth will cause teenagers to always have good behaviour and not show any problematic personalities.

Individuals with a high sense of self-worth are more likely to choose the proper job route (Yap et al., 2015). In this light, the findings of a study done by Wahab et al. (2015) on self-worth in preaching revealed that the level of respect for Islam and self-worth in preaching is quite high among the Orang Asli movement in Negeri Sembilan. Their zeal and desire to affect the target groups depend not only on the methods used but also on a certain amount of self-esteem to deal with these groups. To attain this goal, every preacher should be satisfied with his or her chosen profession. They are always upbeat about their involvement in their preaching vocation. Due to the unfavourable attitude displayed by society, there is little influence or even discouragement to continue preaching (Deal & Peterson, 2015).

Students with high self-worth view failure in the context of the classroom as simply not trying hard enough, while students with low self-worth view it as evidence of an innate inability to succeed in certain areas. According to Vilas et al. (2019), children whose teachers had low self-efficacy had lower test results than students whose teachers had high self-worth. The student who is more reserved and cautious in their approach to exams is the one who ends up with a better cumulative grade point average. Students who are less optimistic about their academic success are those who devote less time to studying. Students who have a solid sense of who they are are more likely to succeed, say Van de Grift and Houtveen (2016).

The self-worth hypothesis plays a pivotal role in boosting pupils' self-esteem (Avolio & Bass, 2015). Students will be easily rattled by stressful conditions if they lack a solid foundation of self-confidence. The intrinsic strengths of students are crucial to their learning motivation. Those who maintain faith in the future despite setbacks or disappointments are more likely to take action. Conversely, pupils with a low opinion of themselves are more likely to give up, remain mute, and do nothing to raise their grades. Academic optimism and encouragement from professors are crucial components that need to be present among students as the building blocks for high self-confidence in order to increase the students' efficacy. Students' natural curiosity about their coursework is an example of intrinsic motivation, whereas positive feedback from a teacher is an example of extrinsic motivation that can boost results.

Although research has established that transformational leadership is the key to motivating followers to accomplish extraordinary goals, there is still room for improvement. However, most schools in Kakamega County that employ transformational leadership have not achieved these results. Nationally, student achievement remains low despite these efforts (Hite et al., 2016). This is because, ever since Kenya gained its independence, the government has placed a great priority on educational initiatives, resulting in increased demand for higher education. This means that students with higher grades and test scores are given more attention (Hallinger & Murphy, 2016). As a result, the heads of schools are tasked with creating a productive atmosphere for their students.

These research findings indicate that transformational leadership styles have been proven to have a significant factor in increasing students' academic achievement when implemented in different participants, places, and situations. Thus, it is recommended for school principals and others to implement and maintain transformational leadership styles in return for the improvement of students' academic achievement as well as school qualities.

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2.1 Theoretical Review

The study adopted self-determination theory. This theory refers to a person's ability to make choices and manage their own life (Legault, 2017). Self-determination theory seeks to explain how being self-determined impacts motivation. People feel more motivated to take action when they think that what they do will have an effect on the outcome. According to Haque et al. (2014), scholars have created a variety of methodologies in order to understand and foster employee motivation in organisations. Locke, Bentham, and others who developed early theories of motivation based their ideas on hedonism (Danchev, 2016). According to this school of thought, individuals act in a way that is designed to maximise pleasure and minimise discomfort. Both Frederick Taylor and Douglas McGregor, with their respective approaches to scientific management and the human relations movement, had an impact on the ideas of motivation in management that were prevalent from the 1910s through the 1960s (Adebayo, 2020). The strategy put forth by Taylor is designed to maximise the labour efficiency of employees, who are motivated by factors in addition to monetary compensation. Recent research indicates that employees require a number of things from their jobs, including a sense of security, social fulfilment, and less strenuous working conditions (Martela et al., 2018).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the non-experimental research design, which is the ex-post-facto survey design with correlation. The study was conducted in Kakamega County, which is part of western Kenya. The number of secondary schools in Kakamega County is 385, with 385 principals. The number of class teachers is 770, while the number of Form 3 students is 23,100. A simple random sampling was used to sample 4 out of 12 sub-counties in Kakamega County. Thirty percent (30%) of the schools were used in the study, which was deemed an adequate sample size according to Joshua (2017). This percentage was sampled by stratified simple random sampling from the four sub-counties as the main stratus; this made a total of 115 schools with 115 principals.

The sample size of class teachers was randomly sampled from the 385 schools; this was 231 (30% of 770) class teachers. All school principals were purposively sampled out by census, while students were sampled by using the following formula: $n = Z^2 pq/d^2$ (Mengesha et al., 2019), which resulted in 384 students. The researcher used the questionnaire, document analysis, interview guides, and focus group discussion (FGD). A questionnaire was administered to both class teachers and students. An interview was conducted with the school principals, while a focus group discussion (FGD) was done by the students.

The collected raw quantitative data was sorted, edited, coded, and tabulated for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. This involved descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages, and frequencies. Qualitative data from interview schedules and focus group discussions was analysed by content analysis to identify emerging themes.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of a teacher's self-worth on secondary school learners' performance academically.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Data from selected likert-scale type statements was analyzed descriptively and the findings presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Teachers Self-Worth and Learners' Academic performance

		SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1	We are always being appreciated for our efforts made towards achievement of set academic goals and objective.	68	29.4	95	41.1	38	16.5	19	8.2	11	4.8
2	In our school, the principal's decision is the final.	46	19.9	60	26.0	34	14.7	51	22.1	40	17.3
3	Our school principal is always patient, tolerant and accommodates all staff members and students from different backgrounds.	95	41.1	85	36.8	23	10.0	13	5.6	15	6.5
4	Our staff consists of members from different ethnic background.	129	55.8	93	40.3	6	2.6	3	1.3	0	0.0
5	Promotion of our staff members is balanced considering departmental balance, gender, experience, religion, age, disability and experiences.	51	22.1	105	45.5	42	18.2	29	12.6	4	1.7
6	Admissions of student governing council members is done by balancing class/stream, gender, religion, age and disability.	64	27.7	114	49.4	20	8.7	20	8.7	13	5.6
7	Election, nomination and appointment of student governing council members is done by balancing class/stream, gender, religion, age and disability	50	21.6	120	51.9	21	9.1	17	7.4	23	10.0
8	The way a teacher presents himself has nothing to do with learners results	18	7.8	28	12.1	17	7.4	88	38.1	80	34.6
9	There is no need to report cases of indiscipline to the school leader, I can deal with them	13	5.6	10	4.3	27	11.7	93	40.3	88	38.1
10	As a teacher I can invest my money and time on my looks than any other project	6	2.6	15	6.5	21	9.1	57	24.7	132	57.1
11	As a teacher, I can exercise substantial influence on school practice in matters of curriculum, Instruction and assessment	61	26.4	133	57.6	23	10.0	6	2.6	8	3.5
12	My image is positive towards learners and I would desire them be like me.	122	52.8	90	39.0	13	5.6	4	1.7	2	0.9

N=231, 100%

According to Table 1, 68 (29.4%) believed that their efforts towards achieving defined academic goals and objectives were acknowledged. 11 (4.8%) teachers had a different opinion, strongly disagreeing with the notion that their efforts towards the accomplishment of established academic goals and objectives could ever be appreciated. Another 19 (8.2%) respondents expressed a similar sentiment. In certain schools, the principal's choice is final. This was affirmed by 46 (19.9%) of the instructors who strongly agreed that this was the case in their schools. Sixty (26.0%) educators gave their full approval, meaning that this decision cannot be overturned. Forty (17.3%) educators strongly objected and reported never having their school principals make such final choices. There were also 51 teachers (22.1%) who said no, while 34 instructors (14.7%) were on the fence.

About 95 teachers, or 41.1%, agreed that some principals were consistently patient, tolerant, and welcoming to children and staff from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. But 15 (6.5%) educators strongly disagreed with the statement. Among the teachers polled, 129 (55.7%) strongly confirmed that their staff consists of members from different ethnic backgrounds. However, some of the teachers acknowledged the presence of students from varied cultural backgrounds and were surprised by the extent of the diversity among their colleagues. Only 3 (1.3% of all instructors) made some sort of comment on the topic, while 6 (2.6% of all teachers) said nothing at all.

Promotion of employees may take into account departments, gender, experience, age, disability, and religious preferences. 51 (22.1%) teachers strongly agreed, confirming this. However, four (1.7%) of the teachers were adamantly opposed. The admittance of students to the governing councils is balanced in terms of class/stream, gender, religion, age, and handicap; 64 (27.7%) teachers agreed. According to 21.6% of teachers, this was accomplished at some schools by electing, nominating, and appointing members of the student governing council. In some schools, 13 (5.6%) teachers

strongly agreed that there is no need to report cases of indiscipline to the school leader because they can deal with the victim students.

According to the findings shown in Table 1, the vast majority of respondents felt that the recognition of the efforts they made to accomplish their predetermined academic goals and objectives was appropriate. The findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted by Hurren (2016), who discovered that school leaders, particularly administrators, have a tendency to recognise the work that instructors put forth in order to cultivate students' enthusiasm for learning and increase the students' academic performance.

The study noted that the choice made by the principal at certain schools is irrevocable, which means that the decision cannot be reversed under any circumstances. The findings of this study contrast with those of Hite et al. (2016), who defined transformational leadership as a kind of leadership that motivates followers to achieve larger or more astounding results. This study's findings support the latter definition. As a consequence of this, school leaders need to practise democratic leadership in order to make teachers feel as though they are an integral part of the school's mission to achieve academic achievement.

The vast majority of respondents mentioned that certain principals were consistently patient, tolerant, and friendly to students and staff members from various walks of life and cultural backgrounds. Because the majority of schools have students and staff members from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, teachers gave this gesture their full and enthusiastic support. These findings are in agreement with those obtained by Hallinger et al. (2016), who showed that recognising diversity promotes a climate that is favourable to learning, generates a sense of self-worth in students, and allows schools to function more efficiently.

Finally, the findings of the study show that advancement opportunities for workers may take into account factors such as departments, gender, experience, age, disability, and religious preferences. In addition, according to the respondents, the admission of students to the governing councils is balanced in terms of class or stream, gender, religion, age, and the presence or absence of a disability. According to Hooper et al. (2015), who suggest that the absence of gender discrimination in schools has a tendency to have an impact on the teachers' abilities by inspiring and boosting the effectiveness of their job performance, the findings support these arguments. In addition, the promotion of gender equality inspires students to increase their self-assurance so that they can achieve greater academic achievement.

4.2 Focus Group Discussion

In the focus group discussion, students responded to the question of how their school principal recognises other instructors for helping the school achieve its academic goals. They emphasised that the principals typically accomplish this by rewarding the teachers of successful subjects, elevating them to departmental leadership positions, providing classroom space for teachers, planning academic field trips for teachers, and awarding diplomas to them. These results are consistent with those found by Bush (2020), who argues that rewards for teachers raise their morale. Because of the relaxed environment fostered by the teacher's confidence, the students may learn more effectively. The results are consistent with those of Cherian and Gaikar (2020), who also found that teachers who establish positive relationships with their students are more likely to be consulted by their students when they have difficulties in the classroom.

4.3 Inferential statistics

Pearson correlation was used to test the interrelations between the study variables. The findings were presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlation Output between Components of Teachers' Self-Worth and School Academic Mean Grades.

	Practical Report Scores
Pearson Correlation	0.68
Sig. (1-tailed)	0.034

According to Table 3, the correlation between components of teachers' self-worth and school academic mean grades was found to be positive having the values of .68. The study also revealed a statistical significant result between components of teachers' self-worth and school academic mean grades with p-value being below significance level of .05 (r=0.68, p<.05). This finding thus tends to agree that teachers' self-worth can lead to better academic performance in secondary schools.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study finally ascertained that teachers' self-worth has an influence on secondary school learners' academic performance. The majority of teachers confirmed that they are always appreciated for their efforts towards the achievement of set academic goals and objectives. They termed their school principals as being patient, tolerant, and accommodating to all staff members and students from different backgrounds, as they confirmed that their staff members also come from different ethnic backgrounds. Teachers also gave their feedback on their promotions, where they noted that promotion of staff members is balanced considering departments, gender, experience, religion, age, disability, and experiences.

5.2 Recommendation

Teachers play an important role and contribute significantly to providing academic confidence and motivation to students, which will affect their academic performance. A teacher's role can actually be translated into different contexts. The role played by teachers will be able to produce a feeling of self-efficiency and a sense of security among teenagers in a classroom setting. This allows teenagers to use a strategy that will lead them to their cognitive relationship. Therefore, the study recommends that school leaders, especially principals, should cooperate with teachers to create and reform the school environment so that it can foster students' interest in learning and improve their academic performance. School heads need to adopt a transformational leadership style—a kind of leadership that inspires people to attain greater or amazing outcomes. Furthermore, school heads should encourage collective community involvement and integrated cooperation by the local community, teachers, and students so as to create a conducive environment for learning and academic excellence.

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