

Influence of Self-Esteem on Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examining the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka -Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 340 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 301 form three students, 13 heads of curriculum, 13 deputy head-teachers and 13 heads of guidance and counseling. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data collected was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential statistics included Chi-Square test. The study found out that there was significant influence of self-esteem on students' discipline (Chi-square value=30.04, df=12, sig(p-value)=0.003). This implies that an improvement of self-esteem enhances students' discipline in secondary schools. The study recommends the need to build self-esteem among students. This will guarantee good discipline in secondary schools. It is anticipated that the findings of the current study will provide necessary information useful to the policy makers, academician, students, teachers, school administration and other stakeholders to enhance discipline of students in secondary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Discipline; Self-esteem; Secondary schools; Students

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a life skill that is highly embraced by all societies at all stages of development. It is the process by which individuals rate themselves, acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them participate effectively in the society. Self-esteem is a significant life skill that touches on the affective, cognitive and the psychomotor domain of every individual and can lead to promoting individual development if effectively implemented in all secondary schools. According to Gichinga (2005) self-esteem education helps an individual to translate knowledge attitude and skills into action, behave responsibly and this leads to healthy living, develop positive attitude towards themselves and others as well as develop full potential. Moreover, Gichinga (2005) continues to say that life skills promote the state mental well-being as this motivates students to press on in their academic work. Another function of self-esteem as a life skill is to promote risk free behaviour, helps students to communicate effectively, develop negotiation skills and improve self-perception by building self-confidence, self-image and self-worth. Life skills education has long term benefits to the society, which include social, health, cultural and economic benefits (Dondo, 2008).

Douglas (2010), refers to discipline as the conduct of students at school which means obedience to school rules and regulations and may be portrayed by general obedience, honesty, humility, being responsible and maintaining peace while disobedience is manifested by violence, riots, vandalism, sneaking out of school, drug abuse and other undesirable acts. This study would like to examine the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline in Tharaka-Nithi County.

Secondary school education has many goals and objectives (KIE, 2006). These include; preparing students for the changes in attitudes and relationships, which are necessary for the smooth process of a rapidly developing modern economy, to promote individual development and self-fulfilment as well as promote sound moral values among learners. Moreover, secondary school education should provide the learner with opportunities to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for development of self and the nation and provide harmonious co-existence among other students or the people of Kenya. This means that, life skills education, that include self-esteem should enable students to build and portray good morals and acceptable discipline in schools.

On the other hand, indiscipline among students leads to strikes, vandalism, time wastage and bullying among students which indicate lack of self-discipline as pointed out in the goals and objectives of secondary school education. This causes irresponsibility, anti-social behaviour and lack of harmonious co-existence with others (Mutuma, 2007). This shows the need for the current study to examine the influence of self-esteem on students discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County.

Self-esteem is the value an individual places 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 among students (Mutuma, 2007). Positive self-esteem enhances healthy discipline at home, at school, work place and the society in general.

A person's self-esteem can be perceived as negative or positive depending on how one evaluates their worth (Dondo, 2005). The value that one attaches to self leads to the level of self-esteem that they have. As a result,

this level of self-esteem can influence ones performance of tasks in various situations in life. The two extremes of self-esteem are not desirable. Positive self-esteem implies that, comparing ones value to others, the individuals find themselves superior. This can lead to behaviours like arrogance, selfishness and difficult in coping with others. Such behaviour may influence an individual's academic performance.

According to Mutua (2011), the Kenya's Ministry of Education has greatly emphasized the teaching of life skills where one of the skills taught is self-esteem that empowers understanding self. These skills are supposed to be integrated in all subjects in secondary schools. In spite of these life skills being taught and emphasized, many schools in Tharaka-Nithi County have registered poor academic results for a number of years. Low grades refer to a mean grade of C plain and below. Again, the county has had many cases of indiscipline for a number of years. More than fifty secondary schools have experienced unrest (T.S.C. County Director, 2014). This represents 42 percent of the secondary schools. In fact, in the third quarter of the year 2016, a total of 20 schools have gone on strike. Most of the newspapers in 2015 and 2016 headlines bore titles like; Two students in arson attempt, Mock exams to blame for unrest in schools, three students in perish in a dormitory after a fire inferno and strikes again in secondary schools to mention but a few. Hence, the need for the current study to establish the influence of self-esteem on student's discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

The Ministry of Education (2008), has also tried to set up committees to investigate the causes of schools unrest. The Wangai Commission of 2001 was set by the Ministry of Education to conduct an inquiry on students discipline and unrest in schools. This inquiry did not been offer solutions to indiscipline in secondary schools in Kenya. In her study of the causes of students' unrests in secondary schools in Meru South district, Njeru (2010) highlights that lack of self-appreciation and failure to use good negotiation skills in communication as some of the leading factors to students' indiscipline in secondary schools. This portrays the significance of examining the influence of self-esteem on discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. The study therefore seeks to examine the influence of students' self-esteem on student's discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County in attempt to fill the gap.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Self-esteem and Students' Discipline

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. According to a study conducted in Nigeria by Mutuma (2007), discipline among students is a major factor in the way they perform in the final examinations. The research indicates that a lot of time and resources are wasted when students go on rampage and vandalize school property. When charged for the damage, some are unable to meet the cost and hence spend a lot of time outside the school and this impacts negatively on their academic performance, hence the need for the current study. In his study of the relationship between student's level of self-concept and discipline Branden (2009) established that very few cases of students' indiscipline was influenced by their self-concept. He went on to elaborate that the value one attaches on self may not necessarily affect the way high school students conducted themselves. In fact he discovered that a number of those whose self-esteem was low had performed extremely well in discipline. Students with low self-esteem would be seen relating well and assisting those in conflicts. According to Borum (2011), discipline of students was affected by very many factors and the least of them was self-esteem. In his study in Lagos, Nigeria, he observed that most of the fights and general disobedience was displayed by those students who were termed as having high level of self-esteem. He continued to point out that absenteeism and failure to do assignments was found in all students either with high level of self-esteem and with negative self-esteem.

According to Abiero (2009) students with a high level of self esteem influenced the way they related with others – teachers, students and parents. He opines 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 teachers 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. Dobson (2012) argues that life skills education is very crucial in the growth and developmental stages of every human being. He continued to say that self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-efficacy play a significant role in the modification of workers discipline in their places of work. Workers, who understood themselves and what they wanted in life, were better disciplined and organised than those who hated themselves and the kind of jobs they were doing. The workers who did their work as a profession and as a calling, showed a lot of commitment and discipline as well as showed a lot of team spirit and responsibility in task performance.

UNESCO (2009) observed that for any institution to succeed, the discipline of its workers was crucial. They argued that such discipline could be affected by factors innate and those outside the worker. Some of the innate factors that are highlighted include; self-efficacy, ability and the gender of the worker. The other factors were the institution's environment and the motivation of the work

In his study on the relationship between self-esteem of pilots and their discipline in the society, Wainer (2011) showed that there was a high relationship between self-worth and the discipline that pilots portrayed at work and in the society. The research showed that the pilots who rated themselves highly had very close ties with colleagues and the rest of the society. They were found to have frequent visits and celebrations with family members as well as portraying hospitality to their relations and friends. According to Handler (2010) the teacher is very crucial in curriculum development and there is need to ensure his mind is sober when dealing with learners and the society. Handler emphasizes that the teachers discipline could be affected by his psychological challenges that are caused by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Handler emphasizes that some of the intrinsic factors could be the value or judgment of the teacher, his level of motivation and his relationship with others in the work place. According to Gichinga (2005), negative self-esteem, is characterized by focusing one's failures and inadequacies. Students with negative self-esteem are filled with self-pity and self hatred (Gichinga, 2005). They have deep feelings of nothingness and in most cases suffer from inferiority complex. Self-esteem can be built depending on one's family, background, cultural values, social environment and the status of parents or guardians. Learners in our secondary school today portray behaviour and academic performance that can be directly associated to their self-esteem. Students who conduct themselves well and hardly caught committing offences are thought to value themselves than those who are always involved deviant behaviour.

A research on the implementation of life skills education by Mokuu (2011) points out that secondary schools in Kenya have embraced life skills education as they are crucial in students interacting with others and boosting their self-esteem. He continues to say that self-esteem is one of the skills that help students with skills of coping with self and others. This can help in improving one's behaviour as well as improving once academic performance. Too much self-esteem could be viewed as negative (Mokuu, 2011). In addition, too little self-esteem can affect once decision-making in life (Dondo, 2005). Students whose behaviour is not pleasing may not be aware of the influence their self-esteem has on their behaviour (Gichinga, 2006). Most of those students who have discipline problems and do not perform well academically may not attribute this to their self-esteem. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship of self-esteem discipline among students in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. Kenyan secondary schools education recognize the challenges posed by lack of self-esteem among learners in realizing their mission both in academics and ensuring learners are molded in character (Mokuu, 2011). The ministry of education has established guidance and counseling department in all schools that assist in ensuring learners build confidence and realize the potential that is within them. Although the ground for students to build self-esteem as been laid well, most of the students are dissatisfied by a alluding that the quality of life skills education is not up to date for there is no specific lesson plotted on the block time table to teach learners the aspect of self-esteem (Susan, 2009). Mwenda (2006) notes that most students are only interested in achieving good grades and not improvement of their discipline hence, many cases of violence and aggression have been witnessed particularly among students schools (Daily Nation Friday July 2013). This could be a pointer that the students have not yet known the influence that their self-esteem has on their behaviour. According to Mwenda (2006), self worth or dignity to oneself prevents rivalry and conflict among learners.

Rosenberg (2008) refers to self-esteem as a positive or negative evaluation people make of and apply to themselves. Its application generally touches on feelings of worthiness. A person may have a good, average or bad opinion of themselves. Stewart (2007) argues that the value of individuals is mirrored in the eyes of the society, a process that begins in childhood. According to Cobb (2001) our self-esteem is derived from a comparison between ourselves and other people. A surprising point about self-esteem according to Stewart (2007), is the enormous range of variation between individuals. While some people think the whole world is theirs for the taking, others feel they have no right to exist. In some cultures, self-esteem is largely based on membership of family, social groups, tribe or nation. A child's self-esteem will suffer if he or she is not appreciated. Abraham and Twerski (2011), contends that strong negative opinions can be felt by a child long before he or she is mature enough to think logically or form logical conclusions. This indicates that a child for instance, may have been a product of unwanted pregnancy and in spite of the efforts by the parents to conceal this, may have very keenly felt the underlying rejection.

According to Saul (2012), self-esteem should be viewed as a continuum, and can be high, medium or low, and is often quantified as a number in empirical research. When considering self-esteem it is important to note that both high and low levels can be emotionally and socially harmful for the individual. Indeed it is thought an optimum level of self-esteem lies in the middle of the continuum. Individuals operating within this range are thought to be more socially dominant within relationships. Research has shown key differences between individuals with high and negative self-esteem. For example, people with positive self-esteem focus on growth and improvement, whereas people with negative self-esteem focus on not making mistakes in life. Negative self-esteem has been shown to be correlated with a number of negative outcomes, such as depression (Silverstone & Salsali, 2003). Foster and Jim (2009) raises the concern of child therapists that many parents do not help their children to perceive themselves positively and instead concentrate too much on their weaknesses. Whenever

these parents talk they dwell on what the children cannot do. Children reared in this way have high chances of developing poor self-esteem. A child who has been the mothers' favorite will forever keep the feeling that he or she is a conqueror while another, even within the same family grows up with the feeling that their very existence is a terrible mistake. Lalli (2002) pointed out that self-esteem largely depends on how one makes sense of his relationship to the rest of the universe. This yield to a healthy interpersonal relationship characterized by understanding of oneself and others, refraining from unkind comments or emotional outbursts and communicating accurately. This argument is enhanced by Omulema (2010), who views interpersonal as one of the seven major areas of functioning within the complex human personality in the multi model counseling approach. Many therapists concur in viewing self-esteem as being based on one's attitude to the job he does, his purpose of life, strengths and weakness, social status and overall rating of self- worth. Self- esteem may be developed through appreciating and accepting ourselves, disciplining our emotions, not being elated always ,improving our body health and image through eating well, having medical check-ups at least once per year and being in company of people who can build up and make us smile.

According to Cobb (2001) students will behave according to the behaviour of those around them that is, peers, teachers, media, role models and parents or guardians. So, if those next to the students have positive self-esteem they will definitely emulate a lot from them as they build their self-esteem. On the other hand, those with low level of self-esteem can influence the behaviour of learners negatively. Greeno (2001) observes that the comments learners receive after performance of tasks may influence their behaviour greatly. He says that students who are always rebuked end up developing negative self- esteem and end up having little or no confidence in their task performance. Students who are popular with their colleagues sometimes are leaders and tend to have more confidence and give themselves a lot of self-regard and-self integrity. They portray a lot of self-respect and are always filled with happiness (Vistala, 2006). A students' personal self-image leads to them believing that they are good lovable, capable and acceptable. This implies that students' discipline can be modified by the level of self-esteem. Saul (2012) argues that children with negative self-esteem rely on coping strategies that are counterproductive such as bullying, quitting, cheating, avoiding etc. Although all children will display some of these behaviours at times, negative self-esteem is strongly indicated when these behaviours appear with regularity. Socially children with negative self-esteem can be withdrawn or shy, and find it difficult to have fun. Although they may have a wide circle of friends they are more likely to yield to group pressure and more vulnerable to being bullied. At school they avoid trying new things (for fear of failure) and will give up easily. This can affect the academic performance of students negatively. Saul continues to point out that self-esteem continues to decline during adolescence (particularly for students). Researchers have explained this decline to body image and other problems associated with puberty. Although boys and students report similar levels of self-esteem during childhood, a gender gap emerges by adolescence, in that adolescent boys have higher self-esteem than adolescent students (Robins et al, 2002). Students with negative self-esteem appear to be more vulnerable to perceptions of the ideal body image perpetuated in western media through methods such as airbrushing models on magazine covers (Miller, 2002).This underscores the significance of this study to establish the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

According to Van Pelt (2011), the results of positive self-esteem are desirable and characterize individuals who have accepted themselves. Individuals with self-esteem feel secure; learn to build on their strengths and to compensate for their weakness. They are able to live positively with what they are unable to change and yet accept themselves as worthwhile individuals. Positive self-esteem enables a person to recognize the difference and uniqueness inherent in people. Thus one can appreciate the differences and unique characteristics in each human being instead of resenting or fearing them. In this regard these persons hardly suffer from rejection. Nevertheless too high or bloated self-esteem can be disruptive. Stewart (2007) warns against people who bolster their self-esteem at expense of others. Stewart argues that this tendency hampers good interpersonal relationship and healthy communication with others These people as Pearson (2011) observed, rarely focus on anyone for more than a moment and, even then, they do not concentrate on the other person's message Generally according to Rosenberg (2008), positive self-esteem results in information of solid families, good interpersonal relationships, success in life, self-confidence, personal security, motivation to work and good health.

Effects of negative self-esteem are considered to be reverse effects of positive self-esteem. These effects are pervasive and according to Stewart (2007), they present enormous public health problem. According to Van Pelt (2006) victims of Negative self-esteem feel as if no other human being has ever experienced what they are going through. They attempt to hide their insecurities behind false fronts, while trying to fool themselves as they try to fool others. Victims feel extremely self-conscious when in company of others and are hardly settled. Self-dislike tends to make people highly sensitive to blame and praise. Feelings of self-dislike or inferiority also reduces efficiency at work and school. Jobs performance will be affected in direct proportion to how secure or how insecure one feels about himself. Rosenberg (2008) notes that people suffering from negative self-esteem constantly berate themselves and they will not be able to give their whole attention or energy to the task before them. Rather they will be too busy jabbing themselves, running themselves down and ridiculing their

performance. Due to this low opinion of themselves many people drop out of school or accept jobs far below their training and capacity. They also tend to leave projects partly completed, jumping from one task to the next. They lack confidence in themselves and cannot conceive of finishing anything successfully. Feelings of worthlessness will also cause one to rehearse the past and imagine ways in which he could or should have done things differently. Such feelings will make one critical of others and this will adversely affect his interaction with his mates. More specifically as Van Pelt (2006) argues, negative self-esteem is associated with; abuse, anxiety states, delinquency, depressive illness, disability or disfigurement, prejudice and psychosomatic disorders

According to Susan (2009) students with negative self-image have more psychological problems for they suffer from insomnia and are very sensitive to criticism. They are suspicious of others and reject compliments from them. They like others to accept them but do not work for the acceptance. Students who have physical difficulties, hearing and seeing challenges and those with physical appearances that seem different from that which is perceived as normal have tendencies of losing worth in themselves. All these factors can affect students' discipline. Some of the causes of low self-esteem include poor health, poor family backgrounds, uncooperative administration, rejection and lack of appreciation from society, failure to make the right subject selection and past failures. Also, self-consciousness, adolescent crisis, body structure and financial uncertainties can lead to poor self-esteem among learners (Cobb, 2001).

Rosenberg and Owen (2001) offer the following description of people with negative self-esteem based on empirical research. People with negative self-esteem are more troubled by failure and tend to exaggerate events as being negative. For example, they often interpret non-critical comments as critical. They are more likely to experience social anxiety and low levels of interpersonal confidence. This in turn, makes social interaction with others difficult as they feel awkward, shy, conspicuous, and unable to adequately express themselves when interacting with others (Rosenberg and Owen, 2009). Furthermore, negative self-esteem individuals tend to be pessimistic towards people and groups within society. Research has also shown that negative self-esteem has been linked to an increased risk of teenage pregnancy. Guindon (2002) asked school counsellors to list five characteristics that best describe students with negative self-esteem. According to him they are withdrawn/shy/quiet, insecure, underachieving and have negative attitude. They are also portrayed to be unhappy, socially inept, angry/hostile, unmotivated and depressed. Their other characteristics include dependent/follower, poor self-image, risk-taker, lacks self-confidence, have poor communication skills and acts out. It should be noted that on average self-esteem during childhood is found to be relatively high. However, there are individual differences and some children are unfortunate to experience feelings of negative self-esteem. Negative self-esteem in children tends to be related to physical punishment and withholding of love and affection by parents. Carl Rogers (2010) would describe this as conditional positive regard, whereby individuals only receive positive attention from significant others (such as parents) when they act in a certain way. This reinforces to the child that they are only of value when they act in certain way (for instance achieving an A grades in a test).

Indiscipline among students in Tharaka-Nithi County is depicted by frequent strikes that cause destruction of property, sneaking out of school, stealing, smoking cigars, evading lessons, bullying others to mention but a few. This term alone, more than 50 schools have gone on rampage and caused a lot of damage in the schools. In the last five years, a number of schools in Tharaka-Nithi County have been involved in strikes and some of the reasons they give are poor meals, fear of mock exams, parents and teachers pressure hence the need for this study to establish the Influence of self-esteem on students' discipline secondary schools Tharaka-Nithi County. The following Table 1 indicates the number of schools unrest or strikes for some time.

Table 1: Unrest in Schools for some years

Sub-county	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Total
Maara	14	14	8	8	5	49
Chuka Igamba Ng'ombe	14	8	8	4	6	40
Tharaka North	4	2	2	3	4	15
Tharaka South	2	1	1	2	3	9
Total	31	25	15	15	17	113

Source: TSC County Director 2015

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theory is a coherent set of ideas that helps to explain data or phenomenon and to make predictions. It is a set general statement (rules, assumptions, propositions or principles) used to explain facts (Meece 2002). A theory consists of hypothesis or assumptions that can be tested to determine the accuracy (Santrock 2010).

2.2.1Vigotsky's Social-cultural Theory

Vigotsky (2002) notes that this theory emphasizes on 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 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. He argued that children's experiences are extended through interactions with adults and peers. The child grows and changes as a function of his/her efforts and support, guidance and help from others who are more skilled Vygotsky (2002). Social groups have an important effect on children's knowledge and understanding the world. He believed that children can attempt more complex tasks if they had the support from others. The child's ability can be stretched with the help of another person. He called this the zone of proximal Development (ZPD) or the next area of development which could only be achieved with the help and support of others. Vygotsky (2002, 43) argued for cooperative or supported learning. This theory is applicable in the study in that learners' mental ability and social development is supported and enhanced by others through social interaction.

2.2.2 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is among the theories of motivation known as content and process theories. Maslow, Alderfer, Herzberg and Mc eel land (2009) point out that behaviour is as a result of motivation. This implies that students discipline is determined by the way they are motivated intrinsically and extrinsically. Herzberg (2004) says that there are two factors that affect ones motivation, that is, hygiene factors and motivators. A series of hygiene factors creates dissatisfaction if individuals perceive them as inadequate or inequitable, yet individuals will not be significantly viewed as adequate or good. Hygiene factors are extrinsic and include factors such as, provision of basic needs that is, food shelter, clothing, salary or remuneration, job security and working conditions. Motivators are intrinsic factors such as sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility and personal growth. So, if students basic needs are met they will feel motivated to work towards boasting their self-esteem that can lead to improvement of discipline.

According to Maslow (2003) 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 students basic needs are meet they can develop self-esteem and hence improve their discipline. The second level has safety needs which include personal security, good health, well-being and safety against accidents. This again shows how this theory informs on the current study 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 in secondary school in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya

Similarly, according to Dondo (2005) students who relate well with their teachers easily build confidence and this can assist them to have self-integrity which is crucial in character building. So, a sense of belonging and acceptance are pivotal in building students behavior. The fourth level denotes self-esteem needs. This is where people look to be respected and to have self-respect .learners in this level desire to achieve and respect others. This assists the current study in that when students have self-esteem they can easily respect others hence depicting good character. They work to live in harmony and shun conflicts. In the top level, self-actualization needs remain. This level of needs pertains to realizing the person's potential. Indiscipline may hinder students from getting motivated to high needs in Maslows' hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy of needs pyramid is illustrated in Figure 1

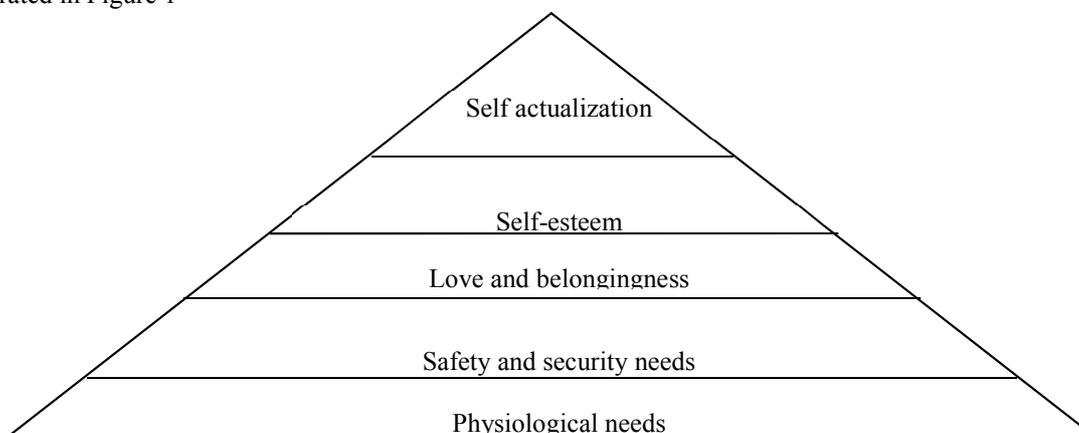


Figure 1: Maslows' hierarchy of needs

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. As people climb the pyramid they often make a head way but also notice that two steps forward can mean one step backward. The goal of mankind is to keep an eye on the top of the pyramid and to climb as steadily as possible.

According to Branden (2009) Students may stumble at times and leap forward at times depending on the level of discipline. Those whose self-esteem is positive may find it easy to get to top. No matter how far they fall backward, students require support systems to help them reach the highest needs in their life. So, according to Maslow students' needs are in hierarchy. They can only aspire for the needs in the upper level if those in the lower level are fulfilled. Students have basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. These are the basic needs in their life and if they are satisfied they aspire for the needs in the next level that is, safety needs. When the physiological, the safety and the love and belonging needs are met the students long for self-esteem this implies the feeling of being accepted as worthwhile and valuable in what they do. If they are not appreciated they may end up being disobedient in schools hence, the need for the current study to examine the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Mouly (2013) explains that a conceptual framework is graphic diagram of a research topic or thesis. It enables the researcher to find links between the existing literature and his/her own research goals. Researchers use it to guide in data collection and analysis. Diagrammatically the relationships among the variables are represented in Figure 2

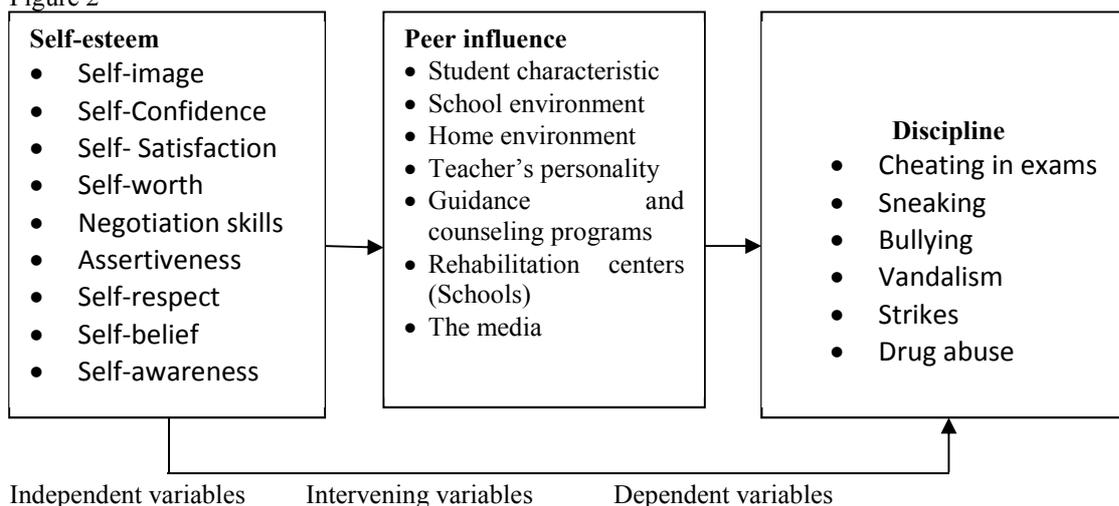


Figure 2: Influence of Self-esteem on Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND 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 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

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. Once this was done guidelines by Kathuri and Pals (1993) were used in selecting representative sample of 301 students (10%). Deputy principal's, heads of curriculum and heads of guidance and counseling

were purposively selected. The total sample size was 340 respondents as indicated in Table 2

Table 2: Students' Enrolment Sample by School Category

Schools Category	Students		TC	D/HT	HC	Total n
	Males	Females				
National	69	61	1	1	1	133
Extra county	30	30	5	5	5	75
County schools	45	35	5	5	5	95
County day schools	20	11	2	2	2	37
Total	164	137	13	13	13	340

3.3 Instrumentation

Data was collected by use of a questionnaire for students and interview schedules for heads of guidance and counseling, heads of curriculum and deputy principals.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics that is a branch of statistics that provide a means of summarizing data (Fildmay, 1987) was used to describe the sample, independent and dependent variables (self-esteem and discipline). For inferential statistics, the study used Chi-square test for the testing research hypothesis.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Respondents Response Rate

The questionnaires administered to the students by the researcher were 301 and 39 Deputy Principals, heads of curriculum and heads of Guidance and Counseling were interviewed. However, 272 questionnaires were filled and returned and 39 interviews were conducted. This gave a response rate of 90.4%. 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. The analyses of the responses were as shown in Table 3

Table 3: 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	31	27	87.0%
Total	301	272	90.4%

4.2 Students' Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the value-judgment that a person passes on himself. The nature of ones self-evaluation has profound effects on a man's thinking- process, emotions, desires, values and goals. To understand any human being psychologically one must understand the nature and degree of his self-esteem and the standards by which he judges himself. Self-esteem is the integrated sum of self-confidence and self-respect. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living. It is also, the single most significant key to his behaviour. There are three categories of self-esteem; high, moderate and low. The pillars of self-esteem include; the practice of living consciously, practice of self-acceptance, practice of self-responsibility, practice of self-assertiveness, practice of living purposefully and the practice of personal integrity. The study sought to establish the level of self-esteem among students' in secondary school and the findings are portrayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Students' Self-esteem

Students' self-esteem	N	Mean	SD
Confidence level	269	4.03	.830
Satisfaction with self-image	263	4.23	.812
Self-value	261	4.26	.860
Belief for self	260	4.42	.784
Respect for self	260	4.39	.856
Openness to new ideas	266	3.77	.900
Self-acceptance	257	4.19	.884
Feelings of adequacy	261	3.72	.904
Level of assertiveness	256	3.87	.996
Negotiation skills	267	3.77	1.013
Average		4.07	.884

The results in Table 4, shows high rating of student self-esteem in secondary schools. The overall mean score was 4.07. This implies that, the high self-esteem among students is critical in their academic undertaking in secondary schools. In a research carried out in America by Van Pelt (2011) points out that the results of positive self-esteem to learners are desirable and characterize individuals who have accepted themselves. He continues to say that students with positive self-esteem are able to live positively with what they are unable to change. Rosenberg (2008) also notes that people suffering from negative self-esteem constantly berate themselves and are not able to maintain good relationships with colleagues and teachers.

Kagoma (2006) observes that the emotional conduct of people with low self-esteem, is manifested in their being critical of others, are full of pessimism, short tempered and never plan positively for their time and resources. They may be devoid of rational character guidance and are easily addicted to alcohol and drug. According to Dondo (2005) Students' with low self-esteem are sensitive to criticism and reject assistance from others.

4.3 Importance of Self-Esteem on Students' Discipline

The study sought to establish the importance of self-esteem in relation to students' discipline in secondary schools -Nithi County. The findings are displayed in Table 5

Table 5: Importance of Self-esteem on Students' Discipline

Importance of self-esteem on students discipline	N	Mean	SD
My confidence in school has helped me to obey school rules and regulations	269	4.41	.839
My satisfaction with my self-image has assisted me to relate well with my colleagues	272	4.34	.981
My valuing myself has assisted me not to get involved in drug and substance abuse	267	4.40	1.094
My belief in being good as well as others has helped me not to bully others.	269	4.22	1.027
Having respect for myself has assisted me to relate well with my teachers and respect them	267	4.45	.850
My feeling of success has assisted me to be more loyal to my school	267	4.03	1.029
My self-worth has assisted me to maintain silence in class when required	269	3.69	1.184
My feeling of success has assisted me to take care of school property and avoid vandalism.	269	4.10	1.017
My being assertive has assisted me to counter negative peer influence	266	4.32	1.042
My good negotiation skills have assisted me to shun violence	268	4.21	1.029
Average		4.22	1.009

The result in Table 5 shows that the overall mean score was 4.22. This implies that the respondents agreed that self-esteem plays a critical role in students discipline aspect. For instance majority of the respondents indicated that having respect for themselves had assisted them to relate well with teachers and other students (mean score 4.45, SD=0.85). Also, the students agreed that individual confidence in school helps them to obey school rules and regulations (mean score 4.41, SD= 0.839). In general, all the respondents agreed that, aspects of self-esteem such as self-belief in being good, self-feeling of success and self-satisfaction with self-image help them not to bully others, avoid vandalism and assist them to relate well with other students. This is important for a conducive learning environment for the students. Based on these findings, self-esteem is critical on students discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka- Nithi County.

4.5 Influence of Self-esteem on Students' Discipline

The study sought to establish the influence of self-esteem on students discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County. To test the association, the following hypothesis was tested through Ho:

Ho: *There is no significant difference on the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya*

Hypothesis one was tested using chi-square test. The results are displayed in Table 6

Table 6: Cross tabulation of Self-Esteem and Students Discipline

Self-esteem	Discipline					Total	Chi-square test
	Extremely low	Low	Moderate	High	Extremely high		
Disagree	1	1	0	0	3	5	$\chi^2=30.04$ df=12 Sig=0.003
Undecided	0	3	7	7	5	22	
Agree	11	31	35	33	14	124	
Strongly Agree	16	17	21	26	38	118	
Total	28	52	63	66	60	269	

The cross tabulation was used to determine the influence of self-esteem on students' discipline. The results showed that, there was significant influence of self-esteem on students' discipline (Chi – square value = 30.04, df = 12 and Sig (P-value) = 0.003) at 5% significance level. Since the p-value = 0.003 is less than 0.05, this

shows that an increase in self-esteem influences students' discipline in secondary schools. From the results, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of self-esteem on students discipline was not supported (reject null hypothesis) in the current study at 5% significant level.

In a research carried out in America by Van Pelt (2011) points out that the results of positive self-esteem to learners are desirable and characterize individuals who have accepted themselves. He continues to say that students with positive self-esteem are able to live positively with what they are unable to change. Also, he argued that positive self-esteem enables a person to recognize the difference and uniqueness inherent in people. Thus one can appreciate the differences and unique characteristics in each human being instead of resenting or fearing them.

Stewart (2007) warns against people who bolster their self-esteem at expense of others. Stewart argues that this tendency hampers good interpersonal relationship and healthy communication with others. These people as Pearson (2011) observed, rarely focus on anyone for more than a moment and, even then, they do not concentrate on the other person's message. Rosenberg (2008) also notes that people suffering from negative self-esteem constantly berate themselves and are not able to maintain good relationships with colleagues and teachers.

A number of studies contradict the findings that self-esteem influences the discipline of secondary school students. Branden (2009) in his study of the relationship between students' level of self-concept and discipline established that very few cases of students indiscipline was influenced by their self-concept. He went on to elaborate that the value one attaches on self may not necessarily affect the way high school students conducted themselves. In fact he discovered that a number of those whose self-esteem was low had performed extremely well in discipline. Students with low self-esteem would be seen relating well and assisting those in conflicts.

According to Borum (2011), discipline of students was affected by very many factors and the least of them was self-esteem. In his study in Lagos, Nigeria, he observed that most of the fights and general disobedience was displayed by those students who were termed as having high level of self-esteem. He continued to point out that absenteeism and failure to do assignments was found in all students either with high level of self-esteem and with negative self-esteem.

However, the findings of the study were supported by the views of other authors. According to Abiero (2009) students with a high level of self-esteem influenced the way they related with others – teachers, students and parents. He opines 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) also, found out that teachers 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.

Dobson (2012) argues that life skills education is very crucial in the growth and developmental stages of every human being. He continued to say that self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-efficacy play a significant role in the modification of workers discipline in their places of work. Workers, who understood themselves and what they wanted in life, were better disciplined and organized than those who hated themselves and the kind of jobs they were doing. The workers, who did their work as a profession and as a calling, showed a lot of commitment and discipline and portrayed a lot of team spirit and responsibility in task performance.

According to Handler (2010) the teacher is very crucial in curriculum development and there is need to ensure his mind is sober when dealing with learners and the society. Handler emphasizes that the teachers discipline could be affected by his psychological challenges that are caused by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Handler emphasizes that some of the intrinsic factors could be the value-judgment of the teacher, his level of motivation and his relationship with others in the work place. He stresses that the teachers level of self-esteem could affect the self-esteem of his students.

4.6 Causes of Indiscipline among Students

The researcher sought information from the students on the cause of students' indiscipline in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County. The information was analysed by determining the percentage of the occurrence of the type of indiscipline. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 7

Table 7: Causes of Students' Indiscipline in Secondary Schools

Causes	Frequency	%
Peer Influence	234	82.3
Availability of drugs	216	75.6
Unfairness among teachers	193	68.3
High handedness of administration	185	65.4
Unmet promises from administration	176	62
Lack of dialogue and communication	165	58.1
Influence from other schools	162	57.2
Poor coverage of syllabus	159	55.6
Fear of exams	151	53
Media influence	16	5.9
Poor meals	20	7.4
Students' council siding with administration	145	51.3
For fame	53	19.5
Lack of role models	19	7

According to Table 7, most common causes of indiscipline as reported by most of the respondents were peer influence (82.3%), availability of drugs (75.6%), high handedness of administration (65.4%), unmet promises from administration (62.0%) and lack of dialogue and communication (58.1%). However, there were least causes of indiscipline as reported by respondents such as media influence (5.9%), lack of role models (7%) and poor meals (7.4%).

According to Dondo (2005) learners indiscipline is enhanced by many factors among them peer influence, drug and substance abuse and lack of dialogue with learners. Okorodudu (2013) points out that, factors causing students indiscipline could be within or without the learners and he greatly emphasized on negative self-esteem, and the environment of the learner. These studies confirm some of the causes of indiscipline in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.7.1 Level of Discipline among Students

Deputy Head-teachers felt that the discipline of students is high although they are few cases of indiscipline especially among boys such as; Sneaking out of school, Fighting, Vandalism, Noise making, Sneaking out of school, Taking alcohol and bullying

Heads of Curriculum also felt that students' discipline was high particularly in most girls' schools. Some of the indiscipline cases they mentioned included; Failure to complete assignments, Laziness, Noise making and Conflicts with others

Most of the Heads of Guidance & Counseling pointed out that discipline of students was above average particularly in single boarding schools. Although cases of indiscipline in both boys and girls were noted such as; poor time management, laziness, drug abuse and Few schools' had cases of strikes within the year (in two schools).

4.7.2 Factors Affecting Students' Discipline

Deputy Head-teachers noted that factors affecting students' discipline were intra factors, factors outside the student, within or outside the school. These factors include; Low self-esteem and negative attitude towards self; Failure to be understood by parents, Peer influence, Media influence, lack of proper guidance and counseling and lack of good role models.

Heads of Curriculum felt that factors affecting discipline could be traced at school, home and society. Some of the factors they cited included; Poor family backgrounds, Lack of support and follow up from parents, Location of the school, Political problems and unfairness of teachers in dealing with discipline.

Generally, Heads of Guidance & Counseling felt that discipline of students is affected by very many factors which included; Poor role models in society, pressure for good results from parents and teachers, Intra personal conflicts, adolescence crisis and unfairness of the students' leaders and teachers. These factors are found in most of the schools as highlighted by the respondents.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions of the Study

The study established that, there is significant association between self-esteem and students' discipline in secondary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. This implies that an improvement of self-esteem enhanced students' discipline in secondary schools. The aspects of self-esteem such as self-belief in being good, self-feeling of success and self-satisfaction with self-image help students not to bully others, avoid vandalism and assist them to relate well with other students. This is important for a conducive learning environment in

secondary schools.

The study established that self-esteem of students could be improved through guidance and counseling, interaction with other schools, participation in symposiums, strengthening peer counseling, supporting needy students, motivating students by accepting them and rewarding where necessary. Furthermore, the respondents pointed out the importance of strengthening their spirituality and beatitudes, promoting their reading culture to gain more knowledge on how to improve self-esteem, engaging motivational speakers, practicing living consciously and regular reinforcement and talks on self-awareness.

The study established the following as some of the causes of students' indiscipline in secondary schools; peer influence, availability of drugs, unfairness among teachers, high handedness of administration and unmet promises from administration. Also, the researcher noted that lack of dialogue and communication, poor coverage of syllabus, influence from other schools, and fear of exams as well as students' council siding with administration were cited as causes of students' indiscipline in secondary school in Tharaka Nithi County.

5.2 Recommendation of the Study

In order to enhance students' discipline in secondary schools, there is need to build self-esteem among students. This will guarantee good discipline which may lead to a conducive learning environment in secondary schools.

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