
Standard eight pupils from two marginalised and two non-marginalised schools were purposively sampled from Mathare division, Nairobi (N =330; 177 boys; 153 girls). The main objectives of the study were to investigate:

1. Sex difference in self concept
2. Sex differences in academic achievement.
3. Differences in self concept of marginalised and non-marginalised school pupils.
4. Differences in academic achievement of pupils in marginalised and marginalised schools.
5. Interaction effects of sex, and self concept on the academic achievement of pupils in the sample.
6. Interaction effects of school type and self concept on the academic achievement of pupils in the sample.

Self reported home background data elicited from pupils questionnaires ascertained the that purposive sampling of schools was adequately done. The ten step academic ability ladders developed and validated by Kilpatrick & Cantril (1960) were modified by the researcher to seven stepladders. A pilot study indicated that the seven step self concept measure was quite stable over a two week interval with variation in student location in the pretest and posttest having a relatively low (13%) error chance. Ten step ladders have been used successfully in Kenya before by Maritim (1979), and Muasya (1989). A self-developed paired comparison technique generated rankings of ability in the seven subjects. Data obtained on these comparisons enabled the researcher to test directional hypotheses where applicable.

Two-way analysis of variance methods were used to analyze data at the $\alpha \leq 0.01$ level of significance. The findings indicated:

- Significant sex differences in self concept for Geography, History & Religious education and the Science & Agriculture Subject areas. Boys had higher self concepts than girls in these subjects.

- Significant sex differences in academic achievement for Home science & Business Education only. Girls achieved higher scores than boys in this subject.

- Significant interaction effects of sex and self concept on achievement in Home science & Business education and GHC & RE. Depending on the achievement area sex and self concept accounted for 14% to 45% of the variance in achievement.
- Significant school differences in self concept for Kiswahili and GHC & RE. Pupils in Marginalised schools had higher self concepts in Kiswahili and GHC & RE compared to those from non-marginalised schools.

- Significant school differences in academic achievement for all subjects. Marginalised pupils had lower achievement scores compared to their non-marginalised counterparts.

- Significant interaction effects of school and self concept on achievement in all subjects. Depending on the achievement area, school and self concept accounted for 35% to 62% of the variance in achievement.

It was concluded that sex and school differences in self concept and achievement are subject specific. High self concepts do not necessary correspond to high achievement levels. The school type contributes more to variance in achievement compared to sex of the pupil. The observed school differences suggested that marginalised pupils still need serious attention if their achievement levels are to be raised. Indeed they have high self concept in some subjects even if they perform poorly. The role of specific school related factors in academic achievement needs further investigation. The results can be used to encourage pupils to work harder in specific subjects. Measures can be taken to improve the achievement level of marginalised pupils so that they obtain higher scores in the KCPE national examination.