

Influence of Participation in Competitive Co-Curricular Activities on Self-Concept of Secondary School Students in Kenya

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Abstract Co-curricular activities are planned to improve on the attainment of the curriculum goals and objectives. Schools should aim for a holistic curriculum that develops a child mentally, physically, socially and morally to fit in the world of work and society. Many stakeholders in the education programme believe that co-curricular activities consume academic time and unnecessarily. Various studies have established that involvement in co-curricular activities is not entirely recognized in a number of schools and its influence on students' self-concept is not evidently expressed through evidence-based facts to the teachers, students and parents. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of participation in competitive co-curricular activities (i.e. sports, music and drama) on the self-concept among secondary school students in Central Region, Kenya. The study adopted the Ex-post Facto research design and data was collected through a self-concept inventory questionnaire and examination of school records from students' participants (1,408) in the regional championships in central region Kenya. Data was analyzed using Independent t-test and Two-way ANOVA. The results indicated that participants had higher scores on self-concept (73.93 ± 13.56) than non-participants (54.15 ± 22.90), and t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between participants and non-participants self-concept level ($957 = 0.001$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that participation in co-curricular activities had a positive influence on students' self-concept in reference to gender, school type, class and parental economic status. The findings also revealed that participants in drama had a higher self-concept compared to sports and music. Therefore, schools should encourage students to participate in competitive co-curricular activities.

Keywords Co-curricular activities, Self-concept, Participants, Non-participants, Drama, Music, Sports

1. Introduction

Participation in extracurricular activities play an important role in socialization of individuals in all age groups, and offers a powerful resource for personal development and acquiring social competencies (Crews, 2005; Nelson & Gordon-Larsen, 2006; Barbieri, 2007; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Kamau, Rintaugu, Muniu & Amusa, 2015; Fredricks, Simpkins, 2012) have also linked participation in co-curricular activities to improved self-concept of students (Piexoto, 2004; Hart, 2013; Kimengi, Kiptala & Okero, 2014). Piexoto (2004) and Hart (2013) established that adolescent students who participate in co-curricular activities report higher self-concept scores than peers who do not participate. This in turn, increases their self –concept which positively influences their academic performance.

Eccles (2005) cited in Jaiswal and Choudhuri (2017) defined self-concept as an individual's perception based on self-knowledge or experience and it is formed through interaction with environment and attributes of his or her behaviour. Similarly, Marsh and Cheng (2012) contend that self-concept refers to an individual's representations of the self-concept regarding physical, social and emotional domains of the body. In the context of this study, self-concept is defined as an individual's perception of the self in relation to how they see themselves, value themselves and how they wish they could be. Students who keep positive attitude toward their academic ability obtained higher grades because their positive self-concept reinforces them to be more autonomously motivated in school or in classroom (Guay, Chantal, Ratelle, *et al.*, 2010). Numerous studies have shown that participation in co-curricular activities is linked to improved self-concept of students (Lam, 2011; Rouse-Gordon, 2011; Hart, 2013; Annu, 2014; Kimengi, Kiptala & Okero, 2014; Ahmad, Rahman, Ali, *et al.*, 2015; Ghaxanfar, 2015; Rafiullah, Fakhar & Jehanzaib, 2017). For example, Kimengi, Kiptala & Okero, 2014 noted that

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students who took part in sports had a higher self-concept than those who did not. Similarly, Annu (2014) found out that students' (8th and 9th grades) who participate in extracurricular activities had higher self-concept, good school attendance and had better academic performance than those who did not.

Russell-Bowie, (2013) explored on the improvement of self-concept of children aged between 8 and 12 years from different social and cultural, and economic backgrounds. The children were engaged in a quality Creative Arts program. Utilizing Marsh's self-concept questionnaire (SDQ1), the study looked at the improvement of academic and non-academic self-concept among pupils engaged in a coordinated expressions program with those not included in the program. The results demonstrated that, general self-concept of those pupils involved in the creative arts program expanded extensively more than that of the non-creative arts program pupils. Ghaxanfar (2015) found that participation in co-curricular activities boost self-concept by helping students develop confidence and a positive perception of the school and other students. This study focused on primary school pupils unlike the current study that targeted secondary school students in a Kenyan learning environment and noted that participation in co-curricular activities positively influence their self-concept.

Rafiullah, Fakhra and Jehanzaib (2017) explored the positive impact of extracurricular activities on university students (n=200) and found that university students, who had participated in the extracurricular activities, had a positive self-concept and improved academic performance than the students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities.

In Bangladesh, Ahmad, *et al.*, (2015) determined the relationship between students' (n=475) participation in extracurricular activities in college campus and academic performance and found that students participating in extracurricular activities generally benefited from having better examination results, higher self-concept, and educational attainment. It further emerged that by engaging in extracurricular activities, students often learnt skills such as teamwork and leadership from college club activities hence decreasing the likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviour. It is apparent that participation in co-curricular had a positive impact on students' development of personality, interpersonal skills and building their identities.

Kiptala and Kimengi (2014) explored perceptions and self-concept and participation in sports amongst secondary school students (n=72 in volleyball & 124 in football) in Rift Valley of Kenya. Findings showed that majority of the players (98%) had a higher self-concept and there was a critical connection between perception in sports participation and student's self-concept. This implied that students who took part in sports had a higher self-concept than those who did not. As such, the current study centred on the influence of participation in co-curricular activities (sports, music and drama) on students' self-concept in public secondary schools in Central region, Kenya. Therefore, the purpose of

this study was to determine the influence of participation and non-participation in competitive co-curricular activities on self-concept of secondary school students in Central Region, Kenya. Chege (2012) noted that in most schools, emphasis has been placed on academic side of the curriculum and little is said about co-curricular activities and little is known about their role in students' learning outcomes and psychological well-being.

1.1. Research Hypothesis

The general objective that guided this study was that there is no significant difference in self-concept between participants and non-participants in co-curricular activities among secondary school students in Kenyan Central region.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was based on developmental theory developed by Kohlberg's (1969) to explain the influence of participation in co-curricular activities on students' self-concept. The basic principle of developmental theory is that co-curricular activities enhance socialization and personality development. According to Broh (2002), developmental theory emphasis that taking part in co-curricular activities positively influences students' performance in academics indirectly because of non-educational and psychological benefits associated with participation in these activities. Broh (2002) argued that involvement in co-curricular activities can positively enhance students' educational aspiration indirectly in three different ways.

First, co-curricular activities involvement enhances development of positive life skills and virtues such as hard work and positive self-concept, which are related to increased educational performance. Secondly, involvement in co-curricular activities boosts students' socialization and allows them gain entry in peer groups that are academically oriented. Thirdly, involvement in co-curricular activities allows students to interact freely with other students, teachers and parents, thereby acquiring social networks that keep them engaged in their schools.

This socialization aspect thereby, acts as a form of social control that encourages them to strictly follow school rules and regulations (Broh, 2002). Johnson and Eason (2016) established that students who participated in the extracurricular activities had a positive self-concept and an improved academic performance than non-participants. Additionally, participants in extra-curricular activities were able to develop social connection, teamwork and also control their emotions (Rafiullah, Fakhra and Jehanzaib, 2017). Similarly, Brown (2010) found out that adolescents who were involved in co-curricular activities had a higher self-esteem and self-confidence than non-participants. Despite the overwhelming support, other studies emphasis that not every type of activity promotes adolescents' psychological adjustment, but change depends on the type of

activity under consideration (Lisha, Crano & Delucchi, 2014; Fredricks & Eccles 2008). One of the main reasons this theory was applicable in the current study was the mistaken observation in developing countries, particularly in Africa, that participants in extracurricular activities are "academically bankrupt" and intellectually "never-do-well" (Gitonga, 1998). The researcher sought to bridge this gap by establishing the influence of participation in co-curricular activities on students' self-concept, deviant behaviour and academic performance particularly in Central region, Kenya.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

The study employed ex post facto research design. This design is recommended in psychology, sociology and education research because many research problems in social sciences do not lead themselves to experimental enquiry (Simon and Goes, 2013). In ex post facto design, the researcher does not manipulate the independent variable since study participants cannot be randomly assigned to different levels of independent variable (Kothari, 2004). The choice of ex post facto research design is pegged on the realization that the researcher did not manipulate either of the variables. Hence, this design enabled the researcher to discover causes, even when she could not control the variables. The design also enabled the researcher to study facts that have already occurred. This is because the effect of the independent variables (participation and non-participation in co-curricular activities) on the dependent variables (self - concept, deviant behaviour and academic performance) had already occurred.

3.2. Target Population

This study targeted secondary school students who participated in Regional championships in the Central Region of Kenya. Central Region constitutes of five counties namely, Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua. The region is the originally referred to as "White Highlands" by the British colonialists where most coffee exports have been practised. It has dominance of Kikuyu community with numerous secondary schools. The target population was made of participants in sports, drama and music competitions organized by Central Region Secondary Schools Sports Association and Central Region Secondary Schools Music/Drama Association (CRSSSA and CRSSMA/DA). Competitions are organized from zonal level, Sub-county level, County level followed by Regional level and finally National level.

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample was drawn from students who participated in co-curricular activities competitions at the regional level after emerging as winners at county level. Using a matched pair design the selected participants were identified with the

help of their respective teachers and were asked to name their close friends who did not participate in co-curricular activities competitions. From each category, 704 participants (128 in sports (soccer, volleyball), 240 in drama (play, creative dance) and 336 in music (folksong, set piece) and 704 non-participants were selected to take part in the study giving a total of 1,408 students. Out of the 1,408 students, 963 (563 participants and 400 non-participants) participated in the study giving a 68.4% return rate which was considered adequate for this study.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

The researcher, through telephone calls and personally visiting sampled schools, formally requested the heads of the sampled schools for permission to use their schools for the study. The school heads introduced the researcher to the teachers and requested them to cooperate and give the researcher the needed information. The school heads also requested teachers to assist the researcher with the students' academic performance records and their class attendance registers. Thereafter, at a mutually agreed suitable date and time, the researcher visited the schools to administer the questionnaires. The researcher coordinated with the research assistants to assist in delivery and collection of questionnaires from participants. The completed questionnaires were collected the same day. The researcher also examined the school records on discipline and academic performance in the deputy principal's office immediately after collecting the questionnaires. She was also assisted by sports, music and drama teachers in the sampling of respondents and data collection.

3.5. Research Instruments

A questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. The questionnaire had two sections. Section one comprised of respondents' background information e.g. gender, age, co-curricular activities participated in while section two gathered information on students' self-concept measured using the Personal and Academic Self-Concept Inventory (PASCI) developed by Fleming and Whalen (1990). The self-concept inventory scale had 16 items on a 2-point Likert scale (0-practically never and 1-very often). The midpoint of the scale was a score of 0.5. Therefore, a mean score of below 0.5 showed that majority of the respondents have practically never found themselves in certain situations measured using a self-concept scale while a mean score of 0.5 and above showed that majority of the respondents had frequently found themselves in those situations.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data collected from the field was quantitative in nature and it was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations whereas inferential statistics included independent t-test and Two-Way ANOVA.

4. Results

The study found that in terms of gender, the proportion of male students (53.9%) who participated in the study was slightly higher compared to that of female students. In relation to level of study, majority of the students (36.3%) were in form three followed by those in Form two, Form four and then Form one. The study further found out that regarding the school type, most of the participant and non-participants were from extra-county and national schools (See table 1).

Table 1. Students' Background Information

Gender	Participants		Non-participants		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%
Male	315	56.0	204	51.0	519	53.9
Female	248	44.0	195	48.8	443	46.0
No response	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2
Class level						
Form 1	90	16.0	46	11.5	136	14.1
Form 2	133	23.6	112	28.0	245	25.4
Form 3	202	35.9	148	37.0	350	36.3
Form 4	138	24.5	94	23.5	232	24.1
School type						
Sub-county	33	5.86	37	9.25	70	7.3
County	17	3.01	24	6.0	41	4.3
Extra-county	333	59.14	188	47.0	521	54.1
National	174	30.90	143	35.75	317	32.9
No response	6	1.06	8	2.0	14	1.5
Total	563	100.0	400	100.0	963	100

As shown in Table 2, the mean scores obtained by the participants and non-participants on the aspects measuring their self-concept ranged from 0.36 to 0.93 and 0.45 to 0.63 respectively. The highly ranked statements by the participants were “Are you often concerned when your academic performance is not progressing well?” (0.93±0.25), “Most of the time, do you sincerely like yourself ($\bar{x}=0.89\pm0.30$)” and “How often do you think of yourself as a

generally competent person who can do most things well in school?” (0.89±0.31)”. The lowly ranked statement by the participants was “Are you worried about what other people think of you?” (0.36±0.48)”. Among the non-participants, the highest scored statements were “do you consider yourself a worthwhile student in school (0.63±0.48)” and “are you concerned when your academic performance is not progressing well (0.63±0.48)” while the lowest scored statement was “do you find yourself having problems expressing your ideas when doing oral or written assignments (0.45±0.50)”. It emerged that majority of the participants in co-curricular activities obtained scores above 0.5 in most items on the scale. This implies that majority of the participants had higher self-concept compared to non-participants whose majority had scored below 0.6.

Figure 1 illustrates overall composite scores computed for students' self-concept. The highest possible score on the scale being 16 (high self-concept) and the lowest possible score being 0 (low self-concept). The midpoint of the scale was a score of 8. Figure 1 illustrates results obtained.

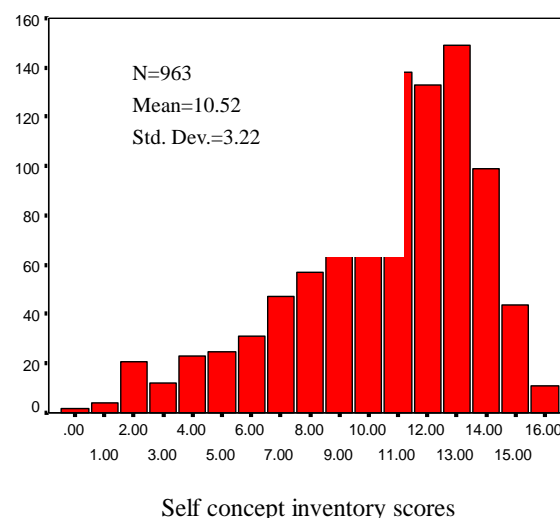


Figure 1. Overall scores on self-concept inventory

The scores obtained on the scale as illustrated in Figure 1 ranged from 0 to 16, with a mean score of 10.52±3.22. Majority of the respondents obtained mean scores of above 8 meaning most of them had higher self-concept.

Table 2. Participants and Non-Participants Self-Concept

Self-concept items	Students	Practically never	Very often	Mean	Std. Dev.
		%	%		
You have ever thought of yourself as an outstanding student	Participants	18.0	82.0	0.82	0.38
	Non-participants	46.7	53.3	0.53	0.5
Are you ever worried about other people regarding you as a success or a failure in school	Participants	41.2	58.8	0.59	0.49
	Non-participants	50.3	49.7	0.5	0.50
Academically, do you think you have more ability than a number of your classmates	Participants	17.9	82.1	0.82	0.38
	Non-participants	44.1	55.9	0.56	0.50
Ever have feelings of being less capable in academics than your classmates	Participants	26.0	74.0	0.74	0.44
	Non-participants	38.7	61.3	0.61	0.49

Self-concept items	Students	Practically never	Very often	Mean	Std. Dev.
		%	%		
Do you consider yourself a worthwhile student in school	Participants	13.4	86.6	0.87	0.34
	Non-participants	36.5	63.5	0.63	0.48
You have ever considered yourself having better capability to read and understand than most students	Participants	20.5	79.5	0.8	0.40
	Non-participants	51.4	48.6	0.49	0.50
You find yourself having problems expressing your ideas when doing oral or written assignments	Participants	38.0	62.0	0.62	0.48
	Non-participants	55.4	44.6	0.45	0.50
Most of the time, do you sincerely like yourself	Participants	11.2	88.8	0.89	0.40
	Non-participants	44.0	56.0	0.56	0.50
You have ever doubted yourself as a worthy person	Participants	26.2	73.8	0.74	0.44
	Non-participants	48.3	51.7	0.52	0.50
You think of yourself as a generally competent person who can do most things well	Participants	10.5	89.5	0.89	0.31
	Non-participants	45.0	55.0	0.55	0.50
You are worried about what other people think of you	Participants	63.8	36.2	0.36	0.49
	Non-participants	45.6	54.4	0.54	0.50
You get worried when others criticize you on your behaviour or performance	Participants	51.5	48.5	0.48	0.50
	Non-participants	51.9	48.1	0.48	0.50
You always feel proud of or pleased with your looks and appearance	Participants	21.0	79.0	0.79	0.41
	Non-participants	45.9	54.1	0.54	0.50
You often feel nervous or uncomfortable when called upon to speak in front of others	Participants	36.5	63.5	0.63	0.49
	Non-participants	54.8	45.2	0.45	0.50
How often do you feel that you have a strong sense of self worth	Participants	12.8	87.2	0.87	0.33
	Non-participants	37.3	62.7	0.63	0.48
Are you concerned when your academic performance is not progressing well	Participants	6.7	93.3	0.93	0.24
	Non-participants	37.0	63.0	0.63	0.48

Table 3. Multiple comparisons of participation in sport, drama and music on self-concept, deviance behaviour and academic performance

Tukey HSD					
Dependent Variable	(I) Which co-curricular activity do you do?	(J) Which co-curricular activity do you do?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Self-Concept Index	Nonparticipant	Sport	-18.38056*	1.38165	.000
		Drama	-20.38378*	1.84767	.000
		Music	-16.63030*	1.85864	.000
	Sport	Nonparticipant	18.38056*	1.38165	.000
		Drama	-2.00322	1.76886	.670
		Music	1.75026	1.78032	.759
	Drama	Nonparticipant	20.38378*	1.84767	.000
		Sport	2.00322	1.76886	.670
		Music	3.75348	2.16205	.306
	Music	Nonparticipant	16.63030*	1.85864	.000
		Sport	-1.75026	1.78032	.759
		Drama	-3.75348	2.16205	.306
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.					

4.1. Independent Sample T-Test

To determine how participation and non-participation in competitive co-curricular activities influences students' self-concept, an independent sample t-test was conducted

and results revealed that there was a significant difference between participants and non-participants self-concept level; $t(957)=0.001$, $p<0.001$. This implies that participants in co-curricular activities had higher self-concept compared to non-participants. As such, the null hypothesis which stated

that there is no significant difference in self-concept between participants and non-participants in co-curricular activities could not be accepted, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Further analysis was conducted to find out whether the students' participants in sport, drama and music and non-participants differed in their self-concept scores.

Participants in drama had scores on self-concept of 75.87 ± 12.44 , followed by those in sport 73.87 ± 13.92 while those in music obtained 72.12 ± 13.46 while nonparticipants had 55.49 ± 21.55 . This shows that participants in drama had higher self-concept as compared to those in music, sports and non-participants in co-curricular activities. Table 3 depicts two-Way ANOVA between-subjects effects participation in co-curricular activities on students' self-concept.

4.2. Two-Way ANOVA between-Subjects Effects Participation in Co-Curricular Activities on Self-Concept

Analysis of Variance showed a main effect of participation in co-curricular activities on students' self-concept ($3,802 = 72.917$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that participation in co-curricular activities had a significant influence on students' self-concept.

Table 3 shows Post Hoc results using Tukey's HSD.

Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD showed that there was a significant mean difference between non-participants and participants in drama ($p < 0.001$), music ($p < 0.001$) and sports ($p < 0.001$) on self-concept level. This implies that participants in the three (sport, drama and music) co-curricular activities had higher self-concept than non-participants.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of participation and non-participation in co-curricular activities on self-concept of secondary school students who were participating in co-curricular activities. It emerged from the study findings that participants in co-curricular activities had higher self-concept scores compared to non-participants. These findings are in agreement with Kiptala and Kimengi (2014) whose study found that students who took part in sports had a higher self-concept than those who did not participate. Their findings established that there was a critical connection between perception in sports participation and student's self-concept, meaning students who were participating in sports were more positive and had higher self-confidence. Kort-Butler and Hagewen (2011) discovered that students who participated in school-based extracurricular programs had higher initial levels of self-esteem compared to those who did not participate. This is because participation in co-curricular activities boost self-concept by helping student develops confidence and a positive perception of the school and other students (Ghaxanfar, 2015). Similarly, Rafiullah, Fakhar and Jehanzaib (2017) found that university students, who had

participated in the extracurricular activities, had a positive self-concept and an improved academic performance compared to the students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities. Secondly, Rafiullah, *et al.* (2017) established that students who participated in extra-curricular activities were able to develop social connection, teamwork and also control their emotions as compared to non-participants.

The findings of the analysis revealed that participants in drama had higher self-concept as compared to those in music, sports and non-participants in co-curricular activities. This associated with the physical and mental wellness attributed to the activities. Contrary with the findings, Scsmidt, Zdzinski and Ballard (2006) found out that participation in music had great influence on student's self-concept as compared to drama and sports. In yet another study, Mansour, Martin, Anderson, Gibson, Liem and Sudmalis (2018) established a relationship between young adults' participation in various forms of creative and performing arts such as dance, drama, film, music, visual arts and their self-concept. Cognitive functions of the brains stimulate attention thus improved learning, through enhanced concentration.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the study findings, the study concludes that participation in co-curricular activities had a positive impact on students' self-concept. However, there were differences in self-concept where the participants in drama had higher self-concept as compared to those in music and sports. This study, therefore, recommends that schools should encourage students to participate in sport, drama and music activities. This will help them to develop self-confidence and gain skills for solving their own problems. The study further suggests that the school administrators should organise seminars and forum for students, teachers and parents to emphasis on the role of participation in co-curricular activities on students' self-concept.

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