

**STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' RETENTION PERCEPTION AS
PREDICTORS OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/ institution for certification. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works including the internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.



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DEDICATION

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my parents Romano Nangithia and Joanina Tuulu for laying the foundation for my education. I also dedicate it to my wife Nkatha, and children Makena, Nkirote, Gatwiri, Thurania, Loina and Mwendu for their prayers and patience.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FPE	Free Primary Education
GoK	Government of Kenya
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NELS	National Educational Longitudinal Study
RSES	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TPARS	Teacher Perceptions about Retention Survey
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

Retention is a common intervention strategy often used when students fail to meet minimum standards on academic assessments. It has remained a controversial and highly debated topic in education despite many years of research. In Kenya, there have been mixed concerns both in private and public schools due to teacher and school accountability demands. Although numerous researches have been done on class retention, there is a dearth of local studies on retention perception. This study sought to establish the extent to which secondary school students' and teachers' retention perception relates to self-esteem and academic achievement. Erickson's Psychosocial Theory formed the logical theoretical basis to explain the study. The study adopted correlation design. The study targeted secondary school teachers and students drawn from Meru County which had 283 public secondary schools. Cluster sampling was used to select 28 public schools; random sampling to select 336 form four students and purposive sampling to select 28 form four class teachers. Questionnaires with standardized scales were used as the main tool for data collection. A pilot study was done to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments. Cronbach coefficient alpha was used to ascertain internal consistency. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and analyze the collected data. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The null hypotheses were tested. The level of significance used in rejecting a null hypothesis was $p < .05$. No significant difference was found between students' and teachers' retention perception ($t(183) = .32, p > .05$). Students' self-esteem had significant correlation with teachers' perception ($r(26) = .84, p < .05$) as well as with students' perception ($r(333) = .63, p < .05$). Academic achievement had significant correlation with teachers' perception ($r(26) = .83, p < .05$) as well as with students' perception ($r(333) = .79, p < .05$). Academic achievement correlated positively and significantly with self-esteem ($\chi^2(18) = 492.84, p < .05$). A major finding was that students with a positive perception developed a high self-esteem and also attained high academic grades. The major conclusion is that teachers' and students' perception have a direct relationship with students' self-esteem and academic achievement. There is therefore need for educators to avoid forcing students to repeat and rather employ other strategies including individualized remedial programs. If retention has to be used, it must be as a last result when all other measures have failed to work. However voluntary retention should be considered to allow students to catch up with the rest.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives, research hypotheses and significance of the study. It also highlights the limitations and delimitations, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework and operational definitions of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Retention also known as grade retention, repetition or flanking in western countries has been a common yet controversial practice in many education systems worldwide and still remains a subject of serious debate among educationists (Brent, 2010).

Retention of students can occur for several reasons, however the two most commonly used are when students fail to meet the requirements of school set targets or when students are seen as immature for their class. Supposedly an extra year is intended to help students reach the levels of the particular curriculum for that class (Bonvin, Bless, & Schuepback, 2008). According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) global monitoring (Education for all) report 2008, retention occurs when students are held in the same class for an extra year rather than being promoted to the next class along with their peers. However, it is important to

note that in the Kenyan context retention is commonly used to mean the deliberate attempt to have those students enrolled in a class remain in the system without dropping out. For the purposes of this study, retention will be used to mean repetition or holding back a child in the same class for an extra year.

The way teachers and students perceive the practice of retention is likely to predict students' self-esteem and academic outcomes. However, in recent years, research has been extensively done regarding class retention in higher education with little success on whether it predicts students' behavior positively or negatively (Mbuva, 2011).

Past research has associated class retention with negative outcomes at the individual, school and national levels which include low self-esteem, low academic motivation and negative peer relationships which lead to long-term problems such as low academic achievement, behavioral problems and school dropout (Njora, 2010). With higher standards and requirements placed upon teachers, students and education administrators across the world, the debate surrounding retention and social promotion continue to surface in the public arena, in educational circles, and in the political realm across many education systems.

Some countries have attempted to address the question of retention through legislation to guide policy and practice in order to reduce the frustration of students who may be retained or at risk of retention. Organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists (2003) and the American

Educational Research Association (2000) have drafted strong policy statements against grade retention to deter its use.

In the United States of America, a majority of citizens supported the passing of the No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 raising the bar of accountability expectations for teachers and students (Larsen & Akmal, 2007). The NCLB legislation required raising promotion requirements and used performance on standard examinations to determine whether children move on to the next grade level or not thereby abandoning the old age practice of automatic social promotion (Wu, West, & Hughes, 2008). This legislation rekindled debate of grade retention in the public domain in the U.S (Gleason, Kwok, & Hughes, 2007).

In Kenya, the Basic Education Act (2012) has clearly stated that no student enrolled in school should be held back in any class. The government has put up measures to implement automatic transition and transfer between grades and levels of education in order to address the challenges of retention (MoE, 2012). The basic education act was enacted to be in line with the requirements of the new constitution (2010) that guarantees free basic education as a right and the Kenya vision 2030 whose key education agenda was to achieve education for all (EFA) by 2015, improve access, equity, quality and transition at all levels of education. The introduction of free primary education (FPE) by the NARC government in 2003 was aimed at ensuring that all children remain in school. However, under-reporting of retention is common in Kenya because of the official policy banning it and the lack of clear guidelines to enforce the policy

systematically. Although the law is clear on retention practice, it is evident that retention occurs with sufficient frequency to merit research attention in Kenya. Data from the Ministry of Education (EMIS) indicate that the national repetition rate stood at 14% in primary school while dropout rate was 37% in both primary and secondary school in 2003.

The general perception of teachers is that a student must attain a certain score for him/her to be allowed to proceed to the next class and if not, retention should be considered. Some teachers feel that retention gives students a chance to mature and be better prepared for their future schooling while others feel that making weak children repeat exactly the same curriculum seems wasteful. A survey among secondary school teachers in Belgium showed that retention does have a negative effect on children's confidence in their own abilities thus injuring their self-esteem. In addition, just fewer than 50% of secondary school teachers interviewed believed that children could fully catch up the following year (Meuret, 2002). Witmer, Hoffman, and Nottis (2004) contends that majority of teachers believed retention was an effective practice for preventing failure. Research on teacher's perception in some selected African countries concluded that most teachers perceived retention favorably and as a crucial tool for weaker children who needed to be given another opportunity to improve their knowledge and be more prepared for the higher levels of schooling. Nearly 80% of Senegalese teachers thought retention was an efficient measure, and 18% thought it was extremely efficient. Only 2% believed that retention was totally inefficient (Michaelowa, 2003).

A majority of the research findings have found out that students perceived class retention negatively and saw it as a stressful life event (Anderson, Jimerson and Whipple 2004). In their study, 87% of the students interviewed reported that retention made them feel sad, bad, upset or embarrassed.

These findings were confirmed by Pattey (2010) who rated grade retention as the third most stressful event for a student after losing a parent and going blind. Jimerson et al (2006) compiled results of 20 studies that had been conducted from 1990-1999 to establish the effectiveness of grade retention. Retained students were followed up to the age of 21 and findings showed that due to frustration emanating from retention policies in the education system, most of them ended up dropping out of school.

The mere presence of a repeater in a classroom could have serious implications on the repeaters and those who watch them repeat. Consequently, this could result in failure as a result of continuous insulting behavior and unfair treatment by the teachers and their fellow classmates (Bushra, 2011). Negative perception by teachers and other members of the peer group towards repeaters often result in stigmatization and loneliness on the part of the repeaters and this eventually robs the repeater experiences that facilitate adjustment and development of positive self-esteem (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). According to Jimerson & Kaufman (2003), despite conclusions that retention causes

negative effects on students' academic and socio-emotional outcomes, the practice has continued to increase over the years.

Sirin and Jackson (2001) found out that academic achievement is highly influenced by perceived competence, the locus of control, autonomy and motivation. Past research has shown that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate directly to a moderate degree (Ross and Broh, 2000).

In Kenya, the decision to repeat is made by the schools quietly because the ministry of education has outlawed the practice (EMIS, 2003). Final examination increases the pressure on secondary school administrators to retain low achieving students to allow them more time to prepare for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and improve the schools' mean score. However, no one seems to be concerned about the psychological effects that the practice may have on the repeaters and those at risk of retention in the classrooms.

Self-esteem is a function of reflected appraisals of the significant others like teachers and peers (Awor, 2010). There is considerable evidence that students' poor academic achievement in school is to a large extent the result of a misconceived perception of the self and the world around them (Kwena, 2007). Kwena (2007) asserts that a child who is forced to repeat a class due to low academic achievement may not be motivated to continue with schooling and his attendance may slacken resulting from low self-esteem. Students who are perceived unfavorably by their teachers and significant others because of

retention are likely to perceive themselves as incapable of achieving. Such students are more likely to develop a negative attitude towards school, attain low academic grades and most likely drop out of school. Conversely, students who are favorably perceived will have a high self-esteem and are more likely to achieve highly (Kwena, 2007).

In the case of secondary school students who are going through adolescence, perceived competence or incompetence resulting from school experiences such as fear of retention will determine success in school and eventual psychosocial adjustment. If a student perceives the school as boring and a burden they are likely to have a negative opinion about their performance and this could lead them to perform poorly in examinations. Conversely, students are likely to have a positive perception if they are involved in the decision about retention which makes them develop a high self-esteem and perform better in their academics.

The present study was designed to find out the extent to which retention perception of secondary school students and teachers predicted self-esteem and academic achievement in Meru County with a view of reducing learner's frustration and improving educational outcomes in the country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The question of retention has remained a controversial topic to discuss particularly in Kenya where the practice is outlawed yet secretly practiced in many schools (EMIS, 2003). Underreporting of retention cases is common due

to fear of government monitoring. This scenario has complicated the situation for local researchers who despite having knowledge that schools are practicing retention encounter resistance in getting data of the retention cases.

In Meru County, although no substantial data about retention rates was found at the education offices, some of the interviewed candidates agreed to having repeated a class during the education cycle. However, retention indicators such as an increase in student indiscipline cases in secondary schools just before the national examinations were evident. In the second term of 2016 alone, 67 out of 382 registered schools recorded unrests. Cases of students cheating in K.C.S.E have also been on the rise with 346 out of 15,312 KCSE candidates in 2013 having their results canceled due to exam malpractices. Coupled with these is the declining trend in performance with the county mean score dropping from 4.90 in 2012 to 4.33 in 2013 (EMIS data from the County Director of Education). The above trends in Meru County could be pointers to the underlying problems associated with the students' fear of retention due to pressure by parents and school administrators for students to attain high grades to maintain the school mean score.

The fate of the repeaters, the at-risk students, and those who watch the others repeat due to high academic standards set by the schools has not been adequately addressed. Kwena (2007) investigated some selected factors for academic self-concept. However, this study did not adequately address retention perception of secondary school students and teachers with a view of establishing its relationship with self-esteem and academic achievement in

order to help teachers, students, and education administrators to reduce student frustration resulting from the fear of retention.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which secondary school students' and teachers' retention perception relate to student's self-esteem and academic achievement in Meru County- Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

- i. To find out the differences between students' and teachers' perception of retention.
- ii. To establish the relationship between teachers' perception of retention and students' self-esteem.
- iii. To establish the relationship between students' perception of retention and self- esteem.
- iv. To find out the relationship between teachers' perception of retention and academic achievement of students.
- v. To find out the relationship between students' perception of retention and academic achievement.
- vi. To determine the relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H_{a1}: There are significant differences between teachers' and students' perception of retention.

H_{a2}: There is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of retention and students' self-esteem.

H_{a3}: There is a significant relationship between students' perception of retention and self-esteem.

H_{a4}: There is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of retention and students' academic achievement.

H_{a5}: There is a significant relationship between students' perception of retention and academic achievement.

H_{a6}: There is a significant relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the assumption that the students' and teachers' perceptions of retention influenced students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

It was also assumed that the selected schools practiced retention. The study also assumed that the respondents answered the questionnaire items honestly.

1.8 Limitations of the study

A key limitation of this study was that it only involved form four students and their class teachers. The researcher assumed that retention was more prevalent at this level and also took into consideration the fact that these students and their class teachers were experienced enough to give reliable information. The study neither considered school category nor gender of the students in the schools. This limited generalizability of the findings due to the fact that retention perception could vary depending on gender, and category of the schools.

Another limitation was the respondents' resistance due to the sensitivity of the topic. The researcher however used four well trained research assistants who made the students and teachers to understand the purpose of the study.

A final limitation was that the study relied on students' own rating of self-esteem making it difficult to rule out a degree of subjectivity in the final findings. Furthermore, teachers' rating of students' perception also increased the degree of subjectivity. The researcher however ensured that the questions asked to both the teachers and students were adjusted accordingly to capture the respondents' level of understanding of the construct of retention.

1.9 Delimitations

Interpretation of results was only based on data obtained from form four students and their class teachers in selected secondary schools in Meru County leaving other classes where students could also have been retained.

The subject of class retention is very broad however; this study focused only on perception of students and teachers and how they relate to student's self-esteem and academic achievement. Even though there are other factors that influence students' self-esteem and academic achievement such as individual differences in learning and personality differences, the researcher concentrated only on students' and teachers' perception of retention as predictors of self-esteem and academic achievement.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study will be significant to teachers at secondary school level who may consider it necessary to retain students in order to improve their results at KCSE without considering the negative influence of the practice on the students. This study will provide teachers with clear knowledge of the consequences of their perception of retention in relation to both academic achievement and self-esteem of the students so as to reduce students' frustration

On the other hand the study will help students to make informed choices regarding retention particularly those students who feel that they did not do enough at one level and who may want to improve grades. The findings will also inform the ministry of education to come up with better policies and enforcement mechanisms to reduce the negative effects of retention.

The study will also help parents who in most cases request that their children repeat without consulting them by bringing to light the harmful effects of

retention and how it damages their self-esteem and academic achievement. Such parents will consider it prudent to consult with teachers and students before making decisions on retention.

Over all, the study will be of great help to the ministry of education in Kenya because the question of retention has been a challenge for decades.

1.11 The Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the psychosocial theory (Erickson, 1959).

Psychosocial Theory (Erickson, 1959)

Research showing how identity develops through perceptions and how it relates to self-esteem and academic achievement is based on Erickson's work on ego identity (Erickson 1959). According to Erikson, personality develops in a series of stages. The theory describes the effect of social experience across the whole lifespan (the development of ego identity). Ego identity is the conscious sense of self that we develop through social interaction. According to Erikson, our ego identity is constantly changing due to new experiences and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others. In addition to ego identity, Erikson also believed that a sense of competence motivates behaviors and actions. Each stage in Erikson's theory is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life.

In each stage, Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development. In his view, these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. During

these times, the potential for personal growth is high, but so is the potential for failure. Adolescents are faced with identity versus role confusion crisis. This is the stage when they are beginning to develop a sense of self. They begin to pick up on their own social and personal identity. Their perceptions begin to be more complex and if frustrated by thoughts of negative school experiences like fear of retention, anxiety sets in and this could result in low self-esteem, impaired peer relationships, and increase in behavioral problems including negative attitudes towards school. Indeed, many adolescents will deny having repeated a class for fear of social stigma either from their peers or teachers

A strong sense of identity protects the adolescent from stress and helps them to take life positively. The adolescent learns to control impulses and feelings. One feels guilty for actions that go beyond limits set by teachers and parents.

The frustration self-esteem model developed by Finn (1989) is based on Erikson's theory and it identifies problem behaviors and low academic achievement as reasons students drop out of high school. In this model students who achieve low grades are at risk of retention and thus develop a lower self-esteem which causes unhappiness and dislike of school. Consequently, such students are more likely to attain low academic grades, suffer frustration and drop out of school. Repeaters are likely to feel anxious about the reactions of their peers and significant others to their status as school failures. A student who is retained is separated from peers thus may end up feeling terrified and unsure about him/herself, while the rest of the students feel threatened by the imagination that they could be asked to repeat. Such a scenario is likely to

create low self-esteem that may impact negatively on academic achievement. This study was deemed necessary find out the relationship between students' and teachers' perception, students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

1.12 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in figure 1.1 below shows the relationship between students' and teachers' retention perception, students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

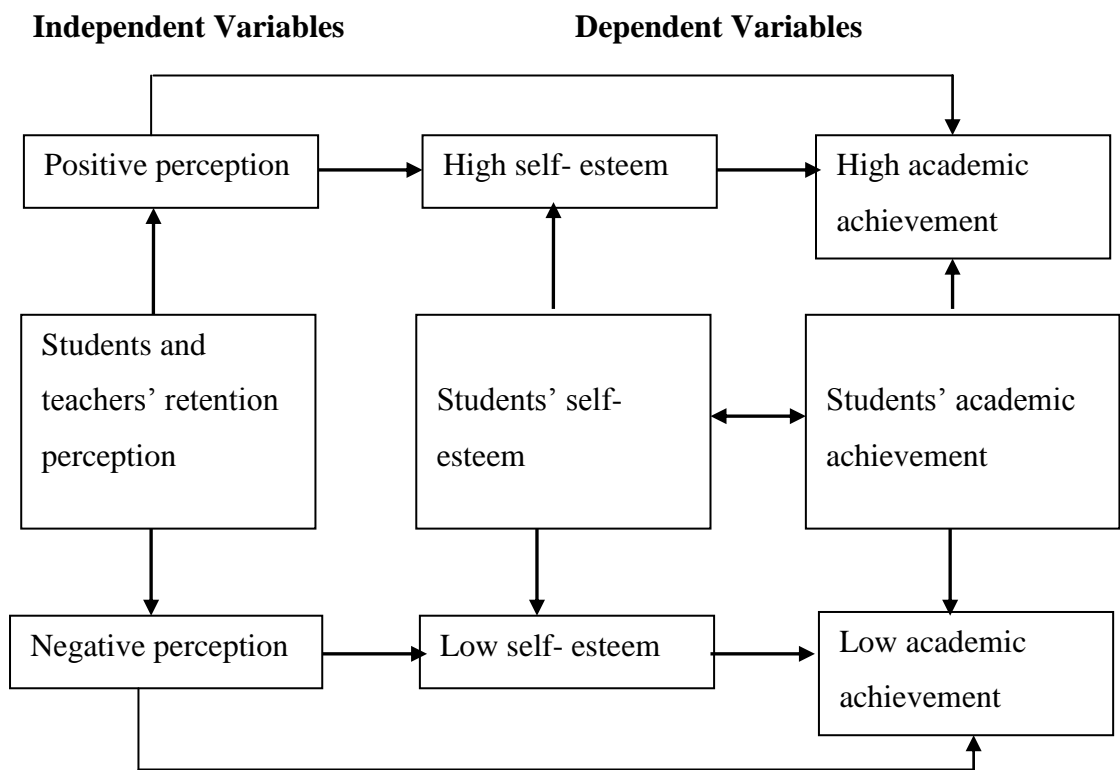


Figure 1: The interrelationship between variables in the study

Note \longrightarrow Direction of influence \longleftrightarrow Reciprocal influence

Figure 1 is a summary of how teachers' and students' retention perception relate to students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

Students' and teachers' perception of retention have a direct influence on students' self-esteem and academic achievement. In cases where students' perception of retention is positive, they develop a high self-esteem and this translates to a high academic achievement. Conversely, in cases where the students perceive retention negatively, they develop low self-esteem and it follows that their academic achievement is low.

In cases where teachers perceive retention positively, they relate well with the retained students thus the students develop positive self-esteem and this motivates them to work hard and achieve highly in academics. If teachers on the other hand do not relate well with the retained students and make them understand the reasons for retention, the students develop negative attitudes to others and to teachers that eventually result in low academic achievement. Likewise, positive perception of teachers and students will have a direct positive relationship with students' academic achievement in that when teachers support the academically weak students, there is a likelihood that these students will be motivated to work hard to improve their grades.

Self-esteem and academic achievement also influence each other in that students who have a high self-esteem are likely to achieve highly in academics. Likewise students with a high academic achievement are also more likely to develop a positive self-esteem.

1.13 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Academic Achievement: Was used to refer to students' performance in mock examinations.

At- risk Group: Those students who were attaining low grades and who may be considered for retention.

Retention Perception: The views, beliefs, attitudes and perspectives of teachers and students concerning the practice of retention.

Retention: This term is used in western countries synonymously with flanking to mean the act of a student repeating a class.

Social Promotion: Allowing students to proceed to the next class automatically.

Socio- emotional Outcomes: This phrase was used to mean the psychological results of retention e.g. Low self-esteem.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on students' and teachers' perception of class retention and its relationship to students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The literature on the relationship between the self-esteem and academic achievement has also been reviewed.

2.2 Overview of Class Retention

Class retention is a phrase used to indicate repetition of an academic year. There are many factors that contribute to students being retained in their current academic year instead of progressing with their peers or classmates to the next class. Intellectual disability is one of the main reasons as to why students are retained (Sermier, Dessemontet, 2013). A consultation between parents of the child and the teacher who is overseeing the academic progress of the student determines whether a student will be retained or not. A student is also held back if he or she appears to be young or immature as compared to their peer group. Baker et al. (2010) note that in many schools, tests are frequently used to determine whether a child will go on to the next class or repeat the class they are currently in. Wynn (2010) posits that more than half of school children had been retained at least once in the 19th century. Since then, research done on class retention has been overwhelming.

Grade retention has over the years continued to be a widely used policy tool in various regions. Its general relation to academic achievement and the rate of school completion has been and continues to be a subject of a century empirical research. Results of over 44 studies carried out between 1911 and 1973 focusing mainly on the effects of class retention and social promotion on low-achieving students and those with socio- emotional problems were published in 1975. These studies concluded that retention was more beneficial than the promotion of students with academic or adjustment difficulties (Halverstadt, 2009).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Jimerson, Burns, and Silberglitt (2006), findings revealed that class retention did not yield any advantage in reading abilities from first to eighth grade. They concluded that retained students had lower levels of academic adjustments by the end of eleventh grade, and were more likely to drop out. Gleason et al. (2007) conducted a longitudinal study designed to find out the short-term effects of grade retention on peer relations and academic performance (N=350). Instruments used to collect data were Likert-scale teacher questionnaires, peer socio-metric evaluations, teacher interviews, and individual student interviews. Data was analyzed by using maximum-likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and a mean-adjusted chi-square statistic test. Results indicated that retention had a significant positive effect on peer acceptance and on teacher-perceived and peer-perceived academic competence, concluding that those students who were

retained benefited from an extra year in grade in terms of academic achievement and peer acceptance.

Jimerson's (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 169 studies on grade retention. The analysis concluded that 5% of 169 analyses of academic achievement outcomes favored retained students and 47% favored low-achieving promoted peers. He further noted that any gains from retention disappeared over a relatively short period of time. The results of over 700 analyses from over 80 studies during the past 75 years did not support the use of retention to achieve academic achievement or enhance self-esteem and behavioral adjustment (Jimerson, et al., 2006). On the issue of student adjustment, retained students were two to eleven times more likely to drop out of school as a result of the fear of retention that increased that risk by 20 to 50% (Jimerson, et al., 2006). Retention did not appear to negatively affect children academically or self-esteem in the early years, however, as the child progresses through the grades the gains were lost apparently weakening the repeater's attachment to school, this was according to a study by Gleason and colleagues.

In most countries, this practice has been strongly discouraged or even banned due to its negative impact on students' self-esteem and social behavior (Demant & Van Houtte, 2013). The application of this practice, however, is often carried out in many elementary and secondary schools. Class repetition occurs in the first grade in most instances. Schools worldwide experience higher grade repetitions at the start of school cycle than they do in the subsequent years (Martin, 2009). This observation is typically attributed to

inadequate school readiness and serious challenges with the student's learning abilities or cases of high enrollments which have not been accompanied by appropriate levels of supervision and provisioning as noted by (Wu, West, & Hughes, 2010). In high-level classes, this approach is restricted to the subject that the student is an underperformer as compared to their peers.

Another longitudinal study conducted by Silbergitt, Appleton, Burns, and Jimerson (2006) found out that grade retention did not give any advantage in reading abilities from first to eighth grade. Retained students had lower levels of academic achievement, were more likely to drop out of school, less likely to receive a diploma, and also less likely to be enrolled in post-secondary education. Students who had been retained often received lower education/employment status ratings, and were paid less per hour (Ferguson, Jimerson, & Dalton, 2001). Further, a twelve-year, follow-up, longitudinal study using stratified, random sampling failed to prove retention as a positive intervention strategy and retained students were more likely to drop out of school than socially promoted peers (Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007).

Yamamoto and Byrnes (1987) administered a 20-item stress questionnaire entitled, "What Do You Think?" as part of a larger and more comprehensive study to 548 elementary children in order to find out students' perception of grade retention. The majority of the students ranked retention among the most stressful event in life. Anderson, Jimerson, and Whipple (2005) replicated this study and found similar results, where respondents indicated grade retention was as stressful and mentally decapitating as going blind or losing a parent.

Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber (2003) evaluated the academic and behavioral outcomes of students in first grade through high School in Baltimore to explore the consequences of retention (Alexander et al., 2003). Being a longitudinal study, the impact of retention was traced over multiple years involving pupils, teachers, and parents. A stratified random sample of approximately 800 students was selected from a pool of children entering first grade in Baltimore City Public Schools. Twenty schools were chosen on a random basis after which samples of children were drawn in all 20 schools from students entering the first grade with parental consent obtained. The sampling included all first-grade classrooms in the 20 schools (Alexander et al. 2003). The study found out that retention had positive effects for many beginning school children, particularly for the first-time retained students and those retained after first grade, however, children retained multiple times and or retained in first grade presented both behavioral and academic problems (Alexander et al. 2003).

The United States Early Childhood Longitudinal Kindergarten cohort study done between 1998 and 2000 used a sample of more than 20,000 retained kindergarten pupils who were repeatedly observed to find out the possible negative effects of retention. Most students were observed in the fall and spring of their kindergarten year and in the spring of the first year of their retention. The data set contained repeated observations of a nationally represented sample of children, their families, teachers, and schools (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005). Findings indicated retention had no immediate benefit for students, but actually

had a negative effect on students' socio-emotional and academic outcomes. Hong and Raudenbush (2005) stated, "children who were retained could have learned more had they been promoted" (p. 220). Instead, the retained pupils were left further behind, where at the end of the retained year, the average loss in academic growth was equivalent to almost half a year's expected growth.

Studies performed have indicated lowered social-emotional outcomes of students who repeat classes. Holmes and Matthew (1994) reviewed over 650 studies addressing academic achievement, personal adjustment, self-concept, attendance and attitude toward school (Halverstadt, 2009). These studies observed significant differences between promoted and non-promoted students in all the five areas studied (Wynn, 2010). Retained students were more likely to perform poorly in school, had lower self-esteem, and had a poorer personal adjustment and a dislike for school in comparison to their promoted counterparts (Halverstadt, 2009).

Wynn (2010) explored the correlation between retention at the elementary level and how the students performed both academically and socially at the secondary level and found out those achievement scores of the non-promoted students were significantly lower than scores from promoted students. He concluded that there was evidence that the students who had previously been retained and made positive gains in elementary school did not sustain the positive academic gains in high school.

Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) reviewed the Jackson and Holmes and Matthews studies and concluded that there was overwhelming evidence that grade retention was harmful to students (Wynn, 2010). Although these studies represent a very small sample of the work done on class retention, in combination they total to over 1,000 significant analyses of achievement (Halverstadt, 2009). Most of the above studies show that retention is not capable of helping students improve their learning and academic success. Evidence from research gathered over the past 30 years on the practice of retention suggests that retention is academically ineffective and potentially detrimental to the social and emotional health of children (Frey, 2005). Longitudinal studies that have observed retained student over a long period have found out that the academic achievement of students who have been retained over time was no better than before retention, and their academic outcomes were poorer than their peers in the general population who were not retained (Dawson, 1998, as cited in Bowman, 2005). In follow-up analyses, the effects of grade retention were found to be negative irrespective of the grade in which students were retained. However, most of these studies did not adequately address the relationship between learners' perception of class retention, self-esteem, and academic achievement.

2.3 Differences between Student's and Teachers' Class Retention

Perception

For decades, extreme fear of retention has been a topic consistently analyzed, and researchers have been looking into ways in which student achievement is

influenced by the home or learning environment along with how to positively effect change in student achievement. A student's background, specifically his or her family, peers, school, and community, are determinates of the presence (or lack thereof) of risk factors (Clymer, 2013).

Negative attitudes by members of the peer group often lead to loneliness on the part of the repeater. Grade retention takes away a student's opportunity to have experiences that ease both development and adjustment of positive self-esteem resulting to a situation where such students are likely to develop poor self-image and maladjustment in behavior. The literature reviewed by many researchers has established class retention is harmful to children's social and emotional development, predominantly, whether retention has any adverse effects on a student's self-esteem (Pattey, 2010).

In his most recent study, Jimerson (2009) found out that only 5% of 169 analyses of academic achievement outcomes resulted in significant statistical differences favoring the retained students. Byrnes (1989) on the other hand investigated the effects of retention on social-emotional outcomes showed that retention increases the level of stress among repeaters in secondary schools. 87% of students interviewed indicated that repeating depressed them and equated repetition to loss of a parent or going blind. The study, therefore, concluded that repetition had a negative impact on the child's emotional state and feelings.

Hong and Raudenbush (2005) followed a sample of more than 20,000 retained Kindergarten students in the United States observing them through a

longitudinal study. The findings were that retention had no immediate benefit for students but actually had a negative impact on students' socio-emotional and academic outcomes. School imposed class retention is stressful to students and is associated with reduced self-esteem, strained peer relations, alienation from school and increases the likelihood of dropping out (Kwena 2007).

Anderson, Jimerson and Whipple (2004) sought to find out the most stressful life events among students in different grades. Surprisingly, across all the grade levels, the most stressful life events include losing a parent, academic retention and going blind. In this study, 87% of the students interviewed reported that being held back made them feel sad, bad, upset or embarrassed. Only 6% of the interviewees gave positive answers such as one learns more or it lets one catch up.

According to Pattey (2010), grade retention was the third most stressful event for a student after losing a parent and going blind. Pattey (2010) highlights a study carried out by Shepherd and Smith in 1990, and it concluded that out of all the students who participated in the research, 87% indicated that repeating a school year made them feel: depressed, upset, sad and embarrassed. Only a mere 6% of the respondents said that retention helped them catch up to their peer or improved their academic capabilities. Jimmerson and colleagues carried out a meta-analysis of 20 studies that had been conducted from 1990-1999 in 2006, and the outcome was quite shocking. Retained students were followed up to the age of 21 and findings showed that due to frustration by the education system, most of them ended up dropping out of school.

A majority of the research findings, therefore, concluded that students perceived class retention negatively and saw it as a stressful life event. Anderson, Jimerson and Whipple (2004). The current study thus endeavored to connect the students' and teachers' perception of class retention with self-esteem and academic achievement.

Teachers play a vital role in determining whether a student is promoted to the next class or not. However, according to Pattey (2010) the ultimate decision is made by a team of people that include the school principal, parents and sometimes other teachers. According to Witmer, Hoffman and Nottis (2004) teachers are not necessarily familiar with any research on retention. The same remarks were made by Richardson (2010) who, in fact, began his study by first educating the teachers on research available on retention. Consequently, teacher beliefs play a pivotal role in the decisions teachers make in the classroom especially regarding retention.

Most teachers form their perceptions based on previous experiences or by the influence of others other than on available research findings (Witmer, 2004). Due to a relationship between perceptions and action, certain teacher perceptions concerning educational issues such as retention are relatively important (Johnson & Howell, 2009).

Research has shown that teachers, especially in primary school, perceive retention as a viable option for students who are struggling (Roberts, 2007). A study done by Wynn (2010) observed that teachers support and use class

retention if students do not meet the set criteria for promotion to the next class. Of the 326 teachers surveyed in the above study, 83% supported retention and 76% linked poor academic performance to retention. The reason for the overwhelming support for grade retention was that it allowed students who lagged behind to catch up with the others. This reason was backed up by over 65% of the teachers. On whether it was harmful to retain a child, 39% of the teachers disagreed it was harmful to the students' self-esteem. Surprisingly, a majority 80% of the teachers interviewed disagreed that retained students had self-esteem problems. The Wynn (2010) studies also agree with those of Johnson and Howell (2009); Range (2009) and Xia and Glennie (2005).

Range (2009) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of pre-service teachers at two-four year universities and their perceptions regarding class retention using an online survey. The instrument used was a revised version of the Teacher Perceptions about Retention Survey (TPARS) developed by Tomchin (1989). Findings from this study indicated that pre-service teachers had an overall positive perception of grade retention because they believed it prevented future failure, helped maintain standards and assisted students who were struggling with language arts. A significant number of teachers perceived retention as necessary for students who were struggling academically and were immature. Some teachers felt that the threat of retention causes students to take academics more seriously.

Roderick (2002) agrees with this view and states that retention policies may motivate students to work harder and also encourage parents to carefully

monitor their child's progress. However, the motivation for non-promotion between teachers and school principals vary according to a more recent study conducted by Range, Pijanowski, Holt and Young (2012). Teachers believed that retention prevents future failure and motivates students to attend school. The principals' responses fell in the medium range showing they did not feel as strongly as the teachers that retention prevents future failure and motivates students to attend school (Range 2012).

Richardson (2010) seems to disagree with these findings, at least for the elementary students. In a study to find out the perception of elementary teachers towards retention, he concluded that teachers' perception was neutral. Teachers neither strongly disagreed nor strongly favored grade retention (Richardson, 2010). However, the teachers firmly agreed on several statements concerning retention of students. They strongly agreed that the practice was very traumatic to students in their intermediate years than their elementary years. Witmer (2004) in his study discovered that teachers believed a child would greatly benefit if they were retained between kindergarten and fourth-grade years.

Much of the above research was carried out in the western countries and among primary school children and their teachers. The current study sought to find out the perception of both students and teachers regarding class retention in secondary schools and how this perception influences self-esteem and academic achievement among adolescent students at a time when they are developing a sense of self and are more likely to perceive experiences

differently from young learners in primary school. Teachers in secondary school are also likely to have varied views on retaining students as compared to those at the kindergarten and upper primary school.

2.4 Relationship between Students' Class Retention Perception and Students' Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a complex psychological aspect of personality that cannot be observed directly and can only be inferred from students' self-report or from teacher's observation. It is a function of reflected appraisals of the significant others like family members, teachers, and peers. Self-esteem results from reflected appraisals in one's immediate social network (Aworì 2010). Self-esteem characterizes how a person feels about him/herself and it is an important determinant of our behavior.

In cases of adolescents, perceived competence resulting from school experiences like fear of retention will determine success in school and development of self-esteem. In early childhood, self-esteem reflects the value the child perceives he/she has in the eyes of others particularly those significant others.

The relationship between self-esteem and class retention has been an area that has received a lot of attention for years. Consequently, there are many scientific documents that try to relate the two aspects. Shepard and Smith (1990) concluded that children who had been retained at school had higher chances of developing lower self-esteem compared to those who did not.

Holmes & Matthews (1994) also reported negative impact of repetition on all spheres of life, including self-esteem a view that is also supported by Ellsworth and Lagace-Seguin (2009).

Mosley (2005) argues that individuals with low self-esteem are likely to perceive themselves as useless, unlikeable and incompetent whereas those with high self-esteem perceive themselves as successful leading them to perform better. Success is dependent upon a positive mental attitude because people who have a high self-esteem are more likely to work hard and have confidence in their skills and competence (Mosley, 2005). Bengulia (2007) concurs with the above finding and states "children with low self-esteem have a negative self-image and poor self-concept; they do not believe in themselves or others and feels that they have nobody to depend on" (p.17). Consistent with this view, Biegler (2000) found out that people with low self-esteem become discouraged and unmotivated particularly when they receive negative feedback about their performance.

Jimerson (2001) concluded that retained students scored significantly lower on self- perception and attitude measures than their promoted peers. Martin (2009) posited that retention caused serious harm to students' self-esteem with negative consequences still presenting in high school. Anderson; Whipple and Jimerson (2002) study on students' perceptions about retention, found that sixth-grade students viewed retention as the most significant life event they could experience. Jimerson and Ferguson (2007) concluded that retained students exhibited more behavior problems than their promoted peers. 9% of

the promoted group as per an analysis by (Jimerson 2001), did significantly better on social-emotional adjustment; 86% showed no difference, while 5% favored the retained group.

Will and Hughes (2010) in their study, found out that first-grade retention is associated with decreased teacher-rated hyperactivity, decreased peer relationship, sad and withdrawn behavior and increased teacher-rated behavioral maladjustment. The self-rated sense of school liking decreased significantly for retained students. Retention was found to be predictive of emotional distress, low self-esteem, poor peer relations, drug abuse, suicidal tendencies, aggressiveness and early sexual activity during adolescence (Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007). According to Xia and Kirby (2009), it is common sense that repeating school years has a negative effect on the emotional health and social adjustment of students. Consequently, student's self-esteem is affected and they suffer emotional distress as a result of the stigma associated with retention.

According to a study done in Pakistan by Chohan and Qadir (2013), the attitude of repeaters towards their teachers was negative. This is probably because the student blames the teacher for their failure and thus tries to stay away. In addition, students who were high in self-esteem saw their teachers as evaluating their academic performance more fairly compared to those with low self-esteem (Chohan & Qadir, 2013). Bangulia (2007) findings seem to agree with Chohan and Qadir (2013) conclusions since he also reported that as a

result of poor image and self-concept, children with low self-esteem blamed their failures on others.

As a result of low self-esteem, discipline issues also arise as reported by Chohan and Qadir (2013) and Stearns (2007). If the teachers do not relate well with the retained students and make them understand the decision to retain, the students develop negative attitudes to others and their teachers that in time grow to become discipline cases (Chohan & Qadir, 2013). Retained students were also found to be more sensitive and reserved. Chohan and Qadir (2013) argue that the separation of the students from their peers interferes with their social bonds and breaks friendships. Subsequently, the process of looking for friends in a totally new age group may be quite overwhelming which leads to sadness and loneliness (Chohan & Qadir, 2013).

Stearns and colleagues (2007) argue that class retention harms the social and emotional development of children which in turn damages their self-esteem and self-concept. Chohan and Qadir (2013) suggest that the events before and after retention may be very traumatizing to the student and consequently affect their psychological and mental state of mind. The situation is more serious for younger students who may not understand the reason for their failure and wrongly blame their teachers. According to Chohan and Qadir (2013), the situation calls for understanding and support from the family as well as the teachers.

Not all studies agree with the above findings that associate low self-esteem with grade repetition. Ellsworth and Lagace-Seguin (2009) sought to investigate the effect of class repetition from students who were held back sometime in their academic journey. The study comprised of fifty-one subjects among whom, 25 had repeated a school year, while the rest were the control subjects. In their analysis, 36% of the respondents said that it was a positive experience and the same number of respondents said that it was a negative experience. 28% of the respondents said that the whole experience was neutral. Consequently, Ellsworth and Lagace-Seguin (2009) study observed that the retained group did not differ significantly from those who had not been retained in matters of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Martin (2010) found grade retention to be a significant positive predictor of academic self-concept and maladaptive motivation. The study also indicated retention as being a significant positive predictor of self-esteem.

A large number of research studies have indicated that class retention is a major determinant of low self-esteem among students (Kwena 2007). The major argument is that grade retention damages students' self-image which consequently makes them picture themselves as failures, or as misunderstood, and it seems that everyone else is more capable than they are (Mosley, 2005). Sterns (2007) agrees with this view and argues that "retained students have lower self-esteem than continuously promoted students" (p.231). Most of these studies addressed class retention as a practice that affected self-esteem without

isolating students' and teachers' perceptions on retention as key predictors of students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

2.5 Relationship between Teachers' Class Retention Perception and Students' Self-Esteem

Range (2011) carried out a study on early primary grade teachers' perceptions about class retention using a descriptive survey design. In this study, teachers were reported to be more agreeable than principals that retention in the primary grade is beneficial and leads to improved self-esteem. Specifically, teachers agreed that grade retention in kindergarten improved student self-esteem. The teachers in the above study felt that students in the primary grades were too young to be stigmatized by retention (Tomchin & Impara, 1992), and thus, their self-esteem was not negatively affected by repeating a grade (Wynn, 2010). Thus, primary grade teachers viewed early grade retention as a formative and not summative intervention (Silberglitt, 2006). Secondly, teachers in this study believed that early grade retention benefits immature students in kindergarten and first grade. Teachers perceived learning as sequential and agreed that kindergarten students simply needed more time to learn (Beswick, 2008). The principals also agreed that retention in kindergarten benefited immature students more as compared to those students who were retained either in the first grade or second grade, a belief that points to the fact that the teachers agreed that early grade retention was more beneficial than later grade retention (Cannon & Lipscomb, 2011).

A survey among secondary school teachers in Belgium showed that teachers' believed that retention does have a negative effect on children's confidence in their own abilities. In addition, just fewer than 50% of secondary teachers surveyed believed that children could fully catch up the following year (Meuret, 2002). Kwena (2007) concurs with the above view that indeed class retention is likely to injure students' self-esteem.

In the study done by Range (2011), the comments made by teachers, in both the earlier and later grade levels, teachers indicated that their opinions came from their own personal experiences and from the students they had worked with and not from the research that was presented to them. Teachers ultimately concluded that retention was an appropriate intervention for a few students who had not fully understood pre-requisite content necessary for the next grade. Range's study also indicated that teachers strongly believed that retention did not negatively affect a students' future socio-emotional or academic development.

These findings are contrary to Jimerson (2009) who found out that retained students were more likely to experience adjustment difficulties hindering the development of positive self-esteem. Retained children were also found to develop negative perceptions about school leading to low academic achievement and eventual disengagement from school. The above studies did not conclusively address the relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' self-esteem in secondary school where the child is

trying to answer difficult questions about success and failure as defined by the self and the significant others including teachers (Jimmerson, 2009).

2.6 Relationship between students' Class Retention Perception and Academic Achievement

Certain scientific studies argue that the non-promotion effect on achievement depends on external factors. For instance, some scientific studies associate the extremely negative impact of retention on disability. According to Reschly and Christenson (2006) retained students with disabilities were 73% more likely to drop out of school and also less likely to go to post-secondary school. In addition, some studies show that in some instances, academic success is affected by grade repetition depending on the age of the student when they were held back. Retention has been observed to be highest in the early levels of education. For example, retaining students in first grade or nursery and class one is common not only in Kenya but across the world. When children at this age are retained, they find it hard to adjust academically and emotionally in a different age group (Roderick & Nagaoka, 2013).

The same study did not find any evidence to link greater academic achievement among third-grade students who had not been promoted. However, in sixth grade, there was evidence that retention led to lower academic growth (Roderick & Nagaoka, 2013). Ou and Reynolds (2013) also observed age-related differences in relation to retention. Their study comprised of 1,367 participants whose data was from their young age to age 24. The results

indicated that grade retention was generally linked to lower levels of enrollment in postsecondary education. Retention around later stages of school life such as between the fourth and eighth grade had a stronger association with lower rates of post-secondary education than retention between the first and third grades.

Jimerson & Ferguson (2007) research concluded that in the long run, repetition offers minimal academic achievement if any, in high school. A different study carried out by Jimerson & Ferguson (2007) compared the results of retained students and those who had been promoted but were low achieving, however, the significant difference between the two groups was alarming. Shockingly, those who had been promoted despite their poor performance performed better than the retained group. The same comparison was done on a group of adolescent students and results indicated that the retained group had lower achievement levels than the promoted group (Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007).

A student's background can also affect the academic achievement of retained students. Research carried out established that students who were from a poor background were more likely to be negatively affected by class retention as opposed to their counterparts from wealthy backgrounds (Allen & Robbins, 2008). Aggression and academic performance decline were noted to be higher in students who came from financially challenged backgrounds. Disappointment crops in when reality dawns that they are not their family's salvation from the claws of poverty. Such students were also noted to be likely to drop out from school in the future (Allen & Robbins, 2008).

Reynolds (2013) conducted a study to test the effects of early grade retention on reading achievement, mathematics, teacher ratings and perceived competence among fourth-grade students. In his study, it came out that cognitive achievement in reading and mathematics was severed by retention. In addition, the study found out that retention that was not related to teacher ratings had positive impacts on students' perceived competence in school, especially in children who were held back at a young age (Reynolds, 2013).

Lorence and Dworkin (2006) followed up on third-grade repeaters up to their tenth grade and found out that the reading scores of the retained students remained consistent with the socially promoted students, even after repeating the third grade. However, as the years went on, the students who had repeated third grade surpassed the socially promoted pupils (Lorence & Dowkin, 2006). This study is among the few studies that came up with positive results indicating that grade retention was positively correlated to academic achievement.

Hong and Raudenbush (2005) analyzed data from the U.S early childhood longitudinal study kindergarten cohort using the multilevel propensity score stratification technique. The study found no evidence that grade retention in kindergarten improves average academic achievement in math or reading. The study concluded that kindergarten retention left most students even further behind compared to their promoted peers.

When teachers encounter students who are weak academically, the immediate and obvious reaction is to recommend retention probably because retention appears to be an easy intervention and in their view, it helps students catch up with what they are required to learn at the particular grade. On the other hand, students perceive retention as an injustice and a cause of ridicule from their peers. Consequently, this has a negative effect on their academic work. In many educational systems, grade retention is frequently applied as a way of dealing with poor academic achievement. Students who are retained are usually those who fail to meet the requirements of academic grade that is set by the school. One of the basic pedagogical principles behind grade retention is the idea that it allows students more time for learning. However, it is important to note that the retained learners just go through the same content that they failed to grasp and rarely do teachers employ any special methods to address these students' weaknesses. (Bless, Bonvin, & Schuepbach, 2005).

Scientific studies on the effect of retention on academic achievements show mixed reactions. Holmes and Matthews (1984) conducted a meta-analysis comprising 44 studies of grade retention published between 1925 and 1981. Their findings suggest that students who were retained performed significantly less well than their promoted peers in the areas of language arts, reading, mathematics, work skills, social studies, and grade point average. Jameson's (2001) meta-analysis of 20 studies published between 1990 and 1999 showed that 80% of the studies reported negative outcomes following retention. Using data from both the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Study of Early Child and Youth Development (n= 51,364) and the Child Development Project (n= 5,585), Gibb (2010) found that students experienced increases in their language and mathematics performance in the year following retention, but performed less well in the second year following retention thus concluding that gains in post retention years went diminishing with time,

Houck (2009) reported similar findings from a 5-year longitudinal study of students who were retained in the fifth grade (n= 51,575). Some achievement gains were experienced in the first year following retention; however, the gains were not sustained. By eighth grade, retained students had fallen significantly below their grade peers in both reading and mathematics. Renaud (2009) study showed that retained students showed a very limited improvement in academic performance after retention. Two years later, the effect on academic achievement was found not significant. Jimerson and colleagues (2004) also agree that initial academic improvements may occur during the repeated year, but decline within two or three years, therefore, concluding that without specific interventions, most non-promoted students do not catch up.

The reason for no change in academic performance after two years is thought to be because the students were taught with the same methods and no efforts were made to give special attention to them. Silberglitt, Jimerson, Appleton, and Burns (2006) research findings also agree with those of Renaud (2009). Test scores of retained students in their initial year were compared with the scores in their repeated year. Afterward, these scores were compared to a group of promoted students. The results showed that there was no significant increase

or decrease in scores. In addition, promoted students had more overall growth compared to their retained counterparts (Silerglitt, 2006).

Gleason (2007) conducted a longitudinal study aimed at gathering data to study the short-term effects of grade retention on peer relations and academic achievement of first-grade children using Likert scale teacher questionnaires, peer socio-metric evaluations, teacher interviews, and individual students interviews found out that retention had a significant positive effect on peer acceptance and on teacher perceived and peer-perceived academic competence thus concluding that students who were retained benefited from the extra year in terms of peer acceptance. In fact, the final year of school is what determines the academic competencies. This he explains, could be explained partly by the fact that the child is familiar with the grade, or is older and better able to meet the academic and behavioral challenges.

Subsequently, retained students have increased risks of engaging in health-compromising behaviors like emotional distress, alcohol use, suicidal tendencies, violent behaviors and drug abuse. They channel their sense of failure to these ills as a defensive mechanism. As adults, repeaters are more likely to be unemployed, in prison or living on public assistance. The study by Jimerson (2001) is very significant because it directly correlates subsequent development of quality education and socio-emotional adjustment. This means that the effects of grade retention and poor academic performance go further than academic achievements. There are several explanations for the negative effects linked to grade retention. These explanations include lack of specific

intervention strategies to enhance social or cognitive competence, failure to address the risk factors and being over-age for a grade that causes stigmatization by peers displaying behavioral and socio-emotional adjustment problems (Ferguson, Jimerson & Dalton, 2001).

Wei, West, and Hughes (2010) investigated the effects of retention on first-grade students over a four-year longitudinal period. Relative to promoted children, non-promoted students derived benefits from the retention in both short and long term periods. The benefits are in respect to hyperactivity, decreased peer-rated sadness, behavioral engagement and decreases withdrawal all as rated by their teachers. In addition, the non-promoted children exhibited an increase in school liking and school sense of belonging compared to promoted students. These advantages, however, seemed to decrease substantially over the long term. Wei and colleagues (2010) concluded that longer term destructive effects on social acceptance was likely to be the cause of the observed and documented longer term negative effects of retention.

Overall, the literature review shows that retention alone is not effective in helping students raise their achievement. Studies show that even though students may have significant academic success in their retained year, the gains may not be enough to be at par with the promoted students (Alexander, Entwisle & Dauber, 2003). In addition, the gains may last only a very short time and subsequently diminishes as time goes by (Jimerson, 2001; Lorence & Dworkin, 2006; Roderick and Nagaoka, 2005).

Bushra (2011) in her study concluded that there was a weak but positive relationship between class retention and academic performance of the students in fourth grade and also concluded that the academic performance of the repeaters did not improve during the repeated year. Jimerson (1999) observed that academically poor students who were promoted instead of retained attained a higher academic achievement by the 11th grade. The rates of dropouts by age 19 were five times more compared to those who had been promoted. Renaud (2009) agrees that grade retention is the strongest predictor of students dropping out of high school as well. Jimerson, Anderson, and Whipple (2002) observe that students who had been retained twice are 90% more likely to drop out of high school. The consequences of retention also went beyond school to the amount of money paid per hour, education and employment status ratings, employment competence ratings and even the probability of enrolling in a post-secondary education program (Jimerson, 2004).

Studies concerning the relationship between students' and teachers' perceptions and academic achievement in Kenya are necessary targeting secondary schools where the students self-esteem are more developed and therefore more likely to be affected by the threat of retention. The current study is therefore designed to address the shortcomings of previous studies that were reviewed.

2.7 Relationship between Teachers' Class Retention Perception and Students' Academic Achievement

Teachers are usually involved with the implementation of the class retention policy through choosing the students that have to repeat. With increasing pressure to improve school performance, policies regarding class promotion standards have been developed at various levels in the education chain and teachers are usually involved. However, according to Neild, Stoner-Eby, & Furstenberg (2008), teachers are not commonly familiar with any research touching on the possible effects of class retention. Most teachers root for class retention approach and often see this as a gift for another year to the underachieving children. This is due to their belief that another year in the same grade will give the child reinforcing instructions as well as provide another year for the improvement of grade level education skills (Manacorda, 2012).

These policies in Kenya are arrived at in most instances without consulting the students. The decision-making by the teachers is usually influenced by previous experiences or influence by other teachers (Perrachione, 2008). Thus, at times, the students are forced to repeat without their free will. This usually has a negative effect on the students' social well-being and lead to low esteem in most instances. The teachers do not notice the negative impacts of class retention as a result of their beliefs and also short-term effects of class retention which are evident to teachers in most instances (William, Lee, Harrison, & Black, 2010).

Previous research has found teachers' perceptions about retention are influenced more by peers rather than by research (Bonvin et al., 2008), making them recommend retention for students who show little or no improvement in academics (Cannon & Lipscomp, 2011). The most common reasons given by teachers for recommending retention include poor academic achievement and lack of maturity (Range, 2011). Beswick (2008) reported that teachers perceive immaturity as the cause of early learning difficulties and believe students simply needed more time to develop by allowing them an extra year. Researchers, however, agree that most teachers feel retention should occur in kindergarten rather than in later classes like in secondary school (Silberglitt, Jimerson, Burns, & Appleton, 2006).

Range (2011) carried out a survey of primary grade teachers and elementary principals' perception about the effectiveness of class retention. He used a descriptive survey design to measure respondents' perception using an instrument known as Teacher Perceptions about Retention Survey (TPARS) developed by Tomchin (1989). These findings concurred with previous studies in that teachers agreed that students who displayed poor academic achievement were considered for class retention and that retention prevents future failure and motivates students to attend school (Range, 2011). When comparing teachers and principals on their perceptions regarding reasons for retention, teachers agreed significantly more than principals. Specifically, teachers believed retention helped students prevent future failure, maintain standards, helps them to provide additional math support, and motivates students to attend

school (Range, 2011).

Previous research has shown that teachers, especially in the primary school perceive retention as a viable option for students who are experiencing learning difficulties (Roberts, 2007). However, Xia and Glennie (2005) conclude that the main reason for these teachers perception is because primary school teachers have limited knowledge of the long-term effects of retention on learners. In his study, Range (2011) used a revised version of the Teacher Perceptions about Retention Survey (TPARS) tool developed by Tomchin (1989) to find out the perception of pre-service teachers regarding the effectiveness of class retention. The TPARS is a common tool that has been used in other retention studies (Witmer et al., 2004).

Pre-service teachers were surveyed to ascertain their attitudes about grade retention. Findings indicated that pre-service teachers' perceptions of grade retention as an effective intervention for children who were lagging behind or struggling in academic achievement were stronger than practicing teacher perceptions of retention (Range, 2009). Pre-service teachers were supportive of retention probably because they believed it prevented future failure and helped students to catch up. These findings were consistent with those of a study done by Wynn (2010). Further, pre-service teachers perceived school academic performance and child's ability as the two most important factors to consider when retaining students.

Wynn (2010) described these findings as important because retention literature

clearly stated that academic performance should not be the sole reason for administering grade retention. Beswick (2008) argue that when teachers' perceptions are guided by misinformation, the academic future of students is compromised. This is especially true because of a teacher's perception has the capability to impact a student's academic outcomes. Furthermore, pre-service teachers who were in early childhood education were more eager to support retention than those teachers majoring in secondary education (Range 2009). Johnson and Howell (2009) found that, as a result of formal education, pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the use of retention as an intervention for academic failure changed from supportive to less supportive possibly because these teachers had a better understanding of the long-term effects retention would have on the students.

As a whole, the results of most studies conducted to find out the effects of retention on students achievement report negative findings (Xia & Kirby, 2009). However, some studies report short-term academic gains in the year that follows retention but gains quickly fade as the child progress through the higher classes. (Xia & Glennie, 2005).Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber (2003) comprehensive study at the Baltimore School District found that retention had a short term positive academic gains for students, however, this positive achievement was lost as the student moved to secondary school. In a different study, Hong and Raudenbush (2005) and Hong and Yu (2007) found no substantial evidence that retention benefited kindergarten students and that retention had immediate negative effects on reading and math performance the

following year.

In a study carried out by Terry (2011), teachers strongly agreed that grade retention is very traumatic to students in their intermediate years as compared to their elementary years. The study indicated that teachers believed a child would benefit most if they were retained between kindergarten and fourth-grade years. The students in the short-run in, in most instances, experience improvement in their academic performances and this is what is usually noticeable to the teacher. They do not normally follow up to see the long-run effects of retention to the students and hence, they continually encourage it.

Research linking students' academic achievement to teachers' perception of class retention is lacking particularly in the local setting and therefore the current study endeavored to address this gap so as to relate local and international literature.

2.8 Relationship between Student's Self-Esteem and Academic

Achievement

Self-esteem is a popular topic in psychology and teachers, parents and therapists have continuously focused their energies on the efforts to boost self-esteem on the assumption that high self-esteem will lead to better achievements. Sirin and Jackson (2001) posit that academic achievement is influenced by perceived competence, the locus of control, autonomy, and motivation. If a student perceives himself/herself positively, he/she sets higher

goals and becomes motivated to succeed academically as in the case of voluntary repeaters.

Research evidence has indicated a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (Brooker, 2005). He stated that a student's self-esteem is a key factor not only for their well-being but also for academic outcomes. Bushra (2011) computed a regression analysis of self-esteem scores and test scores of fourth-grade students in Pakistan. Academic performance was taken as an independent variable while self-esteem was the dependent variable. In the second phase of the analysis results, it was revealed that academic performance was a significant predictor for students' self-esteem. Predictor criterion MR R2 Beta *t* value *t* sig, Variables; Academic performance and self-esteem .44 .19 .44 *t*= .868 *p* =.000).

A study conducted by El-Anzi (2005) to determine academic achievement and its relationship with self-esteem and other factors in Kuwaiti students found a significant positive correlation between optimism, self-esteem and academic achievement.

A similar study was conducted by Ahmad, Zeb, ullah and Ali (2013) to determine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students in Swabi District in Pakistan. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A 5 point Likert scale with 20 items was used to check the level of self-esteem and its effects on secondary school students' academic achievement. The findings indicated a majority (45%) of respondents strongly agreed that

students with a high self-esteem performed better in examinations due to their cooperation with the teachers.

Researchers using three waves of panel data from the National Educational longitudinal study (NELS) in the United States of America examined the effects of academic achievement in the 8th grade on the sense of personal control and self-esteem in the 10th grade and the subsequent effects of personal control and academic achievement in the 12th grade (Ross and Broh, 2000). The findings indicated that the sense of personal control affects subsequent academic achievement. The researchers found out that achievement had a larger effect on personal control among adolescents who feel that their efforts shape outcomes and that their successes and failures are a consequence of their own actions.

In Kenya, Murugami (2002) conducted a study to investigate the effects of locus of control on self-concept among learners with special needs in the central province (n= 162). She used a correlation research design to investigate the effects of locus of control on self-concept and their relationship on academic achievement. She observed that there was no significant difference between male and female learners in their locus of control, although females had a higher mean score than males. Awori (2010) conducted a study in Kenya to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of girls with hearing impairment, using a correlation design with a sample of 132 girls. The Pearson correlation coefficient resulted in 0.401 ($r=0.401$) and was significant at 0.05 level ($p=0.05$). The study concluded that there was a

moderate correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. A number of other studies have strongly supported this view. Mosley (2005) concluded that success of a student in academics depended on a positive mental attitude and that people who have a high self-esteem are more likely to perform better.

Conversely, other studies disagree that self-esteem is closely linked to academic achievement. Baumeister, Campbell, Kreger and Vohs (2003) suggest that many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their achievements and success and therefore, the measure of success related to self-esteem is subjective. Baumeister and colleagues (2003) suggest that high self-esteem does not necessarily lead to good performance and it is only partly responsible for good academic performance. Moreover, high self-esteem, according to their analysis may be counterproductive in terms of school work. These findings agree with other several findings in the past.

Marsh and Craven (2006) disagreed with the findings of Baumeister (2003). Marsh and Craven (2006) had reviewed the reciprocal effects models from a multidimensional perspective to conclude that self-concept and achievement are both a cause and an effect of each other. In a bid to understand these discrepancies, Marsh and O'Mara (2008) re-analyzed data from both studies using stronger statistical methods to conclude that academic self-concept had a consistent reciprocal effect with both achievement and educational attainment while self-esteem did not (Marsh & O'Mara, 2008). Studies by Ross and Broh (2000) also seem to agree with Marsh and O'Mara's. Hong and Raudenbush

(2005) stated that children who were retained would have learned more had they been promoted. The reason for their lagging behind may have been due to less exposure to meaningful intellectual challenges on a regular basis instead of simply repeating the same grade, pending children cognitive development over the repeated year and constraining their learning potential (Hong & Raundenbush, 2005).

Ross and Broh (2000) found out that personal control or self-concept affects subsequent academic achievement but that self-esteem does not. These studies are in contrast with earlier similar studies which showed that academic achievement and parental support increases self-esteem (Ross & Broh, 2000). Pullmann and Allik (2008) also found that low self-esteem is a significant predictor of better school performance when the academic self-esteem is controlled for. This is made possible by defensive pessimism and self-protective enhancement where students with modest academic abilities compensate for their under-achievement by elevating their general self-esteem (Pullman & Allik, 2008).

Marsh and Martin (2011) findings also agree with these literature reviews. The findings confirm that the effect of self-esteem is negligible while the self - concept plays a vital role in affecting desirable educational outcomes. Schmidt and Padilla (2003) also found that self-esteem was not predictive of better grades or extracurricular involvement.

Xia and Kirby (2009) postulate that; the findings on academic outcomes of class repetition may vary depending on how the comparison was done. There are three types of comparison; same-age, same-grade and across years. Same age comparisons demonstrated the negative consequences of failing on student performance. Same-grade comparisons, on the other hand, yield, mixed findings and are dependent on external factors like how long the students were followed after being held back. Xia and Kirby (2009) argue that same-grade comparisons with low achieving but non-retained control groups report no academic benefit and even show negative effects of grade repetition.

The above-reviewed literature was mainly from the western countries much of which was concentrated in primary schools. There is, therefore, a dearth of local studies on the relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The current study, therefore, purposed to fill the gaps identified above.

2.9 Summary of Literature Review

The question of retention is very sensitive to many school systems particularly in countries where the practice is outlawed. Investigating class retention becomes even more complicated because there are many variables in a child's life that affect self- esteem and academic achievement. However, of the many studies done concerning the subject, few show positive academic and social effects on students. The review of the literature shows that there have been studies performed to demonstrate the effects of class retention on student's

self-esteem and academic performance. Empirical studies reveal that most of the studies on retention have been carried out in the developed countries like the United States; therefore, research in the local context is wanting. Reviewed literature on teacher perceptions of grade retention concludes that teachers at all levels perceived grade retention as an acceptable educational practice that motivates students to work hard. (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005).

Although much of the reviewed literature has shown class retention as a failed intervention for helping students who do not perform well, automatic promotion without well designed academic support program is not also a practical solution. There is a general agreement among researchers that without proper support for weak students both retention and automatic promotion will most likely end in failure. Several studies have shown that promoting an academically weak student followed by proper intervention strategies is a much better option to help in providing social, psychological and academic support for the at-risk student.

Most of the studies reviewed on the effectiveness of class retention have concentrated in primary schools and fail to adequately support its worth in solving the problem of academic failure. Reviewed literature has shown that retained students achieve some benefits during the year of retention, but those gains are lost as the student progresses.

However, the failure of researchers to look at the perspectives of both students and teachers in relation to how these perspectives relate to students' self-

esteem and academic achievement leaves open the possibility that retention perception rather than retention parse may be the cause of low post retention outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology and research design for the study. It focus on the research design, variables, location of the study, target population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments and how they were administered, validity and reliability of the instruments, piloting of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis logistical and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study adapted a correlation research design with ex-post facto methodology. Ex-post facto methodology involves a systematic empirical study in which the researcher deals with variables that have already been manifested and thus has no direct control to manipulate them (Orodho, 2005). In the current study the researcher has no direct control of the independent variables, teachers' and students' perceptions. The relationship between students' and teachers' retention perception and students' self-esteem and academic achievement is naturally occurring variables that can only be correlated for prediction purposes. Correlation method seeks to describe in quantitative terms the degree to which study variables are related (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This design was employed to investigate the current situation,

to determine whether and to what degree the independent variables predicted the dependent variables.

3.2.1 Research Variables

Independent Variables

According to Creswell (2005), an independent variable is an attribute or characteristic that influences or affects an outcome or dependent variable. In this study, independent variables were retention perceptions of secondary school teachers and students. These perceptions have both negative and positive influences on students' self-esteem academic achievement.

Dependent Variables

In this study, the dependent variables were students' self-esteem and academic achievement which were an outcome of how teachers and students perceive class retention.

3.2.2 Locale

This research was carried out in Meru County situated in the eastern side of Mount Kenya. The County has an approximate population of about 1,356,301 (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2009) and occupies an area of about 5,127.10 Sq km (IEBC, 2013). Meru County comprises of nine sub-counties carved from the former districts. By the time of doing this study the county had about 315 registered public secondary schools. Due to accountability demands, the county has witnessed an increase in cases of examination irregularities, indiscipline among students manifested in second term and a drop in academic

achievement all of which could be possible pointers to students' frustrations emanating from fear of retention. Parents, teachers and school administrators are under intense pressure to have the candidates perform well in KCSE. The students on the other hand use every available option to avoid failure which may put them at risk of being asked to repeat in order to preserve the school and county mean score. Although it was not possible to obtain data of the actual number of retained students in the county, records at the county education office have shown that cases of school unrests increased tremendously in second term. In 2016, the county recorded 67 cases in term two as compared to only 11 cases in first term. Between 2013 and 2014 the County mean score dropped by 0.57 while cases of exam cheating increasing from 22 in 2013 to 167 schools in 2015 (EMIS Meru County). This scenario led the researcher to choose Meru County for the study in order to find out if students' and teachers' perception about retention had any relationship with students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

3.3 Population

The study targeted all 315 registered public secondary schools, 315 form four class teachers, and 20,160 form four students according to EMIS data from the County Directorate of Education. Form four students were targeted because the class was preparing for final examination (KCSE) thus most likely to have students held back as they are given more time to prepare for KCSE. The class

was also exposed to standard mock examinations in their final year that made it possible for the researcher to compare their academic achievement.

Accessible population

Due to the large number of members in the target population the researcher selected 94 schools, 94 form four class teachers and 2,016 form four students spread within the county using the 10-30% basis (Kothari, 2009). Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) states that when the members of a target population are large a lot of time and resources may be required in order to select a representative sample therefore, researchers draw samples from an accessible population that is comparable to the target population for generalizability of the results.

3.4 Sampling techniques and sample size

3.4.1 Sampling techniques

The sampling frame for the schools comprised the list of all public secondary schools as obtained from the EMIS data at the County Directorate of Education office. By the time of conducting this research, there were 315 registered public secondary schools in Meru County. To ensure representativeness, Meru County was sub-divided into four clusters namely; Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern based on the current sub-county boundaries. The County comprises of 9 sub-counties. The clusters were created because the county is large and the schools are not evenly distributed within the varied geographical and social-economic set ups. Northern cluster comprised Igembe North, Central and South. Eastern Cluster had Tigania East and West. Western Cluster

comprised of Imenti North and Buuri and Southern cluster had Imenti South and Central. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 7 schools from each cluster and simple random technique was used to select 12 form four students from each school. Thereafter criterion purposive sampling was used to select 28 form four class teachers. This is because being the class teachers, their experience with the students put them in a better position to describe the behavior of the students. David and Sutton (2006) acknowledge that in purposive sampling, the units are selected according to the researchers own knowledge and opinion about which ones they think will be appropriate to the topic area.

3.4.2 Sample Size

According to Kothari (2009) a sample of 10% to 30% is appropriate for selecting study subjects. The study sample was selected from the accessible population. To select the schools, the researcher used 30% of 94 (28) public secondary schools, 30% of 94 (28) form four class teachers and 17% of 2,016 (336) form four students identified in the accessible population were selected for the study.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Cluster	No. Sampled schools	Sample of Students per class	Sample of Students per Cluster	Sample size for teachers	Total Population Sample
Southern	7	12	84	7	110
Northern	7	12	84	7	110
Eastern	7	12	84	7	110
Western	7	12	84	7	110
Total	28	48	336	28	440

3.5 Research Instruments

The main instruments used in the study was researcher-designed questionnaire on perceptions about class retention, self-esteem and academic achievement, a modified Rosenberg scale for self-esteem and students' academic record. Questionnaires are commonly used to obtain important information about a population because they have the advantage of economy, efficiency and anonymity (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

There were two questionnaires; one for the teachers and the other for the students.

3.5.1 Questionnaire for the Students

Questionnaires for form three students consisted; section A which asked about demographic information. Section B, C, D, E, F and G comprised closed and open ended questions. Section B included a four point Likert scale with fourteen statements which respondents were required to indicate their level of

agreement or disagreement concerning their perceptions on class retention. The fourteen questions were answered on a four point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 4 (Strongly disagree). The fourteen items were summed to create a general perception of students. Cronbach coefficient alpha was 0.99 hence the internal consistency of the Likert scale items was deemed good. Section C comprised of open and closed ended questions that sought to find out students' responses concerning their teachers' perception of class retention. Section D consisted of two questions on retention perception and self-esteem, section E consisted of seven closed and open ended questions on retention perception and academic achievement. Section F had a table where students were required to indicate the grade they attained in the five compulsory subjects in county mock examinations and two questions regarding self-esteem and academic achievement.

3.5.2 Questionnaire for the Class Teachers

The form three class teachers' questionnaire contained six sections according to the objectives of the study. Section A required demographic information for the respondents, section B contained a fourteen statement Likert scale similar to the one on student questionnaire where teachers were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement concerning students perceptions of retention and one open ended question. Similar to the students' questionnaire, the teachers answered the fourteen questions on a four point scale from 1 (Strongly agree) to 4 (Strongly disagree). The items were summed to create one scale on teachers' perception. Cronbach coefficient alpha was 0.97

indicating that the internal consistency of the Likert scale items was good. Section C contained six open and closed ended questions requiring respondents to indicate their perception about retention. In section D there were two questions on effects of retention perception on self-esteem. Section E required respondents to indicate effects of retention perception on academic achievement and the last section had three questions on the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. The Rosenberg scale was not administered to the teachers because the researcher was only interested with student's self-esteem.

3.5.3 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

A modified 4 point Rosenberg self-esteem (RSES) scale with nine items was provided to the students' where they were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements which was used to check the students' level of self-esteem. RSES is one of the most reliable and commonly used tool for testing self-esteem (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). The nine items used were slightly modified to fit the study objectives and were answered on a four point scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The items were then summed up to create a one summated scale of self-esteem. Cronbach coefficient alpha was 0.98 thus the internal consistency of the self-esteem questions was good.

3.5.4 Validity

Orodho (2005), contend that validity refers to the degree to which an empirical measure is able to reflect the real meaning of a particular concept.

Both face Validity and content validity were checked. Face validity refers to the “obviousness” of a test or the degree to which the purpose of the test is apparent to those taking it (Borg & Gall, 1985). In this study, Likert scale items were used to measure perception while the modified Rosenberg scale was used to measure self-esteem. Content validity was assured by ensuring the reviewed literature on retention corresponded with the questionnaires and RSES. The RSES was used as a standard test to measure the construct of self-esteem yielding a cronbach coefficient of 0.94. This test has been subjected to rigorous psychometric analysis yielding an internal consistency with Cronbach coefficient alphas ranging between 0.7 and 0.9 (Halama, 2008).

Piloting of the instruments helped to identify those items that were ambiguous and hence the items were modified accordingly thus increasing face validity. The researcher prepared the document in close consultation with the supervisors from the department of educational psychology at Kenyatta University who helped in analytical appraisal of the instruments. Borg and Gall (1985) points out that validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment. The examiners during proposal defense and the supervisors therefore gave expert judgment which helped to improve content validity. Their recommendations were then analytically considered and necessary adjustments were made on the instruments to enhance their validity.

3.5.5 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a test or measurement procedure produces the same results on repeated trials (Orodho, 2005). Reliability of the

instruments was assured during piloting. Internal consistency of the Likert scale items and RSES items was checked using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. Cronbach alpha is usually computed to determine how items correlate among themselves as a way of checking their internal consistency (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). The generally accepted correlation coefficient is a cut-off of 0.90 (Siegle, 2002). Cronbach coefficient alphas for the Likert scale items and RSES were 0.89 and 0.94 consecutively thus their internal consistency was deemed good.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Logistical and Ethical considerations

The researcher got a letter of introduction from the Department of Educational Psychology and Graduate school of Kenyatta University. Using this letter, the researcher applied and was granted a permit from the Government of Kenya through the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the Ministry of Education before embarking on the field study. After obtaining the permit, the researcher presented the copies of the research permit to the County director of Education Meru County for their attention.

The researcher also sought appointment and approval from the principals of the sampled schools. The principals then connected the researcher with the four class teachers who were to participate in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The teachers and students were explained the purpose of the study and methods of data collection. The respondents were assured that the information they gave would be treated with confidentiality. Anonymity was also guaranteed to the respondents by explaining to them not to write their names on the questionnaires.

Informed consent: The introductory part of the questionnaires informed the respondents what the general objective of the study was thus ensuring their informed consent.

3.6.2 Pilot study

The main purpose of the piloting or pre-testing was to check on suitability and the clarity of the questions on the instruments designed, relevance of the information being sought, the language used and the content validity of the instruments from the responses (Orodho, 2005).

Before the actual study, a pilot study was conducted in 4 secondary schools purposively selected, one from each of the 4 regions identified earlier in Meru County. The sample included 4 form four class teachers, 48 form four students, selected purposively. The four schools were similar to the main sample however they were excluded from the main study.

The pilot results enabled the researcher to:

- i. Ensure that the instruments administered were able to produce the expected data. In this respect, a section on students' academic

achievement in the mock examinations was incorporated in the student's questionnaire.

- ii. Correct some ambiguities that were noted in the instruments therefore ensuring the respondents clearly understood the stated items.

Ascertain that it was possible to analyze the data as per the stated objectives. Specifically, the teachers' questionnaire was aligned with that of the students in order to make it possible to draw correlations.

3.6.3 Actual Data Collection

The study combined both secondary data and primary data. The bulk of the research was obtained through primary data from the field using questionnaires. The researcher visited the sampled schools accompanied by research assistants. At the various schools, the researcher introduced himself and the assistants to the respondents about the purpose of the visit and study. Then he explained to the subjects what their roles would be during data collection. With the help of the class teachers and research assistants the questionnaires were issued to the selected respondents. The objectives of the study were clarified to both the class teachers and the selected form four students. The teachers were then issued with the questionnaires to fill at their own free time and the researcher sought permission from the school administration to administer the students' questionnaire after official lesson time.

Secondary data comprised mainly of literature review materials obtained from libraries and the internet. This data helped in linking the findings of this study to related previous studies. Most of the secondary data provided a review of the global, African perspectives and the Kenyan context on the relationship between teachers' and students' perception of class retention, self-esteem and academic achievement.

3.7 Data Analysis

The raw data was categorized manually using a codebook. Various responses were coded appropriately according to the study objectives and questionnaire sections. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed as per the study objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) computer application. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the likert- scaled items. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the choice items. Answers to the open- ended questions were coded and categorized into themes. The means for the statement on the survey to ascertain teachers' and students' overall perception about retention appearing in both questionnaires were calculated to check the overall support or disapproval of retention by the respondents

Statistical Test Analysis

Six null hypotheses were tested as follows:

H₀₁-There are no significant differences between teachers' and students' perception of retention. This hypothesis was tested using *t*-test statistics. Both

perceptions were determined using a four point Likert scale with fourteen questions. Perception scores were at nominal level therefore categorized as positive or negative.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' self-esteem was tested using Chi square and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Teachers' perception was got using Likert scale and was categorized as positive or negative while students' self-esteem analyzed using Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES). Students' self-esteem scores were at nominal level thus categorized as high and low.

H₀3: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of class retention and self-esteem. This hypothesis was tested using *t*-test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Students' perception was categorized as positive and negative. Students' self-esteem was measured using the RSES and categorized as high and low.

H₀4: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' academic achievement. This hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Teachers' perception was measured using a fourteen item Likert scale and categorized as positive and negative while students' academic achievement scores from mock examinations were continuous variable at interval level of measurement categorized as high and low.

H₀5: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of class retention and academic achievement. The hypothesis was analyzed using *t*-test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The fourteen item Likert scale was used to determine students' perception categorized as positive and negative. Students' academic achievement was categorized as high and low.

H₀6: There is no significant relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement was analyzed using chi-square statistics. Chi square is a non-parametric test used in analysis to establish relationships between two variables that are categorical. Self-esteem of students was measured using Rosenberg scale categorized as high and low while academic achievement was got from mock results also categorized as high and low.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed according to study objectives. The chapter begins with a description of the data collection process and analysis, profile of respondents and descriptive statistics presented in graphs and frequency distribution. This is followed by statistical analyses whereby hypotheses are tested for significance. For inferential statistics, *t*-Test, Chi square and Pearson correlation analyses were used to analyze students' and teachers' perceptions regarding class retention and how these perceptions relate to students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

All findings have been discussed in line with the reviewed literature and according to the study objectives and hypotheses as stated below:-

- i. To find out the relationship between students' and teachers' perceptions of class retention.
- ii. To establish the relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' self-esteem.
- iii. To establish the relationship between students' perception of class retention and self-esteem.
- iv. To find out the relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and academic achievement of students.
- v. To find out the relationship between students' perception of class

retention and academic achievement.

- vi. To determine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of the students.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' and students' perception of retention. This was tested using *t*- test statistics.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of retention and students' self-esteem. This was tested using Chi square and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of retention and self-esteem was tested using *t*-test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' academic achievement. This was tested using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between students' perception of class retention and academic achievement. This was tested using *t*-test and Pearson product moment correlation.

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement. This was tested using Chi square statistics.

4.2 General and Demographic Information

This section outlines the general information on the return rate of the questionnaires and the demographic data.

4.2.1 Return Rate

The data for the study was collected using questionnaires. A total of 336 questionnaires were distributed to secondary school students and 28 questionnaires to teachers in the same schools. A total of 334 students' and 27 teachers' questionnaires were successfully completed and returned representing over 99% return rate. According to Mugenda (2003), a return rate of above 50% for questionnaires is acceptable. Therefore, the current study return rate was above the threshold. This high return rate may be attributed to the fact that the researcher used committed research assistants who were hired for two weeks. The findings of the study from the data collected were analyzed statistically, then organized and presented in tables and figures.

Table 4.1: *Profile of the Respondents*

Gender of the respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	172	51.5
Female	162	48.5
Total	334	100.0
School type	Frequency	Percent
Boys	72	21.6
Girls	72	21.6
Mixed	190	56.9
Total	334	100.0
Have you ever repeated a class?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	104	31.1
No	230	68.9
Total	334	100.0
If yes above, why do you think you repeated?	Frequency	Percent
Immaturity	12	11.5
Absenteeism	13	12.5
Low motivation	15	14.4
Poor grades	64	61.5
Total	104	100.0

The findings presented in Table 4.1 indicated that out of the 334 students who returned their questionnaires, 51.5% were boys whereas 48.5% were girls. It was further established that 56.9% were in mixed schools, whereas 21.6% were in boys schools same as girls school.

A majority of the students (68.9%) reported they had never repeated a class while the rest (31.1%) had repeated.

This revelation was an indication that repetition was being widely practiced. These findings are consistent with those reported in other recent studies from Africa.

Results from the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ III, 2010) Project on 'the levels and trends in grade repetition' indicated that most SACMEQ school systems have grade repetition problems. Overall, more than one third of the Grade 6 students in the SACMEQ III Project indicated that they had repeated a grade at least once. About 12 % of the students reported that they were repeating Grade 6 in the year that the SACMEQ III data were collected (2007).

Of the students who had ever repeated a class in this research, 61.5% cited poor grades as the reason for repeating. This view is greatly supported by previous research findings. Bushra (2011) cited lack of interest in studies and poor academic achievement as two main reasons for grade retention, consistent with the teachers' views in her study in Pakistan.

In the current study, as shown in Table 4.1, 61.5% indicated poor grades, 14.4% cited low motivation, and 12.5% cited absenteeism while 11.5% cited immaturity as reasons for repeating. Poor grades were cited as the major reason for class retention is consistent with the conclusion by Gomes-Neto and Hanushek (1994) in their study in Brazil that grade retention was recommended for poor performers.

4.2.2 Profile of the Teachers

Table 4.2: *Profile of respondents (Teachers)*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	17	63.0
Female	10	37.0
Total	27	100.0
Age category	Frequency	Percent
Below 26 years	3	11.1
26 to 35 years	15	55.6
36 to 45 years	6	22.2
46 to 55 years	3	11.1
Total	27	100.0
Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	3	11.1
Diploma	4	14.8
Degree	18	66.7
Post graduate	2	7.4
Total	27	100.0
Length of service in teaching career	Frequency	Percent
Less than 6 years	15	55.6
6-10 years	4	14.8
11-15 years	5	18.5
16-20 years	2	7.4
20-25 years	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0
School type	Frequency	Percent
Boys	5	18.5
Girls	6	22.2
Mixed	16	59.3
Total	27	100.0

As shown in Table 4.2, out of the 27 teachers who returned the questionnaires, 63% were men whereas 37% were women. Majority of the teachers (55.6%)

were aged 26 to 35 years, 22.2% were aged 36 to 45 years. There was an equal number of teachers (11.1%) aged 46 to 55 years with those aged below 26 years. In regard to Education qualification, 66.7% had University degree qualification, 14.8% had a diploma, 11.1% had certificate while 7.4% had post graduate qualification.

A majority of the respondents (55.6%) had served a term of less than 6 years in the teaching profession indicating that many respondents were inexperienced, 18.5% had served a term of 11 to 15 years, 14.8% had served a term of 6 to 10 years, 7.4% had served a term of 16 to 20 years whereas 3.7% had served a term of 20 to 25 years.

In regard to the school type, 59.3% were stationed in mixed secondary schools, 22.2% were in girls schools while 18.5% were in boys schools.

4.2.3 Teachers' Class Retention Perception

Table 4.3: *Teachers' Class Retention Perception*

Statement		SD	D	A	SA
Class retention is good to help weak students	F	5	3	10	9
	%	18.5	11.1	37.0	33.3
Students' self-esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating	F	8	10	7	2
	%	29.6	37.0	25.9	7.4
Students would opt to change school than repeat class in their school	F	9	8	6	4
	%	33.3	29.6	22.2	14.8
Students often feel embarrassed if asked to repeat	F	10	8	7	2
	%	37.0	29.6	25.9	7.4
Some students complain of being harassed by classmates for repeating	F	11	7	4	5
	%	40.7	25.9	14.8	18.5
Forced retention affect students' academic performance negatively	F	3	16	5	3
	%	11.1	59.3	18.5	11.1
Students should sometimes be retained	F	3	4	13	7
	%	11.1	14.8	48.1	25.9
Students would readily accept to repeat a class if asked to	F	3	6	11	7
	%	11.1	22.2	40.7	25.9
Students who perform poorly would request to repeat	F	2	5	13	7
	%	7.4	18.5	48.1	25.9
Students have no problem with repeaters in their class	F	2	7	11	7
	%	7.4	25.9	40.7	25.9
Students with low self-esteem perform poorly	F	5	3	10	9
	%	18.5	11.1	37.0	33.3
Students are not free to disclose whether they had repeated	F	8	10	7	2
	%	29.6	37.0	25.9	7.4
Students who had repeated felt demoralized among peers	F	9	8	6	4
	%	33.3	29.6	22.2	14.8
Retention makes students have low opinion about themselves	F	10	8	7	2
	%	37.0	29.6	25.9	7.4

Note. F = Frequency; % = Percentage

The study sought to establish teachers' perceptions of class retention. The teacher's questionnaire contained a section with a 14 item Likert scale that was used to measure teachers perception. The respondents were asked whether class retention is good to help weak students perform better. A majority of the respondents (70.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed, (18.5%) strongly disagreed while (11.1%) disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that teachers held the perception that class retention is good to help weak students perform better since over two thirds of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. These results are in agreement research studies that have reported teachers, especially in primary school, who believe that retention is a viable intervention for children who are struggling. For example, in the study by Wietmer, Hoffman, and Nottis (2004), an overwhelming 77% of the interviewed teachers believed that retention helped academically weak students to catch up.

In regard to whether students' self-esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating, a majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement (37%), (29.6%) strongly disagreed, (25.9%) agreed while (7.4%) strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that teachers were of the opinion that students' self-esteem is not negatively affected by fear of repeating since more than half of the respondents (66.9%), either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This view is consistent with the finding in the study by Wynn (2010), where an overwhelming 80% of the interviewed teachers felt that retention did not negatively affect students' self-esteem. However, some

researchers like Allensworth (2004) speculated that the threat of retention could cause students to take academics seriously.

Asked whether students would opt to change school than repeat class in their school 33.3% strongly disagreed, 29.6% disagreed, 22.2% agreed and 14.8% strongly agreed with the statement. Majority of the teachers (62.9%), therefore were of the view that students would be comfortable repeating in the same school than opt to transfer. This view supports the earlier assertion that teachers supported retention and that they strongly felt that fear of retention would not affect the students' self-esteem negatively. Furthermore, when asked if they would recommend a student to repeat an overwhelming 77.8% agreed with this statement.

The respondents were asked whether students' often feel embarrassed if asked to repeat. Majority (37.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 29.6% disagreed, 25.9% agreed while 7.4% strongly agreed with the statement. This result shows that teachers' perceived that students' do not often feel embarrassed if asked to repeat. This result is a clear indication that the general teacher perception of retention is positive as supported by the reviewed literature on the above subject.

Asked whether some students complain of being harassed by classmates for repeating, 40.7% strongly disagreed, 25.9% disagreed, 14.8% agreed while 18.5% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates teachers were of the view that students do not complain of being harassed by classmates for

repeating since two thirds of the respondents held a contrary opinion. In their view, teachers felt that repeaters were comfortable with the peers in class since only 33.5 indicated that students complained of being harassed by classmates for repeating. Furthermore, when asked whether students had no problem with repeaters in their class, a majority (66.6%) agreed with the statement. This implied a general view by teachers that retention was of little consequence to repeater acceptability in the repeated class. This view contrasts the view held by Bushra (2011) who reported that the mere presence of a repeater in class could have serious negative effects both on the repeater and other members of the class. Bushra attributed the negative effects of repeating to continuous insulting behavior and unfair treatment by teachers and fellow classmates consequently resulting to failure of the repeater.

The study sought the opinion of the teachers on whether forced retention would affect students' academic performance negatively. A majority of the respondents (59.3%) disagreed with the statement, 18.5% agreed while 11.1% strongly disagreed, same as those who strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that from the teacher's point of view, retention does not affect students' academic performance negatively since about two thirds (70.4%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. However the reviewed literature indicated opposing views. Kwena (2007) argues that a student who is forced to repeat a class due to poor performance may develop a hatred for school and consequently this could lead to poor academic achievement. Previous research has shown that involuntary retention

affected students' self-esteem and eventually affected academic achievement negatively.

As to whether students should sometimes be retained, 48.1% agreed with the statement, slightly above a quarter (25.9%) strongly agreed, 14.8% disagreed while 11.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that in the opinion of the teachers', students should sometimes be retained since close to three quarters concurred to this view. These results indicate that the teachers greatly supported retention with an overwhelming 74% accented to the fact that student should sometimes be retained. This was in agreement with the teacher perceptions in the reviewed literature that the overall teacher perspectives were that students would be recommended for retention on some circumstances. Wynn (2010) found out that teachers recommended retention for students who did not meet the required criteria for promotion to the next class. Range (2009) agrees with this view as teachers interviewed in his study indicated that they supported retention to assist students who were struggling academically.

In regard to whether students would readily accept to repeat a class if asked to, majority of the respondents (40.7%) agreed with the statement, 25.9% strongly agreed, 22.2% disagreed while 11.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result denotes that from the teachers' point of view, students would readily accept to repeat a class if asked to since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred to this opinion. This indicates that teachers held the view that if retention was voluntary then the students would have no problem

and that those students would wish to be consulted before making retention decisions.

Asked whether students who perform poorly would request to repeat, 48.1% agreed with the statement, 25.9% strongly agreed, 18.5% disagreed while 7.4% strongly disagreed with the statement. Over all, majority of the teachers (74%) were of the opinion that students who perform poorly would request to repeat. This view is supported by the reviewed literature on the determinants of the decision to repeat. Bonvin (2003) argued that decision to retain focused on academic achievement as the main criterion while Alexander et al. (2003) posit that low achieving children and children with learning difficulties are at a higher risk of being retained. Majority of the teachers were in agreement that students would be considered for retention if they were not performing well academically, a view that was supported by students.

The study sought the opinion of the respondents on whether students have no problem with repeaters in their class. Majority of the respondents (40.7%) agreed with the statement, 25.9% strongly agreed same as disagreed, while 7.4% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that from the teachers' point of view, students had no problem with repeaters in their class since two thirds of the respondents upheld this view. Conversely, Bushra (2011) indicated that the mere presence of a repeater in a class is likely to produce negative results for both the repeater and the classmates as a result of the negative comments.

The respondents were asked whether students with low self-esteem performed poorly. A majority of the respondents (37.0%) agreed, 33.3% strongly agreed, 18.5% strongly disagreed while 11.1% disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that teachers held the opinion that students with low self-esteem performed poorly since over two thirds of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

In regard to whether students would not be free to disclose whether they had repeated a class, a majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement (37%), 29.6% strongly agreed, 25.9% agreed while 7.4% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that teachers were of the opinion that students would not be free to disclose whether they had repeated a class since more than half of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Asked whether students who had repeated a class would feel demoralized among peers in their class 33.3% strongly disagreed, 29.6% disagreed, 22.2% agreed and 14.8% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that teachers believed that students who had repeated a class would not feel demoralized among peers in their class since close to two thirds of the respondents were opposed to this statement.

The respondents were asked whether retention makes students have low opinion about themselves. Majority (37.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 29.6% disagreed, 25.9% agreed while 7.4%

strongly agreed with the statement. This result shows that teachers' perceived that retention does not make students have low opinion about themselves since two thirds of the respondents were opposed to this opinion. This is illustrated in table 4.3.

4.2.4 Teachers' Class Retention Perception: Summary

Table 4.4: *Teacher Perception on Class Retention Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
.969	.970	14

Table 4.5: *Teachers' class Retention Perception scale*

Teacher's Class Retention Perception	Frequency	Percent
14 to 36	9	33.3
37 to 56	18	66.7
Total	27	100.0

In this study teachers' class retention perception was measured using fourteen variables; Class retention is good to help weak students perform better, students' self-esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating, students' would opt to change school than repeat class in their school, students' often feel embarrassed if asked to repeat, some students complain of being harassed by classmates for repeating, forced retention affect students' academic

performance negatively, students should sometimes be retained, students would readily accept to repeat a class if asked to, students who perform poorly would request to repeat, students have no problem with repeaters in their class, students with low self-esteem perform poorly, students are not free to disclose whether they had repeated, students who had repeated felt demoralized among peers and retention makes students have low opinion about themselves. Each of the variables was measured using a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4 Points) to strongly disagree (1 Point). However, the scale for questions two, three, four, five, six, eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen were reversed because they were negatively stated.

Reviewing high correlations among answers from the fourteen questions on teachers' perception on class retention led the researcher to use one summated scale in looking for teachers' perception of class retention. The answers from the fourteen questions were summed to create a teachers' perception on class retention scale. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .969. This figure is higher than .80 which is the generally agreed lower limit for Cronbach's alpha(); hence the internal consistency of the items related to teachers' perception on class retention was good.

The range of teachers' perception on class retention scale was 14 to 56. A score ranging from 14 to 36 indicated that a teacher had a negative attitude towards class retention while a score ranging from 37 to 56 indicated that a teacher had a positive attitude towards class retention. From these findings, a high majority of the teachers (66.7%) had a positive attitude towards class retention while the

rest (33.3%) had a negative attitude towards class retention. These findings were in line with recent research findings cited earlier in the reviewed literature.

Range, etal. (2009) found out that majority of teachers in primary school had a positive view of class retention. Similarly, in a research done in Senegal, almost 80% of teachers who were interviewed had a positive perception of retention; Michaelowa (2003). This is illustrated in tables 4.4 and 4.5.

4.2.5 Responses of Teachers' on Other Class Retention Related Issues

Table 4.6: *Teachers' Responses on Class Retention*

Who decides which student should repeat in your school?	Frequency	Percent
Teachers	6	22.2
Parents	3	11.1
Students	7	25.9
School	11	40.7
Total	27	100.0
Would you recommend a student to repeat a class?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	77.8
No	6	22.2
Total	27	100.0
Teacher's attitudes towards repeaters	Frequency	Percent
Positive	19	70.4
Negative	8	29.6
Total	27	100.0
Teacher's reaction for students to repeat a class	Frequency	Percent
Supportive	19	70.4
Not supportive	8	29.6
Total	27	100.0
Class retention utilized as a motivator for students to do well in academics	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	44.4
No	15	55.6
Total	27	100.0

The study sought to establish the teachers' view on who decides which students should repeat. Majority of the respondents (40.7%) reported that it is the school that decides on the students that would repeat, 25.9% said it's the students who decide, 22.2% were of the view that it's the teachers while 11.1% reported that it's the parents who determines the student that should be retained in a class. Hence, the school had the greatest influence on the decision on which student

should repeat a class. From this finding, a student plays minimal role on the decision to repeat a class same as a teacher. However, the role of a parent on the decision to repeat a class is insignificant since only slightly above a tenth were of the view that a parent influenced the decision on whether a student would repeat a class.

The teachers were asked whether they would recommend a student to repeat a class. A majority 77.8% of the respondents reported that they would recommend a student to repeat a class while the rest (22.2%) said they would not recommend a student to repeat a class. It is evident from this finding that most teachers would recommend a student to repeat once they have weighed a case.

The view that teachers would recommend students to repeat can be explained by the fact that most teachers had a positive perception about retention because they overwhelmingly agreed that retention was a good strategy to help those students who were not performing well academically. Research evidence has demonstrated that most of the teachers supported grade retention policy and thought that continually passing students at primary level created severe learning problems for students in high school education. Tomchin and Impara (1992) examined the teacher views about retention of students in grades K-7 and found that “teachers were agreed that retention is not harmful in grades K-3, but they disagreed about the impact on students on grades 4-7” (p.199). Overall this study found that the teachers at all grade levels considered grade

retention as an acceptable educational practice that and motivates students to work harder and prevents them from facing daily failure.

The study sought to establish the attitude of teachers towards repeaters. An overwhelming 70.4% of the respondents reported they had a positive attitude towards repeaters while the rest (29.6%) said they had a negative attitude towards the repeaters. Hence most teachers had a positive attitude towards repeaters. This view is consistent with previous research studies cited in reviewed literature. Furthermore,, in a study done by Range (2009) a majority of teachers were found to have a positive attitude towards grade retention.

The study also sought to establish the reaction of teachers towards repeaters. An overwhelming 70.4% of the respondents said they offered support to repeaters while the rest (29.6%) said they did not extend any support to repeaters. This result indicates that teachers offered support towards repeaters since less than a third reported otherwise. These findings were probably because the teachers had a perception that retention was an intervention measure to help weak students and therefore the need to offer support to them during the retention year.

The teachers were asked whether class retention was utilized as a motivator for students to do well in academics. A high majority of the respondents (55.6%) were of the view that class retention was not utilized as a motivator for students to do well in academics while the rest (44.4%) were of a divergent opinion. In previous research findings divergent views have been expressed. Hong &

Raudenbush (2005) in their study argue that grade retention is helpful in improving inadequate academic progress and thus an acceptable educational practice that motivates students to work harder.

Hence the use of class retention as motivator for students to do well in academics is not prevalent in the current study. This is illustrated in table 4.6.

4.2.6 Students' Class Retention Perception

Table 4.7: *Students' class Retention Perception*

Statement		SD	D	A	SA
Class retention is good to help weak students	F	24	95	131	84
	%	7.2	28.4	39.2	25.1
Myself-esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating	F	107	104	101	22
	%	32.0	31.1	30.2	6.6
I would rather change school than repeat class in my current school	F	78	133	90	33
	%	23.4	39.8	26.9	9.9
I would feel embarrassed if asked to repeat	F	107	104	103	20
	%	32.0	31.1	30.8	6.0
I have friends who complain being harassed by classmates for repeating	F	82	131	95	26
	%	24.6	39.2	28.4	7.8
Forced retention affects students academic performance negatively	F	108	102	97	27
	%	32.3	30.5	29.0	8.1
Students should sometimes be retained	F	25	98	132	79
	%	7.5	29.3	39.5	23.7
I would accept to repeat if asked to	F	22	99	107	106
	%	6.6	29.6	32.0	31.7
If am performing poorly, I would request to repeat	F	29	95	130	80
	%	8.7	28.4	38.9	24.0
I have no problem with repeaters in my class	F	20	102	133	79
	%	6.0	30.5	39.8	23.7
Students with low self-esteem perform poorly	F	25	98	132	79
	%	7.5	29.3	39.5	23.7
I would not be free to disclose whether I have repeated	F	22	99	107	106
	%	6.6	29.6	32.0	31.7
As a repeater I would feel demoralized among peers in class	F	29	95	130	80
	%	8.7	28.4	38.9	24.0
Retention makes students have low opinion about themselves	F	20	102	133	79
	%	6.0	30.5	39.8	23.7

Note: F = Frequency % = Percentage

The study sought to establish students' perceptions of class retention. Respondents were asked their opinion on whether class retention is good to help weak students perform better. Majority of the respondents (39.2%) agreed with this statement, 28.4% disagreed, 25.1% strongly agreed while 7.2% strongly disagreed. Overall, majority (64.3%) supported this view while (35.6%) were of the contrary opinion. This result indicates that students perceived that class retention is good to help weak students perform better since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred with the statement. This view was consistent with the teachers' perception of class retention in this study and it is also in agreement to previous studies with the proponents of grade retention arguing that grade retention is helpful in improving inadequate academic progress (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005).

Reviewed literature on teachers' perception of grade retention is in agreement with students' view. Teachers at all levels perceived grade retention as an acceptable educational practice to remediate poor academic achievement and motivate students to work harder. (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005). However other research studies have indicated that students perceived grade retention negatively. Anderson, Jimerson and Whipple (2004) in their study sought to find out the most stressful life events among students in different grades. Surprisingly, across all the grade levels, the most stressful life events include losing a parent, academic retention and going blind. Unlike the previous studies, the Anderson and colleagues' study (2004) found that grade retention was rated as the most stressful life event among students in the sixth grade. In

1990s, Shepard and Smith carried out a similar study which indicated that grade retention was the third most stressful event for a student after losing a parent and going blind (Pattey, 2010).

The respondents were asked whether student's self-esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating. Majority of the respondents (32.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 31.1% disagreed, 30.2% agreed while 6.6% strongly agreed with the statement. Over all, (63.1%) of the respondents felt that their self-esteem would not be negatively affected by the fear of retention. This view was supported by Wynn (2010) who found out that 80% of the teachers interviewed believed that retention did not affect student's self-esteem negatively. However, a large number of research studies have indicated that grade retention is a major cause of negative self-esteem in students (Martin 2009). Consistent with the above evidence, Stearns (2007) in his study that sought the consequences of grade retention demonstrated negative impact of grade retention. The authors used data from "NELS: 88, a nationally representative sample of eighth graders in 1988 who were resurveyed in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000" (p.216). The findings of the study revealed that besides their lower achievement rates and more disciplinary problems, retained students had lower self-esteem, were more pessimistic about their future, were less engaged with school, and had fewer bonds with teachers than did continuously promoted students (p.231). In an interesting finding, Allensworth (2004), argued that fear of retention was likely to cause students to take academics seriously. Roderick (2002) argued that "such policies motivate

students to work harder and encourage parents to carefully monitor their child's progress" (p.333).

The study sought to establish whether students would rather change school than repeat class in the current school. Majority of the respondents (39.8%) disagreed with the statement, 26.9% agreed, 23.4% strongly disagreed while 9.9% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that students would choose to repeat in the same school with only a third of the respondent with a divergent opinion. These findings were consistent with the teachers' perception on the same question. The students would probably choose to repeat in the same school because majority had indicated that the fear of retention would not cause them negative self-esteem issues. Previous research findings have supported the view that people with a positive self-esteem have confidence in their skills and competencies (Mosley, 2005).

The respondents were asked whether they would feel embarrassed if they are asked to repeat. Majority of the respondents (32.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 31.1% disagreed, 30.8% agreed while 6.0% strongly agreed with the statement. Overall, (63.1%) were of the view that they would not feel embarrassed if requested to repeat. This result indicates that students perceived retention positively same as teachers. However reviewed literature provides contrary findings. In a study done by Shepard and Smith's in the 1990s, 87% of the students interviewed reported that retention made them feel sad, bad, upset or embarrassed. Only 6% of the respondents gave positive answers such as one learn more or it lets one to catch up (Anderson et al., 2004).

It was in the interest of this study to find out whether the respondents had friends who complained of being harassed by classmates for repeating. Majority of the respondents (39.2%) were opposed to this statement, 28.4% concurred with the statement, 24.6% strongly opposed while 7.8% strongly agreed with the statement. This result signifies that repeaters were not being harassed by classmates with only a third of the respondents giving a differing opinion. This is an indication that cases of harassment for repeaters were minimal probably due to the fact that majority of the students (63.5%), had earlier indicated that they had no problem with repeaters in their class. Conversely, in her study, Bushra (2011) argues that the mere presence of a repeater in a class is likely to generate negative results due to negative comments from the classmates or teachers.

The study also sought to establish whether forced retention affected student's academic performance negatively. Majority of the respondents (32.3%) strongly opposed this statement, 30.5% opposed, 29.0% concurred with the statement while 8.1% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that forced retention does not affect a student's academic performance negatively with close to two thirds of the respondents concurring with this view. Conversely, other research findings have found out that forced retention indeed affected students' academic achievement. Kwena (2007) argues that a child who is forced to repeat class due to poor performance is likely to develop low self-esteem and consequently perform poorly in academics. Jimerson et al.

(2002), postulate that grade retention seem to be an important predictive variable for a negative academic development.

The respondents were asked whether students should sometimes be retained. Majority of the respondents (39.5%) concurred, 29.3% were opposed, 23.7% strongly agreed while 7.5% strongly disagreed that students should sometimes be retained. This means that students were of the opinion that students should sometimes be retained since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred with this opinion. This view was in agreement with the perception of teachers regarding the same question mainly because both sets of respondents were of similar view that retention was a good intervention strategy for those students who were not performing well. Overwhelming research findings have concurred with this view. Roberts (2007) found out that majority of teachers especially in primary school believe retention is a viable option for students who are struggling, a view that was also supported by Wietmer, Hoffman, and Nottis (2004).

The study sought to establish whether a students would accept to repeat a class if asked to. Majority of the respondents (32.0%) agreed, 31.7% strongly agreed, 29.6% disagreed while 6.6% strongly disagreed with the idea of repeating a class if asked to. This result implies that students would accept to repeat a class if asked to as close to two thirds (61.6%) held this opinion. The findings can be explained by the fact that a majority of the students had previously indicated that retention was good and that they also felt that sometimes students should be retained. This view is supported by the fact that

the students' perception towards retention was positive. However these findings disagree with previous studies that have indicated that students perceived retention as one of the most stressful life events (Pattey, 2010).

The students were asked whether they would request to repeat if performing poorly. Majority of the respondents (38.9%) agreed, 28.4% disagreed, 24.0% strongly agreed while 8.7% strongly disagreed that they would request to repeat if performing poorly. This result indicates that students would request to repeat if performing poorly since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred with this opinion. The students' perception in this case indicated that they associated retention with poor academic performance a view that is held by the proponents of retention especially teachers. Roberts (2007) indicated that teachers especially in primary school believed that retention is good to help those students who were struggling.

The study sought the opinion of the students on their relationship with repeaters in their class. Majority of the respondents (39.8%) agreed that they did not have problems with repeaters in their class, 30.5% disagreed, 23.7% strongly agreed while 6.0% strongly disagreed. This result indicates that students did not have problems with repeaters in the repeaters in their class since close to two thirds of the respondents held this opinion. This can probably be explained by the fact that students' perception of class retention was positive thus viewing repeaters positively. Contrary to this view, Kwena (2007) indicated that repeaters seem to encounter difficulties when dealing with classmates who are younger than them. In her study, repeaters enumerated

bullying, violence and aggressiveness as the most prevalent reactions towards them by their classmates. In other words these children viewed repeaters as intruders in their class possibly because of their size being relatively older. In a similar finding, Bushra (2011) agrees that the mere presence of a repeater in a class is likely to produce negative feelings both for the repeater and the classmates as a result of negative comments.

The respondents were asked whether students with low self-esteem perform poorly. Majority of the respondents (39.5%) concurred, 29.3% were opposed, 23.7% strongly agreed while 7.5% strongly disagreed that students with low self-esteem perform poorly. This means that the respondents were of the opinion that students with low self-esteem performed poorly since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred with this opinion. These findings were in agreement with the reviewed literature regarding the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Research evidence has indicated a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Brooker (2005) in his study found out that self-esteem and academic achievement were highly correlated, a view that is supported by Bushra (2011). The overall assertion is that high self-esteem improves academic achievement and equally high academic achievement causes high self-esteem (Ross & Broh, 2000).

The study also sought to establish whether students would feel free to disclose whether they had repeated. Majority of the respondents (32.0%) agreed, 31.7% strongly agreed, 29.6% disagreed while 6.6% strongly disagreed with the idea that students would not be free to disclose whether they had repeated. This

result implies that students would not be free to disclose whether they had repeated as close to two thirds held this opinion. This revelation proved the earlier cited concern in the background to this study that retention was a sensitive topic particularly in countries that do not have proper policies. This is probably why a small number of students agreed to having repeated a class in this study.

The respondents were asked whether as a repeater one would feel demoralized among peers in their class. Majority of the respondents (38.9%) agreed, 28.4% disagreed, 24.0% strongly agreed while 8.7% strongly disagreed that they would feel demoralized among peers in their class. This result indicates that students who had been retained in a class would feel demoralized among peers in their class since close to two thirds of the respondents concurred with this opinion. These findings were in agreement with previous studies that were reviewed. Anderson et al. (2004) indicated that among other things students would feel sad, bad and embarrassed if asked to repeat, a view also supported by Bushra (2011) where she argues that the mere presence of a repeater in a classroom could complicate the classroom situation.

The respondents were asked whether retention makes students have low opinion about themselves. Majority of the respondents (39.8%) agreed, 30.5% disagreed, 23.7% strongly agreed while 6.0% strongly disagreed. This result indicates that retention makes students have low opinion about themselves since close to two thirds of the respondents held this opinion. This is in agreement to a large number of studies that have indicated that retention is a

major cause of low self-esteem in students because it damages students' self-image. This is illustrated in table 4.7.

4.2.7 Students' Class Retention Perception: Summary

Table 4.8: *Students Perception on class retention Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
.987	.987	14

Table 4.9: *Students' class Retention Perception scale*

Class retention perception	Frequency	Percent
14 to 36 (Negative)	125	37.4
37 to 56 (Positive)	209	62.6
Total	334	100.0

In this study students' class retention perception was measured using fourteen variables.

Each of the variables was measured using a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4 Points) to strongly disagree (1 Point). However, the scale for questions number two, three, four, five, six, eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen was reversed.

Reviewing high correlations among answers from the fourteen questions on students' perception on class retention led the researcher to use one summated scale in looking for students' perception on class retention. The answers from

the fourteen questions were summed to create a students' perception on class retention scale. Cronbach coefficient alpha was .99. This figure is higher than 0.80 which is the generally agreed lower limit for Cronbach alpha; hence the internal consistency of the items related to students' perception on class retention was good.

The range of students' perception on class retention scale was 14 to 56. A score ranging from 14 to 36 indicated that a student had a negative attitude towards class retention while a score ranging from 37 to 56 indicated that a student had a positive attitude towards class retention. From the research findings, a high majority of the students (62.6%) had a positive attitude towards class retention while the rest (37.4%) had a negative attitude towards class retention. These findings are contrary with previous studies that have been reviewed. A majority of research findings concluded that students' perception of retention was negative (Jimerson, Anderson,& Whipple, 2004). Pattey (2010) reported that most students rated retention as the third most stressful life event after losing parent and going blind. This is illustrated in tables 4.8 and 4.9.

4.2.8 Students' Views on Teachers Attitudes about Retention

Table 4.10: *Students' Views on Teacher's Perception on Class Retention*

Teachers have a say in deciding which student should repeat	Frequency	Percent
Yes	246	73.7
No	88	26.3
Total	334	100.0
If yes, what reasons do they give?	Frequency	Percent
To improve previous grade	217	88.2
As a punishment	2	.8
School policy	27	11.0
Total	246	100.0
What are teachers attitudes towards repeaters?	Frequency	Percent
Positive	228	68.3
Negative	106	31.7
Total	334	100.0
Describe teachers reaction for students who repeat a class	Frequency	Percent
Supportive	293	87.7
Not supportive	41	12.3
Total	334	100.0
Do teachers use class retention as a motivator for students to do well in their academics?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	263	78.7
No	71	21.3
Total	334	100.0

The study sought to establish the opinion of the students on whether teachers have a say in deciding which student should repeat. A majority 73.7% reported that teachers have a say in deciding which student should repeat while the rest

(26.3%) reported otherwise. This result indicates that from the students' point of view, teachers had a say in deciding which student to repeat a class with close to three quarters of the respondents concurring with this opinion. These findings were probably because both the teachers and students were in agreement that retention is good to help weak students.

The students were asked the reasons the teachers gave for deciding which students should repeat. Out of the 246 students who reported that teachers had a say in deciding which students should repeat, an overwhelming 88.2% were of the view that it was to improve previous grade, 11.0% reported school policy while a negligible 0.8% sited punishment as the reason the teachers have students repeat a class. This result implies that from the students' point of view, teachers influenced the students to repeat so as to improve their previous grade. There was a general consensus among students and teachers that those students who were not performing well be recommended for retention. Reviewed literature concerning teachers' perception of retention indicated that teachers at all levels perceived retention as an acceptable practice to remediate academic failure (Hong & Raudenbush, 2005).

From the findings, school policy had a little influence in deciding which student to repeat, from the students' point of view, while punishment had insignificant role.

The study sought to establish the opinion of the students on the attitude of teachers towards repeaters. A majority 68.3% reported that teachers had a

positive attitude towards repeaters while the rest (31.7%) reported otherwise. This result indicates that from the students' point of view, teachers had a positive attitude towards repeaters with less than a third of the respondent with a divergent opinion. This view was probably because the students believed that the teachers were well intentioned on matters of retention. A number of studies have revealed that teachers perception of retention was positive and thus the more the reason for the student to think that teachers would have a positive attitude towards repeaters.

The students were asked to describe the reaction of teachers towards students who repeat a class. A convincing 87.7% reported that the teachers offered support to the students who repeated a class while the rest (12.3%) reported otherwise. This result indicates that from the students' point of view, teachers were offered support to students who repeated a class with less than an eighth of the respondents with a differing opinion. This opinion is based on the fact that students perceived their teachers positively on matters of retention which was consistent with the teachers view when asked the same question.

The students were asked whether teachers use class retention as a motivator for students to do well in their academics. A whopping 78.7% reported that class retention was used by teachers as a motivator for students to do well in academics while the rest (21.3%) held a divergent opinion. This result indicates that from the students' point of view, teachers used class retention as a motivator for students to perform well in their academics with only a fifth with a divergent opinion. Roderick (2002) concurs with this view by stating that

retention motivates students work harder. Likewise, Allensworth (2004) says that the threat of retention causes students to take academics seriously. This is illustrated in table 4.10.

4.3 Relationship between Teachers’ and Students’ Perception of Class

Retention

The study sought to establish the relationship between teachers’ and students’ perception of retention. In the descriptive analysis a majority of teachers and students were found to have a positive perception of class retention from the summated scale. These findings indicated a positive relationship between the perceptions of both groups of respondents. This was probably because most of the respondents viewed retention as beneficial to the students.

4.3.1 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.11: *Teachers and Students Perception on Class Retention Group Statistics*

	Teachers Retention Perception	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
						Mean
Students Class Retention Perception	Positive		228	40.02	11.73	0.78
	Negative		106	39.54	13.37	1.30

Table 4.12: *Teachers and Students Perception on Class Retention Independent Samples Test*

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Students Class Retention Perception	Equal variances assumed	0.33	332	0.74	0.48	1.44
	Equal variances not assumed	0.32	183	0.75	0.48	1.51

For inferential statistics, *t* – test was used to test the null hypothesis;

H_{01} : There are no significant differences between teachers’ and students’ perception of class retention. The results indicated a weak relationship between the class retention perception of the two groups ($t(183) = 0.32, p = .75$). In the current study, the difference in the two means (40.02 and 39.54) was not statistically significant, and since the *p* value was greater than .05, the findings therefore supported the null hypothesis thus it was retained. The researcher thus maintained that there are no significant differences between teachers’ and students’ perception of class retention. This is illustrated in table 4.11 and 4.12.

These findings were contrary to previous research findings which indicated that teachers had a positive perception of retention while students had a negative perception of retention (Michealowa, 2003). Research on teacher’s perception in some selected African countries found out that most teachers perceived

retention positively and as an essential tool for weaker children to be given a second chance to improve academic achievement. Nearly 80% of Senegalese teachers who were interviewed thought retention was an 'efficient' measure (Michaelowa, 2003). Concerning students' perception on retention, Anderson et al study (2004) found that grade retention was rated as the most stressful life event among students in the sixth grade. In 1990s, Shepard and Smith had carried out a similar study earlier which indicated that grade retention was the third most stressful event for a student after losing a parent and going blind (Pattey, 2010).

4.4 Students' Self-Esteem

Table 4.13: *Student self-esteem scale*

Statement		SD	D	A	SA
I feel I am a person of worth at least equal with other students	F	2	79	202	51
	%	.6	23.7	60.5	15.3
I feel I have a number of good qualities	F	4	79	227	24
	%	1.2	23.7	68.0	7.2
I feel am a failure due to poor performance	F	27	227	77	3
	%	8.1	68.0	23.1	.9
I am able to do things as well as most other people	F	5	78	227	24
	%	1.5	23.4	68.0	7.2
I feel I do not have much to be proud of in school	F	32	220	80	2
	%	9.6	65.9	24.0	.6
I have a positive attitude towards myself	F	3	80	227	24
	%	.9	24.0	68.0	7.2
On the whole I am satisfied with myself	F	5	79	226	24
	%	1.5	23.7	67.7	7.2
I certainly feel useless at times	F	35	218	78	3
	%	10.5	65.3	23.4	.9
At times I think am no good at all	F	23	231	80	-
	%	6.9	69.2	24.0	-

Note

F = Frequency

% = Percentage

The study sought to establish the self-esteem of the students. A modified Rosenberg self-esteem scale with nine statements was used to measure students' self-esteem levels. Self-esteem encompasses how a person feel about him/ herself and it reflects the value the person perceives he or she has in the

eyes of others. Mosley (2005) argued that “success is dependent upon a positive mental attitude because people who have a high self-esteem more likely to work hard and have confidence in their skills and competence” (p.50). It is upon this background that the researcher embarked on finding out the self-esteem levels of the sampled students so as to link it with academic achievement and retention perceptions.

The respondents were asked whether they felt that their worth is at least equal with other students. A high majority of the respondents (60.5%) agreed that they are of worth at least equal to other students, 23.7% disagreed, 15.3% strongly agreed while a negligible 0.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that most students felt that their worth was at least equal with other students with only a sixth of the respondents with a divergent opinion.

The respondents were asked whether they felt that they had a number of good qualities. A whopping 68.0% agreed with this statement, 23.7% disagreed, 7.2% strongly agreed while 1.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that students had a number of good qualities

The study sought to establish whether students felt that they are failures due to poor performance. An enormous 68% disagreed with the statement, 23.1% agreed, 8.1% strongly disagreed while an insignificant 0.9% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that students did not consider

themselves failures as a result of poor performance since only less than a tenth held a divergent opinion.

The respondents were asked whether they are able to do things as well as most other people. A whopping 68.0% agreed with the statement, 23.4% disagreed, 7.2% strongly agreed while 1.5% strongly disagreed with the statement. This finding implies that students were able to do things as well as most other people since three quarters of the respondents concurred with this view.

The respondents were asked whether they felt that they did not have much to be proud of in school. An overwhelming 65.9% disagreed with the statement, 24.0% agreed, 9.6% strongly disagreed while a negligible 0.6% strongly agreed with the statement. This result means that students had much to be proud of in their school as only a quarter of the respondents gave a contrary response.

The study sought to establish whether the students took a positive attitude toward themselves. A whopping 68.0% agreed with the statement, 24.0% disagreed, 7.2% strongly agreed while a negligible 0.9% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that students had a positive attitude towards themselves as only a quarter of the respondents had a differing opinion.

The respondents were asked whether on the whole they were satisfied with themselves. A convincing 67.7% agreed with the statement, 23.7% disagreed, 7.2% strongly agreed while 1.5% strongly disagreed with the statement. This

result indicates that students were on the whole satisfied with themselves as three quarters of the respondents concurred with this opinion.

The respondents were asked whether they felt useless at times. A high majority of the respondents (65.3%) disagreed with the statement, 23.4% agreed, 10.5% strongly disagreed while a negligible 0.9% strongly agreed with the statement. This result indicates that students did not feel useless as times with less than a quarter reporting that they at times felt useless.

The respondents were asked whether at times they thought they were not good at all. A majority 69.2% disagreed with the statement, 24.0% agreed while 6.9% strongly disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that the students felt believed that they were good with only a quarter of the respondents with the thought that they are not good at all. This is illustrated in

4.4.1 Students' Self Esteem: Summary

Self-esteem is one of the dependent variables of this study.

Table 4.14: *Self-esteem Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
.984	.984	9

Table 4.15: *Students' Self-esteem Scale*

Self-esteem Rating	Frequency	Percent
9 to 18	80	24.0
19 to 31	231	69.2
32 to 36	23	6.9
Total	334	100.0

Self-esteem is one of the intervening variables of the study. The study postulated that teachers and students perceptions towards retention would have an effect on students' self-esteem which would consequently affect students' academic achievement. Burger (2000) concluded that people with low self-esteem easily get discouraged and unmotivated particularly when they receive negative feedback about their performance. Fear of retention damages student's self-image, they regard themselves as failures and they feel that they have no one to depend on. More so, research evidence has indicated positive relationship between retention perception, self-esteem and academic achievement (Brooker, 2005).

Nine questions related to self-esteem were combined and used as one self-esteem variable. Those nine questions were: I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least equal with other students, I feel that I have a number of good qualities, I feel that I am a failure due to poor performance, I am able to do things as well as most other people, I feel I do not have much to be proud of in school, I take a positive attitude toward myself, On the whole I am satisfied with myself, I

certainly feel useless at times, and at times I think I am no good at all. Each question was measured with a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. However, the scale for questions three, five, eight and nine were reversed coded.

Reviewing high correlations among answers from ten questions led the researcher to use one summated scale in looking at self-esteem. The answers from the nine questions were summed to create a self-esteem scale. To check on the internal consistency of the items Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated and a value of 0.984 was obtained. This figure is higher than 0.80 which is the generally agreed lower limit for Cronbach's alpha; hence the internal consistence of the items related to self-esteem was good.

The range of self-esteem scale was 9 to 36. A rating of 9 to 18 was rated as low self-esteem, rating of 19 to 31 was rated as high self-esteem, while 32 to 36 was rated as very high self-esteem. From the findings, it was established that a whopping 69.2% of the students had a high self-esteem, 24% had a low self-esteem while 6.9% had a very high self-esteem. This is illustrated in table 4.14 and table 4.15.

4.4.2 Students' Academic achievement

Table 4.16: *Average Grade achieved in the county mock examination for 5 selected subjects*

Average Grade	Frequency	Percent
A	2	.6
A-	9	2.7
B+	20	6.0
B	26	7.8
B-	68	20.4
C+	87	26.0
C	46	13.8
C-	52	15.6
D+	19	5.7
D	5	1.5
Total	334	100.0

Academic achievement is the dependent variable in this study. It is suggested that academic achievement of students will depend on their levels of self-esteem which is an outcome of how the students perceive themselves and the environment around them. The study sought to establish the score that the students attained in the county mock examination for five selected subjects so as to link it with the self-esteem score and retention perception. It was established that majority of the respondents (26.0%) attained grade C plus, 20.4% attained B minus, 15.6% attained C minus, 13.8% attained C plain, 7.8% attained B plain, 5.7% attained D plus, 2.7% attained A minus, 1.5% attained D plain while 0.6% attained straight A. This result indicates that the

biggest percentage (74.8%) of the students attained grades C minus to grade B minus with both tails (grade 'A's and 'D's) accounting for less than five percent of the respondents. Hence the grades attained in the mocks for the five selected subjects formed a normal distribution curve. This is illustrated in table 4.16.

4.5 Relationship between Teachers' Perception of Class Retention and Students' Self-Esteem:

The study sought to assess the extent to which teachers' class retention perception predicted students' self-esteem.

Majority of the teachers in this study (66.7%) were reported to have a positive perception towards retention and this may have accounted for students' development of a high self-esteem as indicated earlier. Majority of teachers also indicated that they would support repeaters and that they used retention to motivate students a view that students also concurred with. These findings agreed with the students' perception where majority (69.2%) was found to have a positive self-esteem. Self-esteem is the degree to which a person thinks he or she is good, bad, worthy or unworthy in the eyes of significant others (Funder, 2007).

These findings have been supported by previous research findings. Teachers in primary school were reported to have a positive perception concerning grade retention (Range, 2009). Michaelowa (2003) in Senegal found out that 80% of

teachers perceived retention as an efficient measure to remediate academic failure.

A large number of research studies have indicated that grade retention perception can be a major cause of self-esteem issues among students. The way the teachers react towards repeaters and their general attitude towards the policy of retention will have an impact on overall students' development of self-esteem. Students who are favorably perceived will develop a high self-esteem and are more likely to achieve highly (Kwena 2007).

4.5.1 Hypothesis Testing

Chi square and Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used to test the second null hypothesis.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between teachers' retention perception and students' self-esteem. To test this hypothesis a chi-square test analysis was done.

Table 4.17: *Teachers' Class Retention Perception Scale and Students' Self-esteem Cross tabulation*

			Students' Self Esteem				
			Low Esteem	Self	Healthy Esteem	Self	Total
			21	0	1		1
			22	1	0		1
			23	1	0		1
			25	2	1		3
			26	3	0		3
			41	0	1		1
			42	0	3		3
Teachers'	Class	Retention	43	0	1		1
Perception	Scale		45	0	2		2
			47	0	1		1
			48	0	1		1
			50	0	4		4
			52	0	1		1
			53	0	2		2
			56	0	2		2
Total				7	20		27

Table 4.18: *Teachers' Class Retention Perception Scale and Students' Self-esteem Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.529	14	.042
Likelihood Ratio	27.084	14	.019
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.340	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	27		

The study findings established that there was a statistically significant relationship between teachers' perception on class retention and students' self-esteem $\chi^2 (14) = 23.53, p=.042.$). Since the p value was less than .05 the null hypothesis was rejected which stated no significant relationship and the alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship was accepted. This is illustrated in tables 4.17 and 4.18.

Table 4.19: *Teachers' Class Retention Perception and Students' Self Esteem: Correlations*

		Teachers' Class Retention Perception	Students' Self Esteem
Teachers' Class Retention Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.837
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	27	27
Students' Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	.837	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	27	27

Further a Pearson product-moment correlation was done to see whether there was a correlation between the two variables. Results are shown in table 4.19 below.

These results indicated that there was a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and teachers' perception on class retention ($r(26) = .84, p = .00$). Since the p value was less than .05 the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings are consistent with reviewed literature on the effects of retention perception on self-esteem. Jimerson (2001) concluded that students who were subjected to retention scored significantly lower on self-perception and attitude measures than promoted peers. Martin (2009) concurred with this view by arguing that retention caused serious negative repercussions to student's self-esteem particularly in high school.

Jimerson and Ferguson (2007), Bushra (2011) findings were also in agreement that students who were retained exhibited more behavioral problems than promoted peers and concluded that there was a strong impact of grade retention on the self-esteem of students.

4.6 Relationship between Students' Perception of Class Retention and Self-

Esteem:

Table 4.20: *Class Retention perception and Self-esteem; Students perspective*

Would you feel demoralized if there were students retained in your class	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61	18.3
No	273	81.7
Total	334	100.0
Retention makes students have low opinion about themselves	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61	18.3
No	273	81.7
Total	334	100.0

The study sought to establish the relationship between students' perception on class retention and students' self-esteem. The respondents were asked whether they would feel demoralized if there were students retained in their class. A whopping 81.7% reported that they would not be demoralized by presence of repeaters in their class while the rest (18.3%) reported otherwise. This means that presence of repeaters in a class did not negatively affect the morale of the students with only less than a fifth giving a divergent opinion. These findings were contrary to previous research findings. Bushra (2011) in her study in Pakistan reported that even the mere presence of a repeater in class would have serious repercussions both for the repeater and those who watched him or her repeat. Similarly, Kwena (2007) agrees that a repeaters' self concept will be

negatively affected because of the negative comments from the teachers and other students.

The respondents were asked whether retention makes students have low opinion about themselves. An overwhelming 81.7% reported that retention does not make students have low opinion about themselves while the rest (18.3%) reported otherwise. This result means that retention does not make students have low opinion about themselves with less than a fifth of the respondents with a divergent opinion. However as noted earlier these findings are contrary to the findings in the reviewed literature. Kwena (2007), and Bushra (2011), both agreed that students perception of retention if negative, would have a negative effect on students self concept. However it can be argued that a majority of students felt that retention would not make them have a low opinion about themselves because their perception of retention was found to be positive. This is illustrated in table 4.20.

4.6.1 Hypothesis Testing

To test the third hypothesis independent samples *t*- test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient were used.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between students' retention perception and students' self-esteem.

Table 4.21: *Students' Class Retention Perception and Self Esteem: Group Statistics*

	Class retention perception	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self Esteem	14 to 36 (Negative)	125	21.3120	4.53377	.40551
	37 to 56 (Positive)	209	28.0096	3.01437	.20851

Table 4.22: *Students' Class Retention Perception and Self Esteem: Independent Samples Test*

		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means				
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Self Esteem	Equal variances assumed	-16.200	332	.000	-6.69757	.41344
	Equal variances not assumed	-14.688	190.305	.000	-6.69757	.45598

The study established that students with a positive class retention perception registered a mean of 28.01 ($SD = 3.01$) on their self-esteem while their counterparts with a negative class retention perception registered a much lower self-esteem mean of 21.31 ($SD = 4.53$). The results were $t(190) = 14.69$, $p = .000$. The difference in means is statistically significant at the .05 level of significance since the p -value is less than 0.001. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that there is a significant

relationship between students' class retention perceptions and students' self-esteem. This is illustrated in tables 4.21 and 4.22.

A large number of research studies have indicated that grade retention is a major cause of low self-esteem in students. Sterns et al (2007). However it was also noted that students who viewed retention positively developed a high self-esteem probably because they thought that retention was a good intervention strategy to help them improve their grades. In other studies, students were found to have a negative perception of retention which resulted in low self-esteem (Jimerson, Anderson and Whipple 2004).

To further test the hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation was done to find out whether there was a correlation between the students' class retention perception and their self-esteem.

Table 4.23: *Students' Perception on Class Retention and Self Esteem: Correlations*

		Students' Class retention perception	Self Esteem
Students' Class retention perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.628
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	334	334
Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	.628	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	334	334

The results indicated that there was a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and students' perception on class retention, $r(333) = .63, p = 0.000$. Since there is a significant relationship between students' self-esteem and students' perception on class retention and the p value less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that there is a significant relationship between students' class retention perception and students' self-esteem. Results are presented in table 4.23.

4.7 Relationship between Teachers' Perception of Class Retention and Students' Academic achievement:

Table 4.24: *Teachers' Perception on Class Retention and Self Esteem: Correlations*

When students repeat they feel bad and thus perform poorly	Frequency	Percent
Agree	4	14.8
Disagree	23	85.2
Total	27	100.0
Fear of retention cause student's anxiety	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	92.6
No	2	7.4
Total	27	100.0
Students who had repeated performed better in the mock examination	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	66.7
No	9	33.3
Total	27	100.0
Teachers attitude towards repeaters affect their academic performance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	92.6
No	2	7.4
Total	27	100.0

The study sought to find out the extent to which teachers' perception of class retention predicted students' academic achievement. The respondents were asked whether students feel bad when they repeat and thus perform poorly. A whopping 85.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while the rest (14.8%) concurred that students feel bad when they repeat and thus perform poorly. This result indicates that repeaters do not perform poorly as a result of feeling bad due to repeating the class since only a sixth of the respondents held a divergent opinion. These findings are in disagreement with previous findings that indicated that students rated grade retention as one of the most stressful events in their life. Anderson, Jimerson, and Whipple (2005) in their study found out that 6th grade students rated grade retention as the most stressful life event, similar to loss of a parent and going blind and this negative perception made students to perform poorly and even opt to drop out of school. However it can be noted that an overwhelming number of students in the current study refuted the fact that one would feel bad when they repeat and thus perform poorly probably because a majority of these students had earlier indicated that they had a positive perception of class retention. Furthermore when the teachers were asked if the students' performance would be negatively affected by being forced to repeat, a majority of the teachers (59.3%) disagreed with the statement. These results indicated that teachers were of the view that forced retention did not cause students to feel bad and thus perform poorly. Conversely, Kwena (2007), in her study concluded that a child who is forced to

repeat due to poor performance may develop negative feelings which could lead to poor academic achievement.

The respondents were asked whether fear of retention caused student's anxiety. A whopping 92.6% concurred with this statement while the rest (7.4%) held a divergent opinion. These results imply that fear of retention caused students' anxiety probably because retention decisions were made based on academic achievement of students. It is therefore possible that the students who were not performing well would feel anxious when faced with the threat of retention. These findings are consistent with the findings in reviewed literature that conclude that the threat of retention caused students to work hard. Allensworth (2004) speculated that the fear of retention causes students to take academics seriously. Wynn (2010) argued that teachers supported the use of grade retention for the students who did not meet the required criteria for promotion. Bonvin (2003) concurred that teachers were in agreement that the decision criteria for retention focused on academic achievement.

The study sought to establish whether students who had repeated performed better in the mock examination. An enormous 66.7% agreed with this statement while the rest (33.3%) disagreed. This result indicates that students who had repeated performed better in the mock examination as only a third reported otherwise. These findings were in support of the previous findings in the reviewed literature which indicated that teachers believed that retention would help students who were not performing well to improve. Overwhelming research findings have shown that majority of the teachers especially in

primary school believed retention was good to help academically weak students (Roberts 2007, Wietmer, Hoffman and Nottis 2004). Conversely, empirical studies have refuted this view by the teachers and concluded that retention benefits were short lived. Roderick and Nagaoka (2005) in their study, found little progress in the first year of retention for third graders and by the second year no substantial positive effects were found in academic achievement. They therefore concluded that by sixth grade, retention was associated with low academic achievement. Another study conducted by Jimerson, Burns and Silberglitt Apple (2006) revealed that grade retention did not give any advantage in reading abilities from first to eighth grade. They concluded that retained students had lower levels of academic adjustments by the end of eleventh grade, and were more likely to drop out. From these findings it can be concluded that although a majority of teachers felt that retention would help academically weak students to improve, research has shown that the reverse is true. Hong and Raudenbush (2005) concluded that retention left most students even further behind compared to their promoted peers. Specifically they found no evidence that grade retention in kindergarten improves average achievement in math or reading.

It was in the interest of the study to find out whether teachers attitude towards repeaters affected their academic performance. An overwhelming 92.6% were of the opinion that teachers attitude towards repeaters affected their academic performance while the rest (7.4%) held a divergent opinion. This result indicates that teachers' attitude towards repeaters affected their academic

performance since only less than a tenth of the respondents held a differing opinion. It was noted earlier that majority of teachers (70.4%) had indicated that their attitude to repeaters was positive and indeed the teachers alluded to the fact that they were supportive to the repeaters. These findings are supported by previous research findings which indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers perception of retention and students academic achievement. Bushra (2011) contends that a repeaters' academic achievement can be negatively affected as a result of insulting behavior and unfair treatment by teachers. Similarly Kwena (2007) says students' self-image is damaged by the comments he or she receives from the significant others like teachers. Negative attitudes by teachers towards repeaters often result in stigmatization and feelings of failure on the part of the repeaters and this eventually makes the student to have a negative self -mage and poor self-concept. Research has shown that students who receive positive comments from their teachers succeed. Mosley (2005) concluded that children who succeed in academics are those who possess a positive mental attitude. There is considerable evidence that students' poor performance in school subjects is to a large extent the result of faulty perception of the self and the world around them (Kwena, 2007). This is illustrated in Table 4.24.

Hypothesis Testing

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the null hypothesis:

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between teachers' retention perception and students' academic achievement.

Table 4.25: *Teachers' Perception on Class Retention and Academic achievement: Correlations*

		Teachers' Retention Perception	Class Academic Achievement
Teachers' Retention Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.833
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	27	27
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.833	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	27	27

Teachers' class retention perception is the independent variable and students' academic achievement is the dependent variable. The results indicate that there was a significant correlation between students' academic achievement and teachers' perception of class retention, $r(26) = .83, p = 0.000$. Since the p value is less than .05, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of class retention and students' academic achievement was rejected. The results are presented in table 4.25.

These findings are consistent with reviewed literature. Bushra (2011), found a weak but positive impact of class retention on student's academic achievement a view that is also supported by Hong and Raudenbush (2005). Jacob and Lefgren (2004) in their study found an improvement in academic achievement

of students in the repeated year indicating that probably the students in this case had viewed retention positively and that teachers' attitude towards the repeaters was positive which in turn motivated students to work hard.

4.8 Relationship between Students' Perception of Class Retention and

Academic achievement:

Table 4.26: *Students' Class Retention Perception and Academic Achievement*

When students repeat they feel bad and thus perform poorly	Frequency	Percent
Agree	69	20.7
Disagree	265	79.3
Total	334	100.0
Does the fear of retention cause you anxiety	Frequency	Percent
Yes	195	58.4
No	139	41.6
Total	334	100.0
Teachers attitude towards repeaters affect their academic performance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	243	72.8
No	91	27.2
Total	334	100.0

The study sought to establish the relationship between students' retention perception and academic achievement. The respondents were asked whether when students repeat they feel bad and thus perform poorly. A whopping 79.3% disagreed with the statement while the rest (20.7%) agreed with the statement. This means that students' felt that retention did not make them feel bad leading to poor performance. This can be explained by the fact that

majority of students (62.9%) had indicated earlier that if they were performing poorly they would request to repeat and also that they would be willing to repeat if asked to. These findings can be used to conclude that students had no problem with retention if they were consulted and if they thought that it would help them to improve in academics. However in previous studies, it was found out that retention was perceived by students as embarrassing and stressful. The students also indicated that retention made them feel sad, bad and upset probably because retention decisions were made by the teachers without consulting the affected students. Research has shown that retention increased the level of stress among repeaters in secondary school. (Anderson, Jimerson, and Whipple, 2005).

The respondents were asked whether fear of retention cause anxiety to the students. A majority of the respondents (58.4%) reported that fear of retention caused anxiety while the rest (41.6%) reported otherwise. This result was in agreement with the teachers feeling about the same question. As noted earlier, the threat of retention caused students to work hard so as to avoid the embarrassment of being asked to repeat (Roderick et al., 2002). Allensworth (2004) agrees with this view by stating that the fear of retention would cause students to take academics seriously.

The study sought to establish whether teachers' attitude towards repeaters affected their academic performance. A whopping 72.8% reported that teachers' attitude towards repeaters affected their academic performance while the rest (27.2%) reported otherwise. This means that students were in

agreement with the teachers on this matter since less than a third of the respondent held a divergent opinion. Earlier, the majority of students (63.7%) had indicated that they would be willing to repeat if asked to. This meant that if the teachers were ready to discuss the issue of retention with students then, they would be willing to repeat. As argued earlier, the attitude of teachers had a direct bearing on the academic achievement of students (Kwena, 2007). Results of the current study are illustrated in table 4.26.

4.8.1 Hypothesis Testing

The fifth hypothesis was tested using t - test and Pearson product moment correlation statistics.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between students' retention perception and academic achievement.

Table 4.27: *Students' Perception of Class Retention and Academic Achievement: Group Statistics*

	Students' retention perception	Class N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academic Achievement	14 to (Negative)	36	4.9187	.86494	.07736
	37 to 56 (Positive)	209	7.8160	1.20419	.08330

Table 4.28: *Students' Perception of Class Retention and Academic achievement: Independent Samples Test*

		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means				
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Academic Achievement	Equal variances assumed	23.511	332	.000	2.89734	.12324
	Equal variances not assumed	25.487	320.980	.000	2.89734	.11368

The study established that students with a positive class retention perception registered a mean of 7.82 (SD = 1.20) in the mock examinations for five selected subjects while their counterparts with a negative class retention perception registered a mean of 4.92 (SD = 0.86). The results of the test were as follows; $t(321) = 25.49, p = .000$. Since the p value is less than .05 the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that there is a significant relationship between students' perception of class retention and their academic achievement. From these findings, it was clear that students who had a positive perception of grade retention performed better than their counterparts who had a negative perception. The findings of this section are summarized in tables 4.27 and 4.28.

Reviewed literature has agreed with these findings by stating that students who have a positive attitude towards school experiences are more likely to do better in academics than those students who have a negative perception. Mosley

(2005) argues that children who perform well and succeed are those who have a positive mental attitude. Kwena (2007) agrees and states that poor performance of students in school subjects is to a large extent the result of negative perception of the self and the world around them mainly resulting from school experiences like fear of failure and retention. If a student perceives the school as boring and a burden they are likely to have a negative opinion about their performance and this could lead them to perform poorly in examinations. Students are likely to have a positive perception if they are involved in the decision about retention (Kwena, 2007). Sirin and Jackson (2001) concur with this view by stating that academic achievement is highly influenced by perceived competence. The current study therefore concluded that students' academic achievement depended on their perceptions regarding grade retention.

To further test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between students' class retention perception and their academic achievement, a Pearson product-moment correlation was done.

Table 4.29: *Students' Perception of Class Retention and Academic Achievement: Correlations*

		Students' Class retention perception	Academic achievement
Students' retention perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.790
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	334	334
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.790	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	334	334

The results indicated that there was a significant correlation between students' academic achievement and students' perception on class retention, $r(333) = .79$, $p = .000$. Since the p value was less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Findings are presented in table 4.29

These findings are consistent with previous research findings that found out that students' attitudes determined their academic achievement.

4.9 Students' Self-esteem and Academic achievement:

Hypothesis Testing

The study sought to assess the relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement. Chi square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis;

H_{06} : There is no significant relationship between students' self-esteem and their academic achievement.

The variables were subjected to test using Chi Square statistics was to find out whether self-esteem predicted academic achievement. The self-esteem and academic achievement of students was measured quantitatively using the modified Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the results of five compulsory subjects form the county mock examinations. Academic achievement was taken as the dependent variable and self-esteem as the independent variable.

Table 4.30: *Academic Achievement and Self-esteem Cross Tabulation*

		Self Esteem			Total
		9 to 18	19 to 31	32 to 36	
Academic achievement	A	0	0	2	2
	A-	0	0	9	9
	B+	1	10	9	20
	B	0	25	1	26
	B-	1	67	0	68
	C+	2	85	0	87
	C	3	42	1	46
	C-	50	1	1	52
	D+	18	1	0	19
	D	5	0	0	5
Total		80	231	23	334

Table 4.31: *Self-esteem and Academic Achievement Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	492.837	18	.000
Likelihood Ratio	390.673	18	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	203.618	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	334		

Findings indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and students' academic achievement ($\chi^2(18) = 492.84, p = .000$). Since the p value is less than .05, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement was rejected. These results are presented in tables 4.32 and 4.33

The above findings are consistent with previous research findings that concluded that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate to a high degree (Brooker 2005). Ross and Broh (2000) found out that academic achievement boosts self-esteem and the sense of personal control. Similarly, Griffiths (2002) agrees that the self-esteem of students is affected by their perceived ability, especially when gauged from test results. In addition, Gonzalez- Piedad et al. (2002) found out that students' self-esteem has a powerful effect on self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem were found to have a negative self-image and poor self-concept which impacted negatively on their academic achievement (Bengulia, 2007). A study done by El-Anzi (2005) to determine academic achievement and its relationship with self-esteem and other factors among Kuwaiti students also found a significant positive

correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. However, Bushra (2011) in her study in Pakistan found contradicting results in the first and second phase of the study. There was no relationship found between academic performance and self-esteem in phase one whereas in phase two, a significant relationship was found probably because of the gains made in the retained year. Conversely, other studies disagree that self-esteem is closely linked to academic achievement. Baumeister, Campbell, Kreger and Vohs (2003) argue that many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their achievements and success and therefore, to measure their success related to self-esteem is subjective. They suggest that high self-esteem does not necessarily lead to good academic performance and it is only partly responsible for good academic performance. In fact, high self-esteem, according to their analysis may be counterproductive in terms of academic achievement of students.

However the general agreement is that high self-esteem improves academic achievement and also that high academic achievement causes high self-esteem (Ross & Broh, 2000). Conversely, poor academic achievement causes students frustration and leads to lowered self-esteem (Burfeind & Bartusch, 2006).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the main findings of the study presented in preceding chapters, an overall conclusion of the study as per the objectives has also been given and finally, several recommendations and areas for further research have been included at the end of the chapter.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This section presents a summary of the study findings based on the objectives. The aim of the study was to find out the extent to which secondary school students' and teachers' retention perception predicted students' self-esteem and academic achievement in Meru County. The study tested whether teachers' and students' perception of class retention had a significant relationship with students' self-esteem and academic achievement. Further the study evaluated if there was a significant relationship between students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The dependent variables of the study were self-esteem and academic achievement while teachers' and students' retention perceptions were the independent variables. Data for this research was mainly collected from students and teachers questionnaires.

The key findings of this study are summarized below as per the following objectives.

- i. To find out the differences between students' and teachers' perceptions of retention.
- ii. To establish the relationship between teachers' perception of retention and students' self-esteem.
- iii. To establish the relationship between students' perception of retention and self-esteem.
- iv. To find out the relationship between teachers' perception of retention and academic achievement of students.
- v. To find out the relationship between students' perception of retention and academic achievement.
- vi. To determine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of the students.

The first objective sought to find out whether there were significant differences between teachers' and students' perception of class retention. The results indicated no significant differences between the variables. Both teachers and students were found to have a positive perception of class retention probably because majority felt that retention helped academically weak students more time to prepare for examinations.

The second study objective sought to find out the relationship between teachers' retention perception and students self esteem. The findings revealed

that students' development of self-esteem depended on how the teachers treated them particularly regarding retention decisions. Most of the teachers' perception of class retention was found to be positive.

The findings showed a statistically significant relationship between teachers' retention perception and students' self-esteem.

The third objective sought to find out the relationship between students' perception of retention and self-esteem. The findings indicated that the students who viewed retention positively had high chances of developing a high self-esteem and conversely those who viewed retention negatively developed a low self-esteem.

Results showed that there was a significant relationship between the two variables.

The fourth objective sought to find out the relationship between teachers' retention perception and students' academic achievement. The findings clearly indicated that teachers positive perception affected students' academic achievement positively possibly because of the support and encouragement the teachers offered.

The overall conclusion from these findings was that teachers' retention perception was a main predictor of students' academic achievement.

In the fifth objective, the researcher sought to find out the relationship between students' retention and their academic achievement. The results indicated that a high majority of the students felt that their academic achievement would not be

affected negatively when they repeat. Indeed the students agreed that the repeaters academic achievement was improved after retention. The findings therefore revealed a significant relationship between students' class retention perception and students' academic achievement.

The last objective of the study was to explore the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students in form four. The general finding was that high self-esteem improves academic achievement and that high academic achievement causes high self-esteem.

Test results indicated that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

5.3 Conclusions

From the discussions in chapter four and the summary given above, this study has resulted in four main conclusions.

Firstly, based on the findings that majority of the teachers and students perceived class retention positively, it is logical to conclude that majority of the students and teachers viewed retention favorably probably because they thought that retention was good to help weak students.

Secondly, based on the findings that there was a significant relationship between teachers' and students' perception of class retention and student's self-esteem and academic achievement, it is also logical to conclude that students' self-esteem and academic achievement depends on the attitude of both teachers and students towards the repeaters and those at-risk of retention. Students will

develop either high or low self-esteem depending on their experiences with fellow students and teachers. Likewise students will achieve high or low grades depending on how the teachers perceive them either as repeaters or those at risk of being asked to repeat.

Lastly based on the findings that students' self-esteem and their academic achievement correlate to a high degree, it is logical to conclude that self-esteem and academic achievement have a reciprocal effect on each other in that students with a high self-esteem are likely to achieve high academic grades. Likewise the students with high academic grades are more likely to develop a high self-esteem.

5.4 Recommendations

The current study has unearthed several issues related to class retention perception, students' self-esteem and academic achievement. As noted earlier in chapter two, retention is a topic that school administrators, counselors, educators, parents, and students need to understand before they can fully determine the option of having student to repeat.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations have been suggested. The recommendations are intended to address both policy and further research matters.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

- i. Based on the findings that both teachers and students perceived retention as a good measure to remediate low academic achievement,

the ministry of education needs to come up with a clear policy document informed by this and other research findings to ban forced retention and only allow retention to occur when students willingly request to repeat in order to minimize cases of frustration. Likewise, the county education boards need to align their policies regarding retention and promotion with the national governments' policies so as to have a standard way of dealing with the issue.

- ii. Based on the findings that there was a significant difference between teachers' perception of class retention and students' academic achievement, there is need for school administrators to provide adequate training to these teachers in the area of psychometrics to enable them improve their ability to design and interpret assessment data in order to focus their attention on students weak areas instead of condemning students wholesale. Teachers need to be informed more on current research on retention benefits and risks so as to help them make right decisions based on empirical research.
- iii. Based on the findings that teachers' and students' perception of class retention influences students' self-esteem and academic achievement, there is need for education stakeholders to rethink about the high value they place on academic performance ignoring the other aspects of a students' life. Therefore there is need to abolish school and student ranking not only at the national level but even at the school level.

Students' performance should be looked at from a wider perspective covering a broad curriculum.

- iv. Based on the findings that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate to a high degree it is prudent that teachers focus on prevention, early identification of the at risk group and early intervention which employ a variety of strategies like extra remedial programs specifically targeting the students' weak areas. This will help to boost students' self-esteem and improve their grades.
- v. Based on the previous discussions, the Teachers Service Commission need to identify and train counselors in schools to provide mental health programs to promote social and emotional adjustment among students who may either have repeated or be at risk of repeating. Teachers and counselors need to create a positive school environment by cultivating supportive personal relationship with students who are academically weak. Such interventions will go a long way in helping the teachers and students to appreciate individual differences in learning thus reducing students' frustrations.

5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

- i. This research studied the relationship between teachers' and students' perception of class retention, students' self-esteem and academic achievement of form four students in one year. Future research will be most valuable if it embarks on longitudinal studies that follow students

over the school years so as to come up with meaningful comparisons of students' socio emotional and academic outcomes and be able to report objectively. This will enable future researchers to link each student's records with other important information like family socio- economic status, demographic information, characteristics of schools and teachers and community characteristics all of which are important ingredients to academic achievement of learners.

- ii. There is also great need for further research to compare perceptions of retained students, their classmates who are at risk of repeating and their peers who watch them repeat. This comparison will enable the researchers to unearth the psychological aspects of retention as both groups are likely to perceive retention differently. There are various factors that contribute to low academic achievement of students, therefore future research need to focus on a clear understanding of the psychological effects of retention in order to help the student's lead better and successful lives in schools and in society. Furthermore a qualitative study involving perceptions of teachers and students might help to reduce the negative perceptions of class retention and improve self-esteem and academic achievement.
- iii. The current study and much of the previous studies reviewed have concentrated on teachers' and students' perceptions of retention ignoring the other key education stakeholders. It may be interesting therefore for future studies to address the issue of parental involvement

with a view of clearly defining what parental involvement entails and to what extent does it affect retention and promotion decisions.

- iv. Finally, it is necessary for future studies to use the national data base of students who are retained, drop outs, those who continued to lag behind and those who have socio- emotional challenges. Understanding the factors that contribute to students' failure in school is a difficult task because there are many complex variables that interplay thus the need for more complex research designs which allow for control of intervening variables.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Consent to participate in the study

This research study is aimed at finding out the relationship between teachers' and students' perception of class retention, students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The findings of this study will provide insights into the psychological aspects of class retention in relation to students' academic achievement. The study will be helpful to secondary school teachers and students as they try to handle the issue of academic achievement and overall students' life in school.

I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire to help in the success of this research. Any information you put in this questionnaire will be treated with uttermost confidentiality.

I agree to participate in this study_____

Thank you for accepting to participate in this study.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Mburung'a Nangithia

Ph.D. Student, Kenyatta University

Appendix II: Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire is part of a research thesis examining teachers' and students' perception regarding class retention/repetition and its relationship with self-esteem and academic achievement of students in Kenyan secondary schools. It seeks to understand how students and teachers view and understand class retention and whether repeating predicts behavior of the repeaters and other students who may be performing poorly in school.

If you do not understand any question ask your class teacher to clarify to you.

All information will be treated with strict confidence and used for academic purposes only.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- i. Answer all questions as indicated by either filling in the blank or ticking the option that applies*
- ii. Do not put your name or identification anywhere on this questionnaire.*

Section A: Demographic Information:

1. Respondent's gender Male Female
2. Respondent's age
3. Name of school
4. District/sub county
5. School type Boys Girls mixed

Section B: Students Perception on Class Retention

6. Have you ever repeated a class?
Yes No
7. If yes above, why do you think you repeated?

Immaturity

Low motivation

Absenteeism

Poor grades

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements in the table below:

Use 1- strongly agree (SA) 2-Agree (A) (D)3- Neutral

(N) 4- Disagree (D) 5 – Strongly disagree (SD).

Statement	1-SA	2-A	3-N	4-D	5-SD
Student perception on class Retention					
i. Class retention is good to help weak students perform better.					
ii. My self- esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating.					
iii. I would rather change school than repeat class in my current school.					
iv. I would feel embarrassed if am asked to repeat.					
v. I have friends who complain being harassed by classmates for repeating.					
vi. Forced retention will affect a students' academic performance negatively					
vii. Students should sometimes be retained.					
viii. I would accept to repeat a class if asked to.					
ix. If I am performing poorly I would request to repeat.					
x. I have no problem with repeaters in my class.					
xi. As a repeater I feel demoralized among peers in my class.					
xii. I am not free to disclose whether I have repeated or not.					
xiii. Retention makes students have low opinion about themselves.					
xiv. Students with low self-esteem perform poorly.					

Section C: Students' Views on Teachers Perception on Class Retention

9. Do teachers in your school have a say in deciding which students should repeat a class?

Yes No

b. If yes what reasons do they give?

To improve previous grade to mature up

As a punishment School policy

10. What are the teachers' attitudes towards repeaters?

Negative Positive

11. Describe teachers' reaction for students to repeat a class?

Supportive Not supportive

12. Do teachers use class retention as a motivator for students to do well in their academics?

Yes No

b. Give reasons for your answer above

.....

Section D: Retention Perception on Self-esteem.

13. Would you feel demoralized if there were students retained in your class?

Yes No

b. If yes Explain why

Section E: Retention Perception and Academic achievement.

14. When students repeat they feel bad and thus perform poorly.

Agree Disagree

15. Does the fear of retention cause you anxiety?

Yes No

b. If yes above, how would this affect your performance?

Negatively Positively

16. When I repeated, my grades....

Improved Declined Not applicable

b. Give a reason for your answer above.

.....

17. Can teacher's attitude towards repeaters affect their academic achievement?

Yes No

b. Explain

Section F: Self-esteem and Academic achievement

18. Tick the grade you attained in the county mock examinations in the following subjects.

SUBJECT	A	B	C	D	E
MATH					
ENGLISH					
KISWAHILI					
CHEMISTRY					
BIOLOGY					

19. I would perform better if I voluntarily opted to repeat.

True

False

20. a. Does presence of repeaters in a class affect your academic achievement?

Yes

No

b. Briefly explain

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Class Teachers

This questionnaire is to collect data for purely academic purposes. The research seeks to assess the perception of students' and teachers' on class retention and their relationship with self-esteem and academic achievement. All information will be treated with strict confidence and used for academic purposes only.

INSTRUCTION: *Answer all questions as indicated by either filling in the blank or ticking the option that applies.*

Section A: Demographic Information:

1. Respondent's gender
Male Female
2. Respondent's age _____
3. What is your education qualification
4. For how long have you been a teacher in your teaching career?
1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years
16-20 ears 20-25 years 25-30 years
5. Name of school
6. District/Sub-county
7. School type Boys Girls Mixed

Section B: Teachers' view of students' Perception of Retention:

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements in the table below:

Use **1- strongly agree (SA)** **2-Agree (A)** **(D)3Neutral**

(N) 4- Disagree (D) **5 – Strongly disagree (SD)**

Statement	1- SA	2- A	3- N	4-D	5-SD
i. Class retention is good to help weak students perform better.					
ii. Students' self- esteem is negatively affected by fear of repeating.					
iii. Students would rather drop out of school than repeat class.					
iv. Students often feel embarrassed if asked to repeat.					
v. Some students complain being harassed by classmates for repeating.					
vi. Forced retention will affect a students' academic performance negatively					
vii. vii. Students should sometimes be retained.					
viii. Students would readily accept to repeat a class if asked to.					
ix. Students who perform poorly willingly request to repeat.					
x. Students have no problem with repeaters in their class.					
xi. Repeaters feel demoralized among peers in the same class.					
xii. Students are not willing to disclose whether they have repeated.					
xiii. Retention makes students have low opinion about themselves					
xiv. Students with low self-esteem perform poorly.					

9. Who decides which student should repeat in your school?

Teachers Student
Parents School

Section C: Teachers on Class Retention

10. Would you recommend a student to repeat a class?

Yes No

b. What reason would you give?

To improve previous grade to mature up
As a punishment School policy

11. What is your attitude towards repeaters?

Negative Positive

12. What is your reaction for students to repeat a class?

Supportive Not supportive

13. Do you use class retention as a motivator for students to do well in their academics?

Yes No

b. Give reasons for your answer above.....

Section D: Retention Perception on self esteem.

14. Do students feel demoralized if there are repeaters in the class?

Yes No

b. Explain why

Section E: Retention Perception and Academic achievement.

15. When students repeat they feel bad and thus perform poorly.

Agree Disagree

16. Does the fear of retention cause student's anxiety?

Yes No

b. If yes above, how would this affect their performance?

Negatively Positively

17. Students who had repeated performed better in the mock examinations.

Yes No

b. Explain the answer above.....

.....

Section F: Self-esteem and Academic Achievement

18. Students perform better if they repeat voluntarily.

True False

19. Does presence of repeaters in a class affect the rest of the peer's academic achievement? Yes No

b. Briefly Explain

.....

Thank you very much for you taking your time to fill this questionnaire.

Appendix IV: Modified Rosenberg Self- esteem Scale

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.
 If you **Strongly Agree**, Circle **SA**. If you **Agree with the statement**, circle **A**.
 If you **disagree**, circle **D**. If you **strongly disagree**, circle **SD**

	Statement	1.Strongly Agree	2.Agree	3.Disagree	4.Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least equal with other students.	SA	A	D	SD
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3	I feel that I am a failure due to poor performance.	SA	A	D	SD
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of in school.	SA	A	D	SD
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
9	At times I think I am no good at all	SA	A	D	SD

Appendix V: Authorization



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

1st December, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/6438/3968

Nangithia Robert Mburunga
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Impact of teachers’ and students’ perception of class retention on academic achievement in secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for a period ending **12th December, 2014**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. S. K. LANGAT, OGW
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.


The County Director of Education
Meru County.


Appendix VI: Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

MR. NANGITHIA ROBERT MBURUNGA
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 1-60605
MUTHARA, has been permitted to
conduct research in Meru County
on the topic: IMPACT OF TEACHERS'
AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CLASS
RETENTION ON ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA
for the period ending:
12th December, 2014

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/14/6438/3968
Date Of Issue : 1st December, 2014
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2,000


Applicant's
Signature


Secretary
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

