Relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Academic Performance based on gender in Secondary Schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya

Mercy Nkinga Kariuki

Department of Education Foundation & Psychology, Maasai Mara University, Kenya

Correspondent Email: mercykariukin@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka -Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 302 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling technique. 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. Data was analyzed using descriptive (frequencies, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Chi-Square test and t-test). The findings established that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender (chi-square value13.92, df = 8, and P- value=0.084>0.05). This indicates that self-esteem does not significantly influence students' academic performance among boys and girls in secondary schools. In view of the fact that boys' performance is slightly higher than that of girls, more emphasis should be put towards improving the academic performance of the girls in secondary schools. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will inform policy makers, academician, 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 academic performance of students in secondary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Self-esteem; Academic performance; Students; Secondary School: Relationship

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a life skill that is highly embraced by all societies at all stages of development. Debra (2008), noted that self-esteem is the process by which individuals rate themselves, acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them participate effectively in the society. It is the cornerstone of economic, social development and a principle means of improving the welfare of individuals. In his study on the influence of self- esteem on the study habits of students in America, Miller (2002) points out that, high school learners need to accept and value themselves in order so as to do well in their academic work. This consequently shows that it is important to understand the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance.

Work by James (2004) on factors influencing students' academic performance in New York, pointed out that academic performance involves use of one's aptitude in studying and making accomplishments and achievements in terms of transfer of knowledge, communication skills negotiation skills and good grades and marks in examinations. The implication is that students are supposed to be responsible and socially well-adjusted with skills of socialization enabling them to be self-disciplined, appreciate work and manage time properly (Pearson, 2007).

In his study on the challenges facing high school education in Tanzania, Robert (2008) emphasizes that provision of education in East Africa has been faced with numerous challenges, for instance

poor academic performance and indiscipline among learners. Robert (2008) opines that Poor academic performance leads to students' frustration and this can lead to negative self-esteem among learners which can later impact negatively on the economy of a country. It also causes psychological suffering to parents if they have to pay more money to take their children to other schools.

A study on the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance in high school in Germany by Borum (2011) indicated that boys performed slightly better than girls in sciences although girls excelled in languages and humanities. Okeke (1997) affirmed that the proportion of girls in science classes in high school was lower compared to that of boys. Akpochafo (2009) in his study on students' academic performance based on gender in Nigeria reported that there was gender bias in which structural arrangement favoured boys more than girls and this led to the better academic performance of boys. Okoro (2008) also observed that males and females show great differences in their interests, academic performance and choices of careers. The study would like to compare boys and girls in relation to self-esteem and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

Students' academic performance in KCSE has continued to register a decline for a number of years. Tharaka Nithi County has not been an exception compared to other counties like Meru, Embu, Isiolo and Marsabit. Tharaka-Nithi County Director of Education Report (2016) revealed that only 9% of its KCSE candidates joined Tertiary colleges and the regular university programme. This performance was way below Meru County, which had 16%, Embu 15%, Marsabit 12% and Isiolo 14% as per the KNEC Report (2016).

A study by Shiel and Kellan (2009) examined the influence of head of curriculum level of self-esteem and academic performance in secondary schools. The findings pointed out that there is a significant relationship between the head of curriculum level of self-esteem and students' academic performance in secondary schools. This is what the current study intended to address.

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1   The Concepts of Self –Esteem and Students' Academic performance based on gender

Greeno (2001) notes that self-esteem is always attributed to best performances in tasks and atd work place. Self-value may strengthen the learners' relationship with the facilitator. This implies that the students may benefit more from the teacher due to the free atmosphere. It also reduces problems like; truancy, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies that are known to cause poor performances. Character building emanate from self-esteem. Students with self-esteem are able to manage and use their leisure time well. Moreover, they are able to choose good and reliable friends who can help in boosting their academic performance. (K.I.E, 2008).

Gender is a specially constructed phenomenon that is brought about as society ascribes different roles, duties, behaviours, and mannerisms to the two sexes, (Mangvwat, 2006). It is a social connotation that has sound psychological background, and it is used to refer to specific cultural patterns of behaviour that are attributed to human sexes. Gender relates to cultural attributes of both males and females (Akpochafo, 2009).

Avulata and Oniyama (1999) once described gender stereotype in school as "hidden curriculum" which send out messages to girls to conform to role expectation. In most societies, gender has roles based on the women folk, preventing their participating in, and benefiting from development efforts (UNESCO, 2000). This has created a big psychological alienation or depression in the minds of the

female students (Joel and Aride, 2006). As a result, boys dominate Social Studies, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Environmental studies classes while the girls go into reading languages and Arts. Achievement test results conducted by Onekutu (2002) has shown that boys and girls in the early ages perform equally in all subjects including English language, and as they grow to higher classes, the girls begin to get more interested in language Arts, while the boys take more to science and Social Sciences. This has resulted to a situation where there are more boys than girls offering Social Sciences. However, the issue of gender and students' academic achievements has remained a controversial one. While some propose that, males perform better than females in academics, other argue that, the reverse is the case. Veinon (2002) reported that, many comparisons show average scores of boys and girls to be the same on general intelligence test. He said that, girls do a little better on most verbal tests and on tests involving rote memory than boys. On tests of inductive reasoning and arithmetical ability, though with a great deal of overlapping, the average differences, he said, seldom exceeds about four points of intelligence quotient. He added that, the most marked difference occurs on spatial and mechanical tests, and wonders if such ability might be attributed to the cultural influences on our civilization, which encourages boys to develop physical, constructional and mechanical interests. He concluded that, many surveys demonstrate that the range or spread of ability is slightly more restricted in girls.

Gessell (2004) asserted that girls under the age of fourteen years usually perform better in English language than boys of the same age. In addition, after that age, the boys usually overtake the girls. The initial higher achievement by girls than boys, according to Okoye (2009) was as a result of girls over attachment to their mothers in household chores involving social interaction with their mothers and measuring out of food items, quantities of water and other liquids, timing the period for which a particular food needs to boil on fire. In addition, cooking involves estimation of how much each person in the family needs and making allowance for necessary wastages. All these are practical interactions of English language which girls are exposed to as they under-study their mothers, hence, their initial higher achievements as asserted by (Gersell, 2004).

Denga (1998) posited that no evidence is clear as to whether differences exist between males and females in academic achievement. He however stated that, girls tend to do better than boys in languages Arts like English language and music while the boys tend to outperform the girls in Mathematics and Sciences. In the same vein, Kelly (2005) pointed out that attempting to relate specific intellectual abilities to achievement in specific subject areas is prone to considerable problems. Borun (2011) points out that gender differences in intellectual abilities can be as a result of gender role stereotyping. Gender differences in academic performance cannot therefore be assumed to be due to inherent biological differences between the genders even if they exist. The theory of innate gender differences in ability that might be used to account for gender differences in academic performance has weak evidence. According to Kelly, in many psychological areas, it is virtual impossibility to separate completely the innate from the acquired.

In western societies, females possess higher ability in verbal test English language than males. Sweeney, (2003) notes that female students are lower in mathematics and spatial ability, as males were superior to females on problem solving tasks and on specific abilities related to problem solving. Messies (2006) contended that there are gender differences in intellectual functioning that attempts to account for both mean differences and differences in correlation patterns between the genders. He concluded that in the period of secondary school and beyond, the intellectual domain reveals few consistent differences between the genders. Hussein in Ayayo (2007) indicated in an investigation spanning twelve industrialized countries the ability of both male and female students in their general academic performance. The result revealed that males were superior over females. This superiority was not confining to the United States of America alone. The findings also

confirmed that, even with the level of instruction held constant, males achieved higher levels than females. Iroegbu (2000) in his study of secondary school science, found that boys performed significantly better than girls do and posited that there are things in the learning process like level of self-esteem, cultural practices, adolescence crisis, that affect the understanding of boys and girls differently. Macobby (2003) found that many students have, traditionally showed that boys' mathematics achievement is superior to that of girls. Kagoma (2006), he compares the male and the female students and concluded that boys have a higher self-esteem than girls and this leads to the better academic performance in Sciences and Mathematics.

Wainer (2011) emphasized self-efficacy as an important factor that plays a vital role in task accomplishment of boys and girls at school. Teachers' attitudes and behaviour towards students contribute to gender differences in performance of students. Teacher's expectations, attitudes and classroom interaction with girls affect their ability to perform in certain tasks (Veinon, 2002). Poor motivation and satisfaction of teachers in their work, also affects the performance of students for in such conditions, they are not able to give students the attention required (Helena 2006). According to Messies (2006) pointed out, other factors that lead to poor academic performance that included; school facilities, ability of the learner, gender bias and stereotype, parental and family attitudes, gender attitudes and interests. This necessitates the need for a study to establish the Relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka- Nithi County, Kenya

2.2 Theoretical Framework.

2.2.1 Vigotsky's Social-cultural Theory
Social cultural theory espoused emphasizes the significance of cooperative or supported learning. According to the theory, every child has some knowledge and builds on the same through the support they get from peers and adults. This means that students can improve on their self-esteem, modify discipline and improve their academic performance with the support they get from those who are more skilled in the society. The theory emphasizes the importance of play, dialogue between teacher and student, cooperative learning, joint problem solving, coaching, mentoring and assisted learning. Vigotsky argued that children's experiences are extended through interactions with adults and peers. He further noted that, the school is used for socialization and in the process learners benefit a lot from peers and adults, who are teachers. This supported learning assist learners in their academic performance which in turn strengthen their self-esteem. The dialogue between the teachers and learners helps students 'scaffold' that is; develop new concepts and think of higher level concept. The child can use the concepts learned to solve problems in their life even in the absence of the teacher. In a learning institution, cooperative learning, joint problem solving, coaching mentoring and assisted learning are in agreement with Vygosky's theory. This theory shows how students who are supported by parents, teachers and peers build their self-esteem that may impact on their discipline and academic performance positively. It also emphasizes how play, dialogue, role modeling and supported learning can help secondary school students to build their self-esteem which in return may boost their discipline and academic performance.

2.2.2 Social learning theory
This theory was founded by Albert Bandura. It states that people can learn by observation, that is watching other people perform behavior. Three basic models of observational learning include; a live model, a verbal instruction model, and a real or fictional character demonstrating the behavior

through movies, books, television, radios, online media and other media sources. The third concept of this theory is the state of mind or mental state. So, both external and intrinsic reinforcements are significant in behavior modification. This implies that discipline and academic performance can be modified through learner's observation of a live model, verbal instruction, symbolic model as well as the state of the mind. So according to this theory social element can result to the development of new learning among students. The theory explains how students can learn new things and develop new behavior by observing other people as it is concerned with observational learning process. There are three domains of learning that include cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

2.2.3 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is among the theories of motivation known as content and process theory. Maslow, Alderfer, Herzberg and Mc eel land (2009) point out that behaviour is as a result of motivation. This implies that students discipline and academic performance is determined by the way they are motivated intrinsically and extrinsically. Herzberg (2004) says that there are two factors that affect one's motivation, that is, hygiene factors and motivators.

Maslow (2003) pointed out that individuals strive to seek higher needs when lower needs are fulfilled. Once a lower need is satisfied, it no longer serves as a source of motivation. Needs are motivators only when unsatisfied. In the first level, Maslow has physiological needs which include the most basic needs for human beings to survive, such as water, food and shelter. This means that if student's basic needs are meet they can develop self-esteem and hence improve their discipline as well as academic performance. The second level has safety needs which include personal security, good health, well-being and safety against accidents.

This theory informed the study in that when students' security is provided they can build self confidence that can make them behave well and value themselves leading to good academic performance. In the third level, belonging needs exist. Students need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in their families and school. So the way parents and teachers relate with their children and students, can affect their level of self-esteem and hence affect their discipline and academic performance in secondary school. So according to this theory students' needs are in a hierarchy. When needs in the lower level are met the students move on to the next level until they attain self-esteem and self-actualisation. As a result of this, good discipline and improvement in academic performance is realized. Indiscipline and dismal academic performance may hinder students from getting motivated to high needs in Maslows' hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy of needs pyramid is presented in Figure 1.
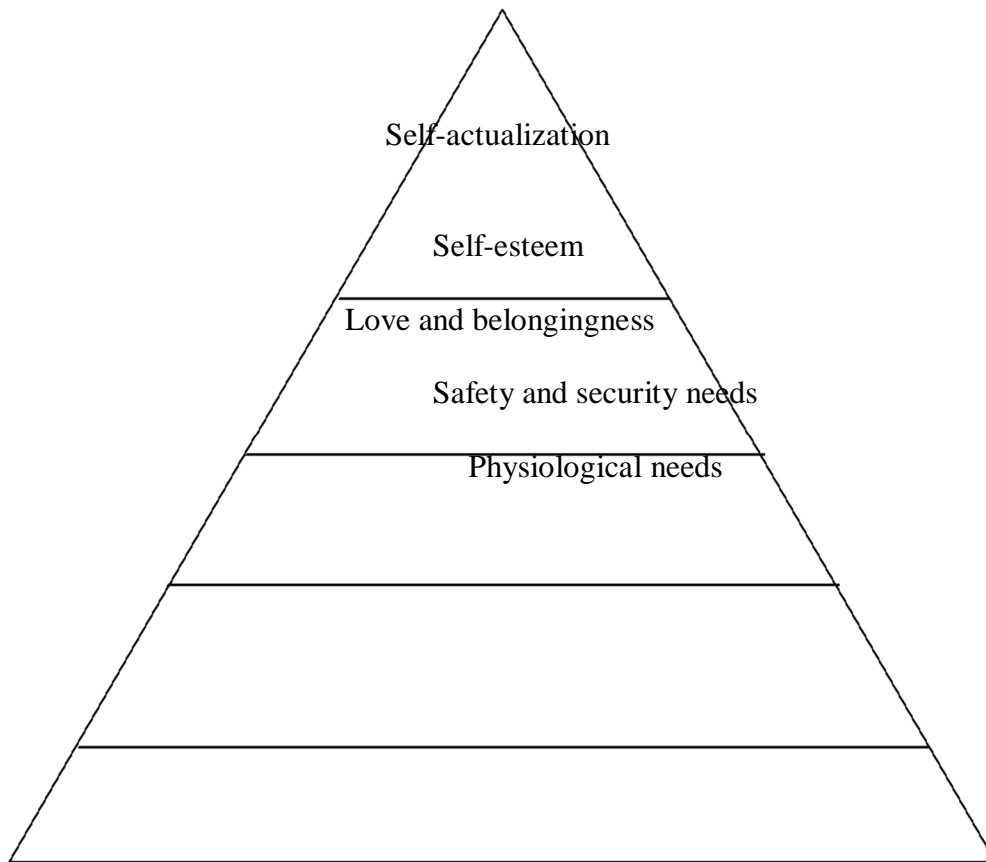
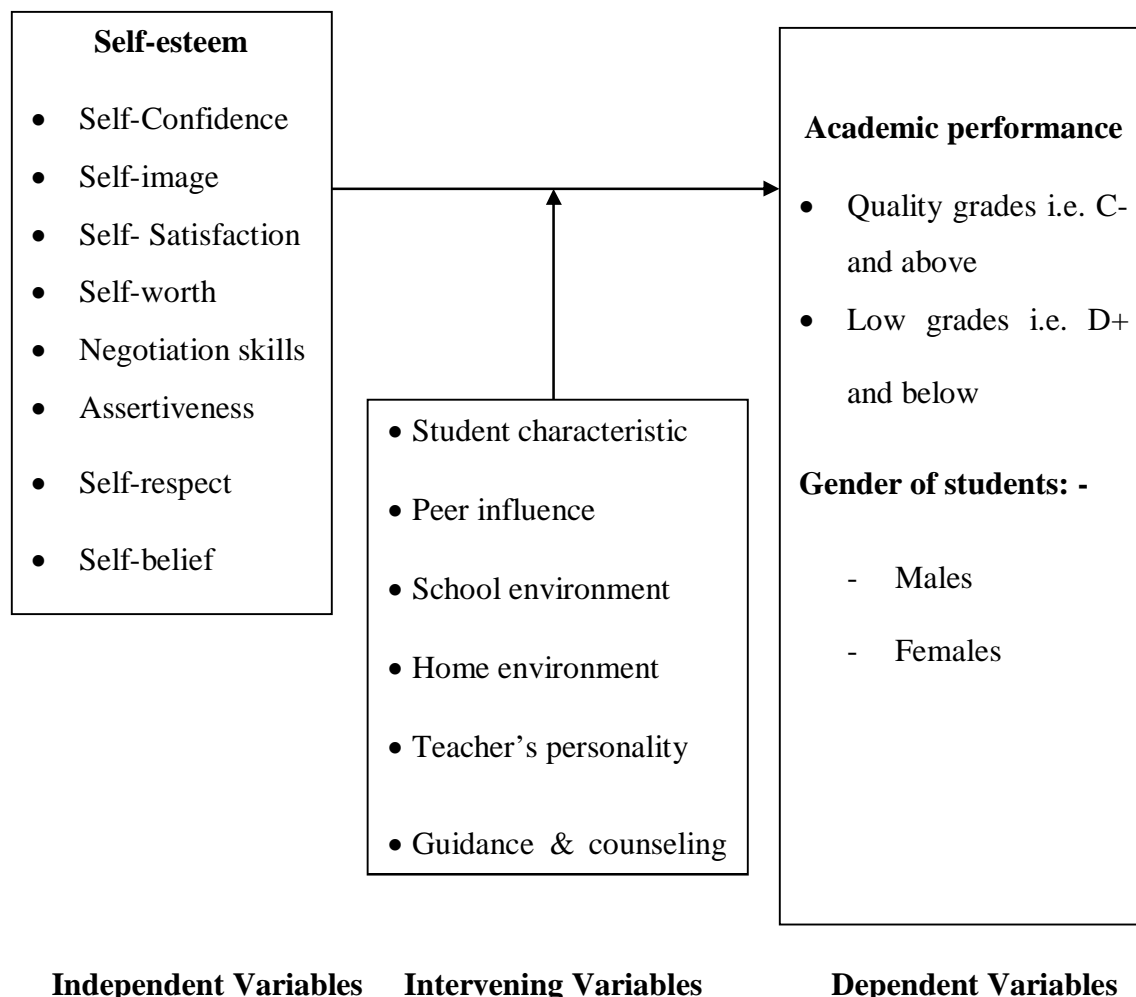**Figure 1**: Maslows' hierarchy of needs pyramid.
Source: Dondo (2005)
Gichinga (2010) points out that many people including students have tried to place themselves on the one of the five levels of the pyramid. This may be an easy task for some, but many struggle in the ups and downs of life. For many students' life and particularly in and out of school especially those with indiscipline cases and perform dismally in academics find it a challenge to get to the top of the pyramid. They often have one foot on one level and the other foot on the next level and are reaching out at times trying and pulling themselves up while making sure they don't fall backwards. The theory can enable students to value and appreciate themselves which may be critical in boosting their academic performance in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya

2.3 Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework guided the collection of the study data by informing questions to be asked in the questionnaires. This framework theoretically proposes existence of the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Diagrammatically the relationships among the variables are represented in Figure 2.

Self-esteem

- Self-Confidence
- Self-image
- Self- Satisfaction
- Self-worth
- Negotiation skills
- Assertiveness
- Self-respect
- Self-belief

• Student characteristic

• Peer influence

• School environment

• Home environment

• Teacher's personality

• Guidance & counseling

Academic performance

- Quality grades i.e. C-and above
- Low grades i.e. D+ and below

Gender of students: -

- Males
- Females

Independent Variables   Intervening Variables   Dependent Variables

Figure 2: relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Academic Performance

3.0   METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design. Kothari (2014), explains that a descriptive survey research design involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject under study. Descriptive survey research design was preferred due to its appropriateness in obtaining opinions, believes and attitudes from a large population in order to establish one or more population parameters. It deals with collection of original data from a population that is too large to be observed directly. It collects information from a sample that is representative of the population as a whole. This design is cost effective and the results can be generalized to the population (Orodho, 2003). The descriptive research design was suitable for the study because it enabled the researcher to gather data from a wide range of respondents and to determine and report the way things are at present.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The county has four sub-counties namely; Chuka Igambang'ombe, Maara. Tharaka North and Tharaka West. The four sub-counties have been purposively selected for this study because according to Njeru (2010) There are numerous cases of indiscipline amongst students in secondary schools in the sub counties. In addition, Wangechi (2011) has pointed out that there is dismal performance of students in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Tharaka Nithi. This is well captured in Table 3. Data was collected from sampled students in the four sub-counties. The cases of indiscipline and poor performance could be attributed to the students' level of self-esteem.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population of the study was 3012 secondary school students comprising of 1642 boys and 1370 girls drawn from the 119 secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County (Tharaka Nithi County Education offices, January, 2015). The study also employed 119 Deputy Principals, 119 heads of Curriculum and 119 heads of guidance and counseling were used. It is the students who are supposed to benefit from life skills education where self-esteem is one of the skills of living with oneself. Table 1 indicates the study target population.

Table 1: Distribution of the Study Target Population in Tharaka-Nithi

School Category	Students		HOG CD	D/HT	HOCD
	Male	**Female**			
National schools	692	608	4	4	4
Extra county	300	300	49	49	49
County schools	450	350	43	43	43
County day schools	200	112	20	20	20
Totals	1642	1370	116	116	116

Source: T.S.C Tharaka-Nithi County Director (2016)

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

According to Kathuri and Pals (1993), sampling is taking any portion of the population or the universe as a representative of that population or the universe. To ensure representativeness of the sample, the study employed stratified random sampling procedures to select the students. Kombo and Tromp (2006) observed that stratified random sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous sub groups and then taking a simple random sample in proportion to their numbers in the population. In this case, the population was divided into homogeneous sub-groups (school categories) as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Studenets' Enrolment Sample by School Category

Schools Category	Students		Total
	Boys	**Girls**	
National	69	61	130
Extra county	30	30	60
County schools	45	35	80
County day schools	20	12	32
Total	164	138	302

3.5 Instrumentation

Data was collected using questionnaire for students and interview schedules for heads of guidance and counseling, heads of curriculum and deputy principals. To validate the instruments, the researcher checked on content, construct and face validity with the help of expert in the area. The study established the reliability of the research instrument by computing the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in regard to each of the study variables from the pilot results. The pertinent results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Self-esteem	10	0.764<0.7	Reliable
Academic performance	3	0.834<0.7	Reliable
Discipline	10	0.941<0.7	Reliable
Average	33	0.846<0.7	Reliable

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive techniques such as frequency distributions, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the data obtained from various parts of the study. The researcher computed composite scores for each of the variables under study since the parameter of the variable were in likert scale for instance a scale of 1=Extremely low to extremely high. Chi-square analysis was used to test the associations between self-esteem and academic performance based on gender of students. This statistical test was appropriate because respondents were classified into various categories based on discipline and academic performance of students. The actual and expected frequencies falling in each category were established to compute (χ^2) value. Chi-square was used because data was in categorical form and does not make assumption as it is flexible and can be used on any data. Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. T-test was used to test whether there is any significance gender difference in relation to self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender. Hypotheses were tested at alpha = 0.05 level of significance. Pearson correlation analysis was used to measure the degree of association between study variables (self-esteem and academic performance).

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSION

4.1 Respondents Response Rate

A total of 302 respondents drawn from 119 secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County were used in the study. A response rate of 90.4% was achieved. This high return rate was attributed to the method used by the researcher (hand delivery and follow up) to distribute the tools to the respondents.

Table 4: Respondents Response Rate

Category of school	Sample	Achieved	Response rate (%)
National	130	129	99.2%
Extra county	60	48	80.0%
County boarding	80	68	85.0%
Day schools	32	27	87.0%
Total	302	272	90.4%

4.2   Respondents' Gender

Table 5: Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	%	D/P	G/C	H/C	Total
Girls	131	48.2%	5	5	5	146
Boys	141	51.8%	7	7	7	162
Total	272	100%	12	12	12	308

The results in Table 5 established that among students, 48.2% were girls and 51.8% were boys. The results show that there are more boys respondents than girls in the study. The findings indicate that there are more boys than girls in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County.

4.3   Relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Academic performance based on Gender

4.3.1 Qualitative Description of the relationship between Self-esteem and Students Academic Performance Based on Gender

The interview schedules from the Deputy Principals, heads of curriculum and heads of guidance and counselling were analyzed and presented in form of themes and concepts. The researcher collected information from the deputy principals, the heads of curriculum and the heads of guidance and counseling on the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender. The information is given in excerpt 4. The real names of these stakeholders were withheld to conceal identity

Excerpt 1

Researcher: How would you rate the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance based on gender?

Respondent A: It higher among the girls than boys. When girls value themselves, they will value their time and work and this drives them to working hard. On the other hand, a few boys do not care about their self-esteem. That is why some boys are not very much affected by the remarks they receive from others and hence still do well in the examinations.

Respondent C: Girls tend to shoot up in academic performance. They are actually closing the gap between girls and boys in academics. This can explain why there are many girls than boys joining universities and taking challenging courses like Engineering and medicine. I can say that girls' self- esteem is higher than that of boys.

Respondent D: The society has encouraged the girl child so much and forgotten the boy child. That is why the girls' level of confidence these days is above that of boys. The girl who was the best in KCPE 2017 was encouraged and glorified that she got to the level of addressing employed people as "please work hard and be like me!" This shows how high the girls' level of self-esteem is boosted by society at the expense of the boys. Girls' self-esteem may easily influence their academic performance.

Respondent E: When it comes to academic work, I would say that both boys and girls display almost a similar level of self-esteem. In boys' secondary schools, the students are seen to have a high level of self-esteem. Therefore, I would like to conclude that the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance based on gender, is moderate

Respondent G: Girls have high self- esteem than boys. That is why their academic performance continues to shoot up. Possibly even at home the girls are taken care of more than boys. In fact, girls are praised more than boys and this lifts their self-esteem

Respondent H: Girls tend to value themselves more than boys. There are many programmes that are geared towards improving the self-esteem of girls than boys. There is need for educational institutional to think about the boy child. So, the level of girls' self-esteem influences their academic performance in big way.

Respondent J: Boys seem to have a better self-esteem than girls. I have taught in boys' schools for so long and I think they value themselves more than girls do, although girls have woken up and are working harder than before.

The information from the interviews reveals that girls have better level of self-esteem than boys and this has led to their improvement in academic performance in the national examinations. The researcher observed that there were many programmes in the national and the county level geared towards encouraging the girl child. This has led to many girls joining challenging courses at the university like engineering and medicine. The researcher also noted that a few boys are less concerned about their level of self-esteem and this could affect their academic performance. Again, some boys are not affected much by the remarks they receive from others and hence perform well even with low self-esteem.

On the other hand, the researcher noted that in boy's secondary schools only, boys display a high level of self-esteem. There is need for the government and the society to come up with programmers that are also going to glorify the boy child just like the girl child.

4.3.2 T-test Analysis of Students Academic Performance Based on Gender

The relationship between academic performance and students' gender was evaluated using t-test. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of academic performances between boys (N=141) and girls ((N=131) and to randomly assign to one of the two groups.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Students' Academic performance based on Gender

	Students' Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Academic Performance	Boys	141	8.24	1.558	.131
	Girls	131	7.17	1.479	.129

Table 6 shows that there was gender variation in the mean performance of boys (8.24, SD 1.558) as compared to that of girls (7.17, SD = 1.479). The performance variation in gender was not the same as the boys' scores vary much from the girls 'scores. This could be due to the fact that on the lower side of the county (Tharaka North and South) is greatly influenced by cultural practices such early marriage and family obligations. The findings are contrary to the study by Mugambi (2014) who noted that girls are outperforming boys in all subjects except mathematics and science, and even there, they are closing the gap. The findings are contrasted by the KCSE results of 2017 candidates for the best student was a girl with a mean of A and that, girls were better than boys in terms of their average mean nationally. An independent t-test was conducted to compare gender influence on students' academic influence on students' academic performance as showed in Table 7.

Table 7: T-test for Equality of Means

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Students Academic Performance	Equal variances assumed	5.817	270	.000	1.073	.184
	Equal variances not assumed	5.828	270	.000	1.073	.184

Table 7 shows that there was statistically significant difference in the scores for boy and girls academic performance, t-value = 5.817, df= 270 and P-value=0.000 at 5% significance level, assuming equal variances. The result suggests that there was significance variation on the influence of gender on students' academic performance and therefore, boys' academic performance is slightly higher than that of girls in secondary schools. These findings are in harmony with a study by Iroegbu (2000) who argued that boys performed significantly better than girls' especially in sciences in secondary schools. He posited that there are things in the learning process like level of self-esteem, cultural practices, adolescence crisis that affect the understanding of boys and girls differently. In addition, Veinon (2002) found out that teachers' expectations, attitudes and class room interaction with girls affect the ability to perform in certain tasks hence gender differences in performance of students.

4.3.3 Gender and Academic Performance.

Table 8: Gender and Academic Performance

Gender		Academic Performance			
		Below Average	Average	Above Average	Total
Boys	Frequency	19	47	75	141
	%	13.5%	33.3%	53.2%	52.0%
Girls	Frequency	42	61	28	131
	%	32.1%	46.6%	21.4%	48.0%
Total	Frequency	61	108	103	272
	%	22.4%	39.7%	37.9%	100%

The results displayed in Table 8 indicate the association between gender and academic performance among students in secondary school. The results show that 39.7% of the respondents had above average academic performance and 22.4% had below average academic performance. Among the boys, 53.2% had above average academic performance and 13.5% had below average academic performance. Similarly, among the girls 21.4% had above average academic performance and 32.1% below average academic performance. This implies that the academic performance of boys is higher than that of girls in the area of study. This is attributed to the fact that girls do most of the chores at home and at times some of them are affected by early pregnancies. These findings are in line with Kagoma (2006), who points out that boys have a higher level of self-esteem than girls and this leads to their better academic performance in sciences and mathematics.

4.3.4 Cross Tabulation of Self-esteem and Students' Academic Performance based on Gender
The study sought to establish whether there is a significant difference on the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance between boys and girls in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. To test   the   association, the   following   hypothesis   was considered;

Ho: There is no significant gender difference in relation to self-esteem and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

Table 9: Cross Tabulation of Self-esteem on Students' Academic performance

Gender	Self-esteem	Academic Performance				Chi-square test
		Below Average	Average	Above Average	Total	
Boys	Low	1	1	1	3	
	Moderate	4	8	11	23	χ2=3.29
	High	13	31	49	93	df=6
	Extremely High	1	7	14	22	Sig =0.772
Total		19	47	75	141	
Girls	Extremely Low	0	2	0	2	
	Low	1	0	1	2	χ2=14.36
	Moderate	4	10	6	20	df=8
	High	16	19	16	51	Sig =0.073
	Extremely High	21	30	5	56	
Total		42	61	28	131	
Overall	Extremely Low	0	2	0	2	χ2=13.92
	Low	2	1	2	5	df=8
	Moderate	8	18	17	43	Sig=0.084
	High	29	50	65	144	
	Extremely High	22	37	19	78	
Total		61	108	103	272	

Table 9 captures the cross tabulation used to determine the relationship and association between self-esteem and students' academic performance by gender. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance according to boys, Chi-square value = 3.29, df=6 and sig (P-value) = 0.772 at 5% significant level. Since the P-value 0.772 is greater than 0.05, this showed that self-esteem has no influence on students' academic performance according to boys. Similarly, the results showed that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance according to girls, Chi-square value 0.073 at df 8 and P-value = 0.073 at 5% significant level. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05, this showed that self-esteem has no influence on students' academic performance according to girls.

Further the results showed that there was no significant influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance between boys and girl; Chi-square value 13.92, df = 8and P-value = 0.084 at 5% level of significance. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05, this showed that self-esteem has no influence on students' academic performance between boys and girls. From these results, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance between boys and girls in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya was supported (accept null hypothesis) at 5% significance level. This is in line with previous studies by Heaven (2005) notes that the modest correlations between self-esteem and school performance do not indicate that positive self-esteem leads to good performance. Instead, positive self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance. Efforts to boost the self-esteem of pupils have not been shown to improve academic performance and may sometimes be counterproductive. These findings are in harmony with a study by Iroegbu (2000) who argued that boys performed significantly better than girls' especially in sciences in secondary school. He posited that there are things in the learning process like level of self-esteem. Cultural practices, adolescence crisis that affect the understanding of boys and girls differently. In addition, Veinon (2002) found that teachers' expectations, attitudes and class room interaction with girls affect the ability to perform in certain tasks hence gender differences in performance of students.

5.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the study found that there was insignificant difference in the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance between boys and girls in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This indicates that self-esteem does not significantly influence students' academic performance among boys and girls in secondary schools. However, the study also revealed that boys 'academic performance was slightly higher than that of girls in secondary schools thus more emphasis should be put towards improving the academic performance of the girls in secondary schools.

REFERENCES

Abiero,M.O. (2009*). Curriculum Development Nairobi*: Longhorn Publishers.

Akpochafo, W.P. (2009). *Social Studies and Feminist Issues for Teacher Education*. Benin City: Justice Jeco Press and Publishing Ltd.

Anele, D. (2008). *The Place of Woman in Human Existence: A Critical Inquiry*. In Sunday Vanguard of August 31,21.

Avulata, B. & Onyama, E. (1999). *Cultural Prejudice and Women Education in Nigerian Rural Community:* Implications for Counseling. The Counselors, 14(2), 124-130.

Ayayo, O. (2007). *Effect of gender attitude on academic performance in KCSE in*

Borum, R. (2011). *The role of Serious Secondary School Humanities Teachers in the Development of Humanities Curriculum in Boarding schools*. M.ed Thesis. Moi University.

Borum, R. (2011). *Radicalization into violent Extremist*. Nairobi: Focus publishers.

Debra,H.(2008).*Teachers and School Discipline*. Making a difference. Ausralia Chania: Micro Print (P) Ltd.

Denga, D.I. (1998). *Educational measurement, continuous assessment and psychological testing*. Calabar: Rapid Educational publishers.

Gessell, N. R. (2004). *Classroom Management: Principles and Practice*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Gichinga, E.M. (2005). *Youth Counselling*. A Counseling Guide. Nairobi: GEM Counseling Services.

Greeno, J.G. (2001).*Students with Confidence, Competence and Accountability*: Affording intellective identities in classrooms New York: The College Board.

Hussein, D. (2007).*Protection of Child Rights under the Law*. Butterworths, London.

Iroegbu, A. (2000). *School Based Interventions to Enhance Self-concept of Students*. Education Research Association. Chicago.

James, W. (2004).*Literary Domains of Self-esteem*. New York: Bantam books.

Joel, A.& Aride, U. (2006).*Social Interaction and Social Relationship in School -Children*. New York: Harcourt-brace and Jovanovich Inc.

Kathuri, N. &Pals, A. (1993*). Introduction to Education Research*. Egerton Univrersity: Education Media Centre

Kagoma, D. (2006) *Understanding Adolescents behaviour*: Eldoret: Zart Charisery consultant and Kenned, com (2008). Life skills based on Education. publisher.

Kenya Institute of Education (2003) *Guidance and Counseling*– Teacher's handbook. KIE: Nairobi.

Kenya Institute of Education. (2006). *Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education*. School syllabus of Life Skills Education. Kenya. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Kenya Institute of Education. (2008). *Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education*. School Syllabus of Life Skills Education. Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printer

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. (2014). *An Evaluation of KICD Curricullum Development to Determine the Effectiveness of its inputs, Process and Outputs*. Research Services No. 119.Nairobi: KICD.

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. (2015). *Secondary Summative   Evaluation.* Retrieved on 15/6/5 from Kicd.ac.ke/93- departments/153- secondary summative evaluation. ntml.

Kombo,D.K and Tromp, D.L. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis writing*. An Introduction. Nairobi : Paulines Publication Africa.

Kothari, C.R. (2014). *Research Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International (p) Ltd.

Maccoby, S. T. (2003). *Gender Conformity*. Journal of School Psychology, 7 (4), 22-28.

Maxwell, O .C. (2010). *The Youth on Future*. Abuja: Nigeria.

Messies, C. (2006). *Learners and Academic Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Messeies, M. (2006). *The Social Psychology of Teaching*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.

Miller, H.P. (2002). *The Power and Limits of a Vision New York*. The Free Press.

Mugambi, D. J. (2010).*Building Self Confidence and Self-Awareness among the Youth*. M.ed Thesis. Moi University

Mugambi, N. (2014). *Impact of Self-Esteem on Learners Academic   Performance at Class room Level in   United   States*. International Journal of Educational Research. Rehttp:/www.doi:10:10:10lb/j.ifer.2011.06.004.

Mugenda, A.G.(2008). *Social Science Research*. Theory and principle. Applied Research and Training Services.

NACADA (2011). *Understanding the Adolescents*. Drug and Discipline in School. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Njeru, E.K. (2010. *Influence of Self-esteem on Discipline in Secondary Schools inMeru County*, Kenya. Unpublished Thesis: University of Nairobi.

Njue, E.K.(2010).*Challenges of Students Adolescence Crisis in Secondary Schools*. M. ed Thesis. Egerton University.

Okeke, E. A. C. (1997). *Women and Girls Participation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education as facilitators*. In G. A. Badmus and L. O. Ocho (eds).Science, Mathematics and Technology Education in Nigeria.Lagos: Evearled Press. Pp 25-42

Okeke, E. A. C. (2007). Sex *Difference in The Understanding of Some Important Biology Concepts*. Nigeria Journal of Education, 2(1), 125-132.

Okoro, O.N. (2008). *Effects of Emotional Pictures on Students, Concept Attainment in Primary Science*. Journal of Primary and Teachers' Education Association of Nigeria. 9 (2), 56 -62 British Journal of Education Vol.4, No.8, pp.72-83, August 2016 ___Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org) 83 ISSN 2055-0219(Print), ISSN 2055-0227(online)

Okorodudu, G.N.(2013).Peer *Pressure and Socio-Economic Status a Predictions of Students Indiscipline and Poor Academic performance in KCSE in Nigeria*. International Journal of Education, 5(1):36-51.

Okorudu,C.C (2013). *Comparing Performance of learners in High School*. New York: Oxford University press.

Onekutu, P. O. (2002). *Gender differences in Achievements in Junior Secondary School Examination in Integrated Science: Implications for National Development*. Review of Gender Studies in Nigeria, 1(3), 4-12.

Orodho, A.J. (2003). *Essentials of Educational and Social Science Research Methods*: Masola publisher.

Robert, B.B. (2008).*Self-Concept Development and Education*. East Africa: Rinehart and Winton Ltd, Dorset Press.

Sweeney, I. M. (2003). *Women's intellect: The potential of women*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Vialle, W. J., Heaven, P. C. L.& Ciarrochi, J. V. (2005). *The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in high ability students*: Evidence from the Wollongong Youth Study.. Australasian Journal of Gifted Education, 14 (2), 39-45.

Wangechi, S. K., (2009). *Effectiveness of Self-esteem on Leadership Styles*. Nairobi: Kenya.

Wangechi S. K., (2009). *Needs Assessment and utilization of counseling services Among Students in Kenya Public University*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Chuka University.

Wangechi C. K., (2012).*Developing in Essential Schools*. Coalition of Essential Schools. London: Praeger

Veinon, C. (2002). *Changing the World and Changing the Self*. Elementary School Publishers: USA, NewYork

Vernon, T. (2002). *Teachers' Comment and Students' Performance*. Journal of Educational Psychology, 49 (44), 173-18.

Wainer, A.C. (2011). *Task Accomplishments among Students*. Nigeria: Lagos

Williams, C. (2010).*Teaching in Mind*. How Teacher Thinking Shapes Education. at http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/5094.html/? s=pdf.

Yoder, J.D. (2009). *Girls and Education. Making a Difference*. Prentice Hall