

## Relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Discipline Based on Gender in Secondary Schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was aimed at examining the relationship between self-esteem and students' discipline 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 of the study revealed that there is statistically significant difference of the influence of self -esteem on students' discipline based on gender in secondary schools. This appears to explain why low self-esteem among boys contributes to high cases of indiscipline in secondary schools. For this reason, there is need for the Ministry of education, science and technology, school administration and other stakeholders to put emphasis on improving the level of self-esteem to enhance boys' discipline in secondary schools. This would help to create conducive learning environment. 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 discipline of students in secondary schools in Kenya. This will guarantee good discipline 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.*

**Keywords:** Self-esteem; Discipline; 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. Kholode (2009) points out that, self-esteem education somehow determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of people. It is the cornerstone of economic, social development and a principle means of improving the welfare of individuals. A study in India on the significance of self- concept in determining ones discipline by Mangal (2007) pointed out that everybody requires some level of positive self-esteem to relate well with others and to be of good discipline at their place of work.

Discipline is the training that produces self-control, orderliness, obedience and cooperation (KICD, 2014). This implies that disciplined students are able to control themselves and avoid strikes, bullying and avoid vandalism among others.

A study on the relationship between self-esteem and discipline by Harter (2004), in Zambia points out that human beings need to rate their self-worth in relation to others for harmonious interaction. Self-worth can affect all spheres of life positively or negatively. The study again underscores the

crucial nature of studying the influence of self-esteem on discipline and academic performance in Secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County.

Mutuma (2007) has noted that self-esteem is the value an individual place on themselves relative to others. It is also what one believes and feels about themselves. It can also mean accepting one's weaknesses as well as strengths, and that one feels that they deserve the respect from others. With self-esteem, one learns to build on strengths and to compensate for weaknesses. A positive self-esteem is crucial in maintaining discipline and academic performance among students (Mutuma, 2007). Positive self-esteem enhances healthy discipline at home, at school, work place and the society in general.

Low self-esteem appears to be a key factor in contributing to students' indiscipline and low academic performance in KCSE in Tharaka-Nithi County. Many studies have been conducted on discipline and academic performance but none has been tied to self-esteem. This necessitated need to establish the relationship between self-esteem and students' discipline based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Concepts of Self –Esteem and Students' Discipline based on gender**

Dondo (2005), define discipline as the ability of students to show self-control and habits of obedience. It can also be defined as the system of rules and regulations used to maintain control or order and help the student to learn what is acceptable, desirable and pleasant. Discipline implementation is meant to correct and restore students. He further noted that the goal of discipline in secondary schools is to ensure students have a consistent, safe and secure environment in which they can learn rules, limits and consequences, understand why these are important and to nurture self-discipline or control.

Discipline in secondary schools cannot be implemented without addressing the core issues that give rise to indiscipline. According to MOEST (2007) there are three types of discipline, that is, preventative, supportive and corrective discipline. According to MOEST, preventative discipline is what can be done to prevent misbehavior, supportive discipline is what we can do to assist students when they show first signs of misbehavior, while corrective discipline is what can be done to suppress and positively redirect misbehavior once it does occur.

KICD (2014) recommends that discipline among boys and girls should be conceptualized as a training that produces self-control, orderliness obedience and cooperation among students. Many researchers have been carried out relating to discipline of boys and girls in various institutions of learning. UNESCO (2009) suggests that both boys and girls in high schools portray cases of indiscipline. A study of the relationship between discipline and academic performance showed that most of those who were in disciplined were boys yet their academic performance was better than those not involved in indiscipline cases. Also, a few cases of the in disciplined girls had done well in their examinations. Also, wells (2004) in his study in Boston indicated that boys have more indiscipline cases than girls yet it was easy to counsel the boys for they could open up easily when they were faced with issues that required counseling.

A study by Debra (2008) in Australia showed that a number of the males in colleges were involved in activities like sexual immorality, drug trafficking, smoking cigarettes and taking beer. This is an indication that the discipline of boys is low and requires a lot of attention from stakeholders. The above study is supported by Dobson (2012) in Botswana, when he noted that the discipline of male teachers was wanting for they would report to school late, drunk and depicted a lot of absenteeism compared to the males. Moreover, John (2010) in his study on an effective teacher shows that male

teachers were poorly dressed, they would be found running their businesses during school time and a number had been disciplined for not taking their responsibilities at school seriously.

Kubler (2005), argued that African youth in education are faced with a lot of challenges. He puts emphasize on the boy child who appears neglected and says that the discipline of boys was slowly deteriorating due to lack of care and concern from parents and teachers. He recommended the need for schools and society to be keen on the boy child, otherwise there would be no male future leaders. He continues to say that in his study out of three (300) schools in West Africa 10% of them have boys who did not complete school due to drug and substance abuse and child labour. Most of them were disrespectful at school and less bothered with their studies until the government had introduced a system to educate ten boys students in every location. Mallum (2010) in Lagos revealed that curbing the indiscipline of boys was more difficult than girls. The study indicated that more boys than girls were involved in vandalism of school property, sneaking out of school and fighting teachers.

Omuka and Amussan (2007) in their study on discipline and academic performance in Abeokuta in Ghana indicated that boys perform better than girls yet their discipline was wanting. They were reported to report to school late, they are difficult in attending to duties and evade academic tasks when there was an opportunity. The findings of this study were contrary to those of Thomas (2010) in his study in Lagos, Nigeria, when he pointed out that in mixed schools' girls appeared more disciplined than boys. He continued to point out that although girls are disciplined they also have some indiscipline issues like noise making, fighting and vandalizing others property when annoyed. Also, a few threaten their colleagues with ensuring to take them to a witch doctor when their items are lost.

A study by Yoder (2009) in Boston concluded that girls had more indiscipline issues than boys. The girls in high school had showed tendencies to fail to do assignments, to hate mathematics and sciences and to wear short skirts that made the males complain now and then. However, only 9% of the girls were in disciplined while 6% of the boys displayed indiscipline tendencies. The feelings of Yoder (2009) are highly supported by Okorodudo (2013) in his study on peer pressure and Socio-Economic status: A prediction of students' indiscipline and poor Academic performance in Nigeria, when he reveals that most girls are affected by their indiscipline unlike boys when it comes to academic performance. He continued to say that when girls have indiscipline issues, they take longer time to go over them than boys which can lead to poor academic performance. Some of the indiscipline cases he highlighted among girls include: bullying others, general disobedience, agitation over poor meals and irresponsible and incompetent head teachers and failure to attend lessons.

Njue (2010) in her study of the challenges of students' adolescence crisis in secondary schools revealed that both boys and girls portray similar indiscipline cases particularly those in boarding schools that are single sex. Both boys and girls, sneak out of school, vandal school property, report to school late, take alcohol and are involved in sexual immorality. She pointed out that the percentage of girls taking alcohol was 5.8% while that of boys was at 5.9%.

NACADA (2011) established that drug and substance abuse is found in both boys' school and girls' schools. They pointed out that there are more cases of drug abuse among boys' schools than girls' schools. Some of the drugs abused included: Alcohol, tobacco, bhang, miraa, narcotics, opium and prescription medicine. According to NACADA (2011), some of the causes of drug and substance abuse include; parental influence, peer pressure, drug availability, viewing alcohol just like any other drink, a way of coping with life challenges, pressure to do well in examinations, family problems, media influence, social economic conditions and student's background. Also, religious and cultural influences, excessive pocket money and poor role models. NACADA (2013)

established that at the university level, there are more males than females involved in drug and substance abuse. A research conducted at Kenyatta University indicated that 21% of the males are involved in drug abuse and only 12% of the female's abuse drugs.

Evergreen (2007) noted that emotional conduct of students with self-esteem is manifested in factors such as; accepts others as they are, they are Optimistic, they look at circumstances with acceptance and are slow to anger. Other factors include; planning their life positively around money and time, loads no guilt on self or others and never manipulates but persuades other. Those with positive self-esteem also have high level of independence, developed rational character guidelines and are self-motivated in addition they have control over their impulses, are self-confidence, they take criticism positively, welcomes help from others and are ready to listen to others point of view.

Vistala (2006) brings out other factors that can help to develop the self-esteem of learners that include; disciplining one's emotions, improving body health and image through eating well, having medical checkups and being in company of people who are joyous. Students with these characteristics tend to conduct themselves well than those who have a low level of self-esteem.

In a study on the effectiveness of self-esteem in good discipline achievement in Murang'a, Wanjiku (2011) points out that girls' self-esteem is higher than that of boys and that boys' academic performance is slightly higher. Gichinga (2005) points out that majority of boys in high school suffer from significant deficit of self-esteem.

Wangechi (2012), noted that the concept of self-esteem must be distinguished from the concept of pride. The two are closely related, but there are important major differences in their underlying meanings. Self-esteem pertains to a man's conviction of his fundamental efficacy and worth. Pride involves the joy a man takes in himself on the background of and in direct response to specific attainments or actions. Pride is the consequences of having achieved some particular value(s). Self-esteem is "I can." Pride is "I have." A man can take pride in his actions in reality, that is to say, in his existential achievements, and in the qualities he has achieved in his own character. The most outstanding pride a man can go through is that which emanates from his conquering of self-esteem: since high self-esteem is an invaluable asset that has to be earned, the man who does so experiences profoundness of his achievement. Wangechi (2012) also opines that although girls portray aspects of pride compared to boys, their level of self-esteem is always higher. She continues to state that, in analyzing the psychology of self-esteem, one of the most important aspects to consider is the relationship of self-esteem to productive work and, more broadly, to the growth and exercise of a man's mental abilities. A man may possess a variety of practical skills, feel confident of his abilities in a number of delimited areas – thus exhibiting a degree of particularized efficacy – and yet be profoundly lacking in that sense of fundamental efficacy which pertains to self-esteem. For example, a man may be confident at his job at his job, but terrified by any wider need for independent thinking, fearing to step outside the frame of reference established by his "significant others." In basic attitude and orientation, he is a profoundly dependent person – dependent, not in the financial, but in the psycho-epistemological sense.

Branden (2012) observed that most females in high school and tertiary colleges had a higher level of self-esteem than the males. This is attributed to the concern of the society to the girl child that is more than that of the boy child. In support of this finding, Borun (2011) emphasizes that ladies had better self-esteem, coping skills and negotiation skills than males. According to Borun (2011) 15% of the females showed higher level of self-esteem than the males who had only 9%. On the contrary, Kagoma (2006) concluded that that boys had a higher level of self-esteem than girls that led to boys better academic performance in sciences and mathematics.

Work by Branden (2012) noted that most females in Tertiary colleges had a higher level of self-esteem than the males. Among a hundred students 50% of the females were portrayed to have high

level of self-awareness, self-confidence and valued their self-image while only 28% of the males among a hundred had showed high levels of confidence level, self-respect and maintained self-dignity as students. This research was supported by James (2004) in the study of the Domains of self-esteem among lower secondary schools' students when he pointed out that girls had higher level of self-esteem although their academic performance was slightly below that of boys. Rand (2009), also looked at the effects of mothers' self-esteem and the way they related with their children and observed that mothers with high school children were more confident and firm in handling their children than those with children below the age of ten. The senior mothers were also consistent in disciplining their children, as a result of their higher level of self-esteem compared to the younger mothers.

According to his study on the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievements among University students in New York, Rosenberg (2008) discovered that the males' students had a slightly lower level of self-esteem from the females and hence did not perform well in languages and debates. Although the males excelled in technical subjects and Arithmetic, their confidence level in communication skills was lower than that of the girls of the same age. He continued to point out that students' self-esteem could be examined in terms of negotiation skills, level of self-image and self-respect as well as self-efficacy.

Shulman (2012) carried out a study in New York on the impact of self-esteem on pilots by gender. The study established that the males were more confident as pilots unlike ladies. The research showed that out of the (30) thirty pilots interviewed, twenty were males and displayed a lot of confidence in their work. The research also pointed out that the level of apprehension among females was higher than males and that is why only ten females out of thirty were pilots. This shows that the males' level of self-esteem was higher than that of females.

Wainer (2011) reveals that the self-esteem of students is affected by the emotions, values and interests of their teachers. Messies (2006) says that most girls' level of self-esteem could be raised by just accepting them and rewarding their efforts and achievements. He continued to point out that, students' self-esteem keeps on fluctuating and particularly that of girls. Veinon (2002) reveals that girl's self-esteem is mostly above that of boys.

Another study examining the causes of high school students' low performance in examinations in Zibambwe by Chireshe (2013) showed that student's level of self-esteem was greatly affected by the stressful situations they encountered in their daily life. He emphasized that more girls than boys are greatly affected by stressful situations which could lead to low-self-esteem. In his study on understanding the adolescents' behaviour Kagoma (2006) enumerates many factors that could affect the discipline of students. He emphasizes on the need to improve the level of self-esteem of students and making them aware of the effects of negative attitudes towards life experiences.

Wells (2010) indicates that low self-esteem is a mental disorder in which a person views him/herself as inadequate, hated, and very incompetent. Once this has been formed, this devastating view permeates through every thought, producing fallible assumptions and ongoing defeatist behavior. Among high school goers, 44 percent of girls and 15 percent of boys attempt to lose weight. Over 70 percent of the ladies aged 15 to 17 run away from normal daily chores, such as going to school, when they feel negative about their physical looks. Williams (2011) notes that, everyone but the most beautiful girl and the most handsome boy is considered to be 'ugly'. Children and teens are very sensitive to their looks and physique. Referring to someone as ugly or using negative description of one's physical features may lead to devaluation of the individual's self-worth and hence affecting their self-esteem which can impact on their discipline (Saul, 2012).

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## **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 Vygotsky'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

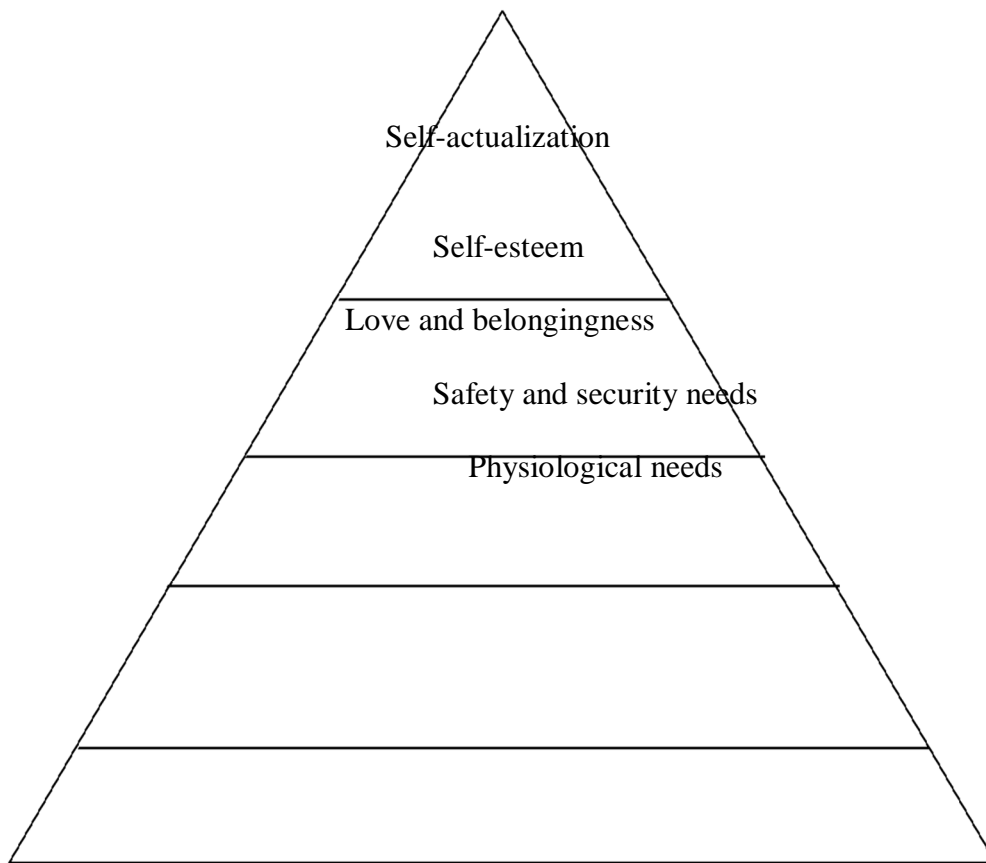
as the state of the mind. So according to this theory social element can result to the development of new learning among students. The theory explains how students can learn new things and develop new behavior by observing other people as it is concerned with observational learning process. There are 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.

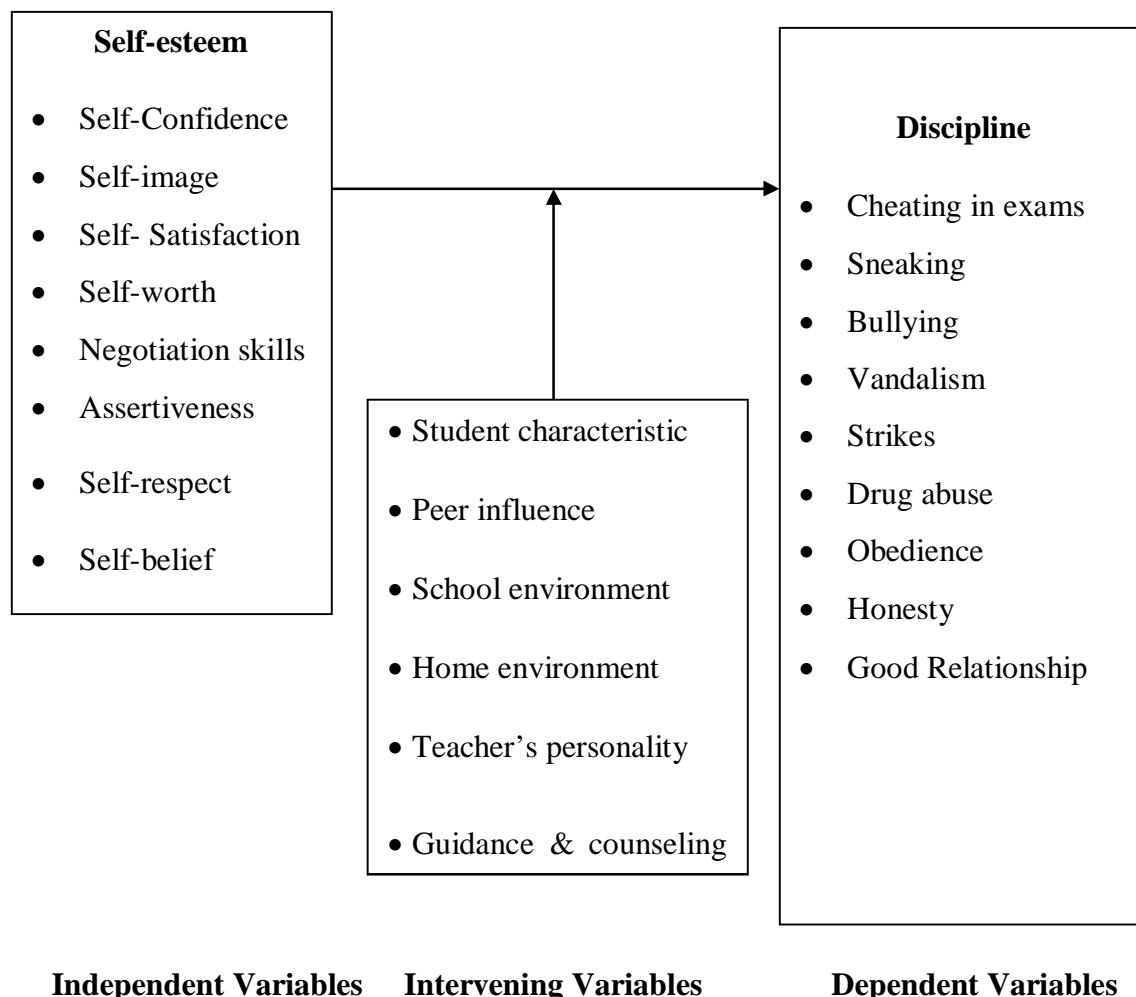
**Source:** Dondo (2005)

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.

### **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' discipline based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Diagrammatically the relationships among the variables are represented in Figure 2.





**Figure 2:** Relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Discipline

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design. Orodho and Kombo (2002), 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, beliefs 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, 2004). 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. Data was collected from sampled students in the four sub-counties. The cases of indiscipline 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
	Boys	Girls			
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: Students' 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.

**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 discipline 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 ( $\chi^2$ ) 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' discipline based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. T-test was used to test whether there is no significance gender difference in relation to self-esteem and students' discipline 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 discipline) at 5% significance level.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 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 Influence of Self-esteem on Students' Discipline based on Gender

### 4.3.1 Qualitative Descriptions of the relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Discipline Based on Gender

The research 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' discipline based on gender in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The stakeholders were from the four sub-counties and the real names were withheld to conceal identity. The descriptions were given in Excerpt 1.

#### Excerpt 1

**Researcher:** Comment on the relationship between self-esteem and students' discipline based on gender.

Respondent A: Girls have better self-esteem than boys and hence their discipline is also better. So self-esteem highly influences the discipline of girls in secondary schools.

Respondent B: The self-esteem of girls could be slightly better than that of boys. Possibly that is why they are better disciplined than boys in mixed secondary schools. So I can say that self-esteem moderately influences the discipline of girls than boys.

Respondent C: I can say that the discipline level of boys is lower than that of girls due to their low self-esteem. Boys' academic performance in KCSE has kept on deteriorating more than that of girls possibly due to their higher level of discipline.

Respondent D: Both boys and girls portray indiscipline cases like drug abuse, bullying and cheating in examinations. However, boys are more involved in drugs than girls. So I can say that self-esteem influences the discipline of both sexes moderately.

Respondent E: Girls discipline is better compared to that of boys although I am not very certain that this is as a result of self-esteem. But if I must give a response, I should say that self-esteem moderately influences the discipline of girls unlike boys.

Respondent F: Self-esteem influences girls discipline more than boys. So, I can say girls are more disciplined than boys. So self-esteem influences the discipline of girls highly. Boys are mostly involved in bullying, sneaking out of school and drug abuse.

Respondent G: Girls discipline is better than boys. This can be attributed to many factors one of them being self-esteem. I may say that self-esteem highly influences the discipline of girls in secondary schools.

According to the information the researcher got from the interviews self-esteem influences the discipline of girls more than boys. The researcher noted that the discipline of girls is better than that of boys even in mixed schools. The researcher also observed that both boys and girls portray indiscipline in terms of drug abuse, sneaking out and bullying is only that the level on boys' schools is higher. A few of the respondents pointed out they were not sure whether the improved discipline among girls was as a result of their high level of self-esteem.

#### 4.3.2 Gender and Self-esteem

**Table 6: Gender versus Self-esteem.**

Gender		Students' Self-esteem				Total
		Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Boys	Frequency	2	8	82	49	141
	%	1.4%	5.7%	58.2%	34.8%	52.0%
Girls	Frequency	3	14	44	70	131
	%	2.3%	10.7%	33.6%	53.4%	48.0%
Total	Frequency	5	22	126	119	272
	%	1.8%	8.1%	46.3%	43.8%	100.0%

Results shows that 43.8% of the respondents agreed strongly that self-esteem is high among secondary schools. In addition, 53.4% of the girls strongly agreed that self-esteem is higher than that of boys. Majority of the respondents agreed that there is strong association between gender and self-esteem among secondary school students. This finding is in harmony with a study by Rosenberg (2008) who noted that girls' self-esteem was higher than that of boys. However, this is contrasted by Serebriakoff (2005) who points out that males' self-esteem was higher than that of females and this enabled them to do well in business subject. Chireshe (2013) in his study the causes of low academic performance among high school students showed that girls are more stressed by events in life than boys and this could lead to low self-esteem.

### 4.3.3 Gender and Discipline.

**Table 7: Gender versus Discipline**

Gender		Discipline					Total
		Extremely low	Low	Moderate	High	Extremely high	
Boys	Freq	12	46	35	34	14	141
	%	8.5%	32.6%	24.8%	24.1%	9.9%	52.0%
Girls	Freq	17	6	30	32	46	131
	%	13.0%	4.6%	22.9%	24.4%	35.1%	48.0%
Total	Freq	29	52	65	66	60	272
	%	10.7%	19.1%	23.9%	24.3%	22.1%	100.0%

Table 7 shows relationship between gender and discipline among secondary school students. Among the respondents who indicated that there is an extremely high relation between gender and discipline were girls (35.1%). This implies that girls in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi- County felt that being a boy or girl may influence students discipline. Moreover, 13 % of the girls were showed to have extremely low level of discipline compared to the boys who had 8.5% with extremely low level of discipline. Generally there was low level of discipline among secondary school students in the study area with 41.1% and 17.6% in girls and boys respectively in their gender category. According to the results, girls are more disciplined than boys (58.6% for girls and 40% for boys). These findings are in harmony with the views of Mugambi (2010) who observed that self-esteem accounts for more than 30% of students discipline in secondary schools. The findings are also supported by Petro (2007) who opines that students' self-esteem directly or indirectly affect their discipline in schools. Petro (2010) points out that 75% of the girls with low self-esteem reported engaging in negative activities like cutting others, bullying and smoking. However, the findings are contrasted by Susan (2012) who says that both boys and girls are involved in cases of indiscipline equally. Also, in her study of the influence of students' self-esteem on students' discipline, Hellena (2006) noted that boys had a higher level of self-esteem than girls although they were involved in many cases of indiscipline.

### 4.3.4 Relationship between Self-esteem and Students' Discipline based on Gender

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference on the relationship between self-esteem and students' discipline based on gender in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. This hypothesis was evaluated using t-test due to the nature of the data.

**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics on Students' Discipline based on Gender**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Students' Discipline	Boys	141	2.94	1.149	.097
	Girls	131	3.67	1.337	.118

**Table 9: T-test for Equality of Means**

Students' Discipline	t-test for Equality of Means			Mean difference	Std . Error
	T	df	Sig ( 2 tailed )		
Equal variance assumed	-4.773	267	.000	-.724	.152
Equal variances not assumed	-4.744	253	.000	-.724	.153

Table 8 shows that there is gender variation in the mean score on discipline of boys (2.94, SD=1.149) as compared to that of girls (3.67, SD = 1.337). The performance variation in gender was not the same as the boys' scores varied much from the girls' scores. This suggests that girls are more disciplined than boys in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. In spite of this, girls' performance is slightly below that of boys. Table 9 shows that there is statistically significant difference between gender variations in students' discipline. The independent sample T-test results showed that assuming equal variance, there was variation in students' discipline (t-value=-4.773; p-value=0.000) at 5% level of significance. A p-value less than 0.05, indicates that there is statistically significant difference in students' discipline for both boys and girls in secondary school. According to KICD (2014) discipline among boys and girls is a training that produces self-control, orderliness obedience and cooperation among students. Many researches have been carried out relating to discipline of boys and girls in various institutions of learning. UNESCO (2009) suggests that both boys and girls in high schools portray cases of indiscipline. A study on the relationship between discipline and academic performance by Wells (2004) showed that most of those who were undisciplined were boys yet their academic performance was better than those not involved in indiscipline cases. Also, a few cases of the undisciplined girls had done well in their examinations. Again, wells (2004) in his study in Boston indicated that boys have more indiscipline cases than girls yet it was easy to counsel the girls for they could open up easily when they were faced with issues that required counseling.

According to Kubler (2005) African youth in education are faced with a lot of challenges. He lays emphasize on the boy child who appears neglected and says that the discipline of boys was slowly deteriorating due to lack of care and concern from parents and teachers. He recommended the need for schools and society to be keen on the boy child, otherwise there would be no male future leaders. He continues to say that in his study out of three (300) schools in West Africa 10% of them have boys who did not complete school due to drug and substance abuse and child labour. Most of them were disrespectful at school and less bothered with their studies until the government had introduced a system to educate ten boys' students in every location. Another study by Mallum (2010) in Lagos revealed that curbing the indiscipline of boys was more difficult than girls. The study indicated that more boys than girls were involved in vandalism of school property, sneaking out of school and fighting teachers.

In their study on relationship between discipline and academic performance in Abeokuta in Ghana, Omuka and Amussan (2007) indicated that boys perform better than girls yet their discipline was wanting. They were reported to report to school late, they are difficult in attending to duties and evade academic tasks when there was an opportunity. The findings of this study were in harmony with those of Thomas (2010) in his study in Lagos, Nigeria, when he pointed out that in mixed schools' girls appeared more disciplined than boys. He continued to point out that although girls are

disciplined, they also have some indiscipline issues like noise making, fighting and vandalizing others property when annoyed. Also, a few threaten their colleagues with ensuring to take them to a witch doctor when their items are lost. According to a study in Boston by Yoder (2009) girls had more indiscipline issues than boys. The girls in high school had showed tendencies to fail to do assignments, to hate mathematics and sciences and to wear short skirts that made the males complain now and then. However, only 9% of the girls were in disciplined while 6% of the boys displayed indiscipline tendencies.

The views held by Yoder (2009) are highly supported by Okorodudo (2013) in his study on peer pressure and Socio- Economic status: A prediction of students' indiscipline and poor Academic performance in Nigeria, when he reveals that most girls are affected by their indiscipline unlike boys when it comes to academic performance. He continued to say that, when girls have indiscipline issues, they take longer time to go over them than boys which can lead to poor academic performance. Some of the indiscipline cases he highlighted among girls include: bullying others, general disobedience, agitation over poor meals and irresponsible and incompetent head teachers and failure to attend lessons.

Njue (2010) in her study of the challenges of students' adolescence crisis in secondary schools revealed that both boys and girls portray similar indiscipline cases particularly those in boarding schools that are single sex. Both boys and girls, sneak out of school, vandal school property, report to school late, take alcohol and are involved in sexual immorality. She pointed out that the percentage of girls taking alcohol was 5.8% while that of boys was at 5.9%.

NACADA (2011) established that drug and substance abuse is found in both boys' school and girls' schools. They pointed out that there are more cases of drug abuse among boys' schools than girls' schools. Some of the drugs abused included: Alcohol, tobacco, bhang, miraa, narcotics, opium and prescription medicine. Further, NACADA (2013) established that at the university level, there are more males than females involved in drug and substance abuse. A research conducted at Kenyatta University indicated that 21% of the males are involved in drug abuse and only 12% of the female's abuse drugs.



## 4.3.5 Cross Tabulation of Self-esteem and Students' Discipline based on Gender

Table 10: Cross Tabulation of Self-esteem and Students' Discipline based on Gender

Gender	Self-esteem	Academic Performance			Total	Chi-square test
		Below Average	Average	Above Average		
Boys	Low	1	1	1	3	
	Moderate	4	8	11	23	$\chi^2=3.29$
	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	$\chi^2=14.36$
	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	$\chi^2=13.92$
	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	

The cross tabulation in Table 10 was used to determine the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline between boys and girls. The results showed that there was no significant difference on the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline by boys, Chi-square value = 8.66, df= 12 and Sig (P-value)= 0.731 at 5% significant level. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05, this shows that self-esteem has no significant influence on students' discipline according to boys. However, results show that there was significant influence of self-esteem on students' discipline by girls, Chi-square value=23.43, df= 12 and P-value = 0.024 at 5% significant level. Since the P-value is less than 0.05, this shows that self-esteem has significant influence on students' discipline according to girls in secondary schools. This finding are in line with the vialle, (2005) who revealed that girl's self-esteem is more strongly related to how she views her own body shape and body weight, than how much she actually weighs. Also, according to Williams (2011) adolescent girls tend to have a higher self-esteem and more positive assessments of their physical characteristics and intellectual abilities than boys have. These findings are contrary to the views of Gichinga (2005) who point out that incidences of suicide attempts, depression, and eating disorders is substantially higher in girls and are normally associated with low self –esteem.

Further, the results showed that there was significant influence of self-esteem on students' discipline between boys and girls, Chi-square value = 30.04, df = 12 and P-Value = 0.003 at 5% level of significance. Since the P-value 0.003 is less than 0.05, this showed that self-esteem

influences students discipline between boys and girls. From these results, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline between boys and girls in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County was not supported (Reject null hypothesis) at 5% significance. The findings are supported by Abiero (2009) when he points out that, students with a high level of self-esteem influenced the way they related with others – teachers, students and parents. He opined that students who had high self-image conducted themselves well in terms of discipline. They were seen to be respectful, co-operative, portrayed team spirit and were ready to accept criticisms. John (2010) found out that students with high self-efficacy had few cases of conflicts with others. This means that they were able to use their negotiations skills to communicate to colleagues any time they had issues with them. Also, they were involved in harmonious arguments.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study revealed that there is statistically significant difference of the relationship between self -esteem and students' discipline based on gender in secondary schools. This appears to explain why low self-esteem among boys contributes to high cases of indiscipline in secondary schools. For this reason, there is need for the Ministry of education, science and technology, school administration and other stakeholders to put emphasis on improving the level of self-esteem to enhance boys' discipline in secondary schools. This would help to create conducive learning environment.

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