

Teacher-Learner Interactions and Academic Self-Concept in Informal Settlement Primary Schools in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of teacher-learner interactions on pupils' academic self-concept in primary schools located in informal settlements in Kibra sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed a survey design. The target population comprised 138 head teachers, 203 teacher counsellors, and 9536 learners in Class VII, totaling 9877 respondents, from which a sample of 385 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. Stratified sampling was used to create seven (7) different strata based on the zones, according to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of 2012. From each zone, five (5) schools, one (1) head teacher, and one (1) teacher-counsellor were selected using purposive sampling. However, from each sampled school, nine (9) learners in Class VII were selected using a simple random method to avoid bias and favouritism. This sampling procedure involved a sample of 35 head teachers, 35 teacher-counsellors, and 315 learners in Class VII. Questionnaires were used to collect data from learners in Class VII, as were interview guides for head teachers and teacher-counsellors. Piloting was conducted among 38 respondents from primary schools in informal settlements in Kibra sub-county to establish validity and reliability. The opinions of educational psychology professionals were used to confirm the study's validity. The split-half method was used to calculate reliability, and the reliability coefficient ($r = 0.728$; $p < 0.05$) at the 0.05 level of significance revealed a high degree of internal dependability. The goals guided the theme analysis of qualitative data, which was then presented in narrative style. Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was used to do a descriptive analysis of the quantitative data (frequency counts, mean, and percentages) and an inferential analysis in order to evaluate the hypotheses, and the results were shown in frequency tables and bar graphs. The results revealed that teacher support, supervision, encouragement, and individualised teaching strategies play a crucial role in shaping pupils' perceptions of their academic abilities. The findings emphasise the significance of these interactions in fostering a positive learning environment and improving academic self-concept. It is concluded that effective teacher-learner interactions can positively impact students' self-perception and motivation to excel academically. Recommendations include promoting training for teachers to enhance their interactions with students, thereby contributing to improved academic self-concept in primary school settings.

Keywords: Academic Self-Concept, Informal Settlements, Primary Schools, Pupils, Teacher-Learner Interactions

I. INTRODUCTION

Learners' social and academic success may be predicted by the strength of their connections with instructors, making these interactions crucial. Allen et al. (2014) argue that students are better able to acquire the social skills necessary to negotiate and overcome problems if they have good relationships with their teachers. Students who develop these kinds of friendships at school have a greater sense of belonging there and are more likely to have a good outlook on school as a whole.

A student may acquire, hone, and display essential intellectual skills and knowledge at school. One of the hallmarks of a successful and well-respected educator is the ability to tailor lessons to each student's unique requirements through the art of teaching. Teachers have a crucial role in students' motivation because they provide students with structure (which helps them become competent) and participation (which helps them feel connected to others). Students' faith in their own intellectual prowess is bolstered as a result. Students are more motivated to study when they have faith in their instructors, know that they have access to the materials they need, and have confidence in their own abilities to plan and carry out the steps they know they need to take to gain the information they need.

It is important to remember that the teacher's belief and encouragement of the learners means that the learners are able to view their abilities positively. Some schools only look at the performance of a learner without wanting to know why they are not doing well in school. Previous research on the effects of grade retention on students' perceptions of their own academic abilities has shown mixed results. Van Canegem et al. (2021) found that social belonging moderated the negative relationship between grade retention and academic self-concept. This means that when a learner is retained in one class for a long time, their academic self-concept goes down.

Because of its significance in shaping students' attitudes, behaviours, and ultimately their educational outcomes, the study of self-concept has become a staple in the classroom. An individual's self-concept consists of their learned set of ideas, attitudes, and overall perceptions of themselves. The findings of Chamundeswari (2014) show a strong link between students' perceptions of their own abilities, their study habits, and their grades.

1.1 Objective

To determine the degree to which interactions within the teacher-learner classroom setting influence the development of academic self-concept among primary school pupils in informal settlements within Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

II. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Learners' social and academic success may be predicted by the strength of their connections with instructors, making these interactions crucial. Brooks (1999) argues that students do better academically when they have a positive impression of their school, believe they are being treated fairly by their professors, and feel they belong there. Creating a welcoming environment for all students is essential to preventing feelings of alienation and promoting a sense of community among them.

A study by Burchinal et al. (2012) in the Netherlands found that students who lacked these types of social supports were more likely to skip classes, to feel isolated from their peers, and to exhibit low levels of academic and social competence. The characteristics that children bring to school that may impact their development of an academic self-concept and eventual success can be taken into account in teacher preparation and professional development, as stated by Burchinal et al. (2012).

Teachers play a crucial role in the classroom since their methods of implementing lessons ultimately impact the extent to which students engage with the material (Tam, 2014; Jagtap, 2015). There has been evidence that emotional support from people like teachers and friends can affect students' academic success. How emotionally invested students get varies greatly. A moderator variable, such as an individual's academic self-concept, strengthens the association between teachers' support and their students' participation in the classroom.

Several studies, including Chen (2005), Lietaert et al. (2016), and Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2016), have investigated the connection between teachers' encouragement and students' enthusiasm. Therefore, we might conclude that a moderator variable, like academic self-concept, is necessary for successful outcomes across contexts. A student's confidence in their own academic abilities would grow, and they would be more motivated to continue their studies. The researchers came to the conclusion that teachers have a crucial impact on students' enthusiasm for learning. This is due to the fact that students' dedication to learning is directly proportional to the resources made available to their teachers.

Teaching practices that put students at ease and encourage them to participate in class (Chen, 2005; Cvencek et al., 2017; Usher & Kober, 2012) include being well-prepared for class, demonstrating knowledge of and confidence in delivering material, communicating effectively, being fair, and holding teaching-learning discussions with students. This research suggests that the more encouragement students get from their instructors, the more actively they will participate in class.

Consistent with earlier research (Wang & Eccles, 2013; Wang & Lieberoth, 2018; Veigal & Almeida, 2012), this highlights the importance of the instructor in influencing students' motivation to learn. This is due to the fact that the educator plays an active role in establishing the context for learning and fostering an environment in which students are motivated to participate actively. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that a student's level of investment in school improves when they get support from their teachers.

Students who feel less of a teacher's care and support are less likely to participate in class and exhibit poor levels of self-confidence (Cirik, 2015). Students' social needs were met not just by their teachers but also by their families, communities, and classmates. Teachers' approval and endorsement of students in a classroom setting have been shown to have a significant impact on students' attitudes and behaviours (Riani, 2016; Zabala et al., 2015).

This indicates that the teacher places a high priority on building strong relationships with their students, as seen in their efforts to create a welcoming classroom environment, exhibit sincere concern for their wellbeing, show respect for the values their students have come to embrace, and extend sincere assistance and acceptance (Prasetyo et al., 2018). Educating, instructing, exercising, and directing pupils are all part of a teacher's job in the classroom.

Similar studies have demonstrated that the participants' unique traits and psychological factors nuance the relationship between a teacher's emotional support and a student's level of school engagement (Wang & Eccles, 2013; Prasetyo et al., 2018). Students' academic self-concepts are positively correlated with the extent to which they get emotional support during learning activities (Ramadhan, 2019; Yuzarion et al., 2018; Aristya & Rahayu, 2018; Kim et al., 2018). Academic self-concept is a moderator variable that boosts both teachers' encouragement and students' interest in learning.

For this purpose, academically positive self-concept is the condition of interest (Tracy et al., 2018; Gasser et al., 2018). An individual's academic self-concept is their own opinion of their own academic ability (Marsh et al., 2018; Wimmer et al., 2019; Dicke et al., 2018; Fabian et al., 2018). Students' motivation to study might be influenced by their perception of their own academic abilities. As several studies have shown (Klapp, 2018; Brandenberger & Hagenauer, 2017; Wolff et al., 2018; Fabian et al., 2018; Dicke et al., 2018), when students have a healthy view of themselves, they are more motivated to study and engage with others. Students who have a healthy sense of self-concept are more likely to exhibit self-control and confidence.

Students with certain personality traits are more likely to succeed academically. Taking everything into account, we can say that a student's willingness to actively participate in their education is influenced by their level of accomplishment motivation. Studies suggest that students with a more optimistic view of themselves are better able to regulate their emotions and behaviour while studying (Klapp, 2018; Cvencek et al., 2017). One of the many criteria that correlates highly with how well a student does in class (Lawrence & Saileela, 2019) Thus, academic self-concept may mediate the connection between instructor encouragement and student engagement in class.

Learner and teacher traits, as well as aspects of the wider social context, all have a role in shaping the dynamics of students' interactions with educators, as Ladd et al. (2009) found. Positive teacher-student interactions are protective factors for children's social and intellectual development, as further demonstrated by Ladd et al. (2009). Instructors see these kinds of encounters as ones that are high in proximity, characterised by respect and care, and in which students view their instructors as reliable and safe confidantes. Interactions like these, say Ladd et al. (2009), provide students with a sense of care, comfort, and protection, all of which help them feel more at ease in a new environment and more motivated to focus on their schoolwork.

Timperley and Robinson (2010) found comparable results in New Zealand, finding that students who had more positive connections with their instructors performed better on tests of visual and linguistic comprehension. This suggests that a strong rapport between instructor and student is a predictor of both positive work habits and fewer behavioural issues as time goes on. In line with these claims, Smith's (2009) analysis of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care indicated that positive relationships between teachers and students improved students' motivation and performance in school.

In contrast, Smith (2009) discovered that poor teacher-child connections, which are characterised by excessive conflict, reliance, and low closeness, seem to function as risk factors for learners' school achievement. Teachers tend to see youngsters as being too confrontational or clinging when there is tension between them and their students. Negative teacher-student connections may have a lasting impact on a child's academic confidence and growth, particularly in the formative years of schooling (Smith, 2009). All of these results suggest that developing a healthy sense of self-worth and confidence is one of the most difficult stages for students to go through on their way to accomplishing their educational objectives. This is because students in elementary school who form strong bonds with their instructors are more invested in their education, more open to new ideas, and ultimately more successful academically.

Guhn et al. (2013) argue that primary students' growth in relational and social skills, crucial components of a healthy academic self-concept, benefits greatly from the emotional support provided by teacher-learner interactions. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (2010), teacher-learner interactions have been found to be a significant predictor of children's learning outcomes, such as social interactions with peers, social boldness, academic success in school, and the establishment of a positive foundation for the growth of a positive academic identity in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chilora and Harris (2001) conducted research in Malawian primary schools and found that positive teacher-learner relationships were associated with better academic and social results for students. An evaluation of a professional development programme for elementary school teachers found that the programme's emphasis on

teachers' social and instructional interactions with students led to improvements in students' academic achievement and social skill development (Chilora & Harris, 2001). This suggests that the academic and social success of students may be greatly enhanced by the cultivation of strong bonds between instructors and their students. In other words, when students perceive that their instructor cares about them, they do better academically. In addition, students like it when teachers show interest in more than just their academic performance and future plans.

Chepkirui and Huang (2021) conducted research in Kenya that looked at how students' senses of identity and motivation affected their performance. Student and school traits were shown to have a role in determining students' academic achievement. Students and the school as a whole may benefit from a deeper appreciation of the significance of these considerations. This investigation tested the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the link between student self-perception and academic outcomes. The data was analysed using a correlation design, multiple regression, and mediation analysis. A total of 365 graduating seniors from various schools of arts and sciences in Kenya were included in the research. According to the results of the correlation analysis, there is a favourable relationship between motivation and academic success. As a rule, students' levels of self-confidence and their academic performance were shown to be moderated by their level of motivation. These findings suggest that students' drive and sense of self are critical to improving their academic outcomes.

The situation is similar in Kenya, where it has been acknowledged that interactions between teachers and students are crucial to the development of students' sense of academic identity (Ngaruiya, 2013). In a study conducted in Baringo County, for instance, Rotumoi (2012) suggested that educators would benefit from realising that their students are more than just their academic performance and would benefit even more if their teachers took an interest in their students' lives beyond the classroom. In Kibra Sub-County, for example, the connection between teachers and students has been held up as a prime example of how to foster students' personal and professional development.

Mureithi's (2013) research in Kibra Sub-County found that there is room for improvement in the quality of interactions between instructors and students at all levels of the school. Mureithi (2013) revealed that there are several advantages to building good teacher-learner relationships, including but not limited to better self-esteem and greater engagement. Among them are setting high standards for students, showing genuine concern, and encouraging students to take pride in their classroom. Although empirical researchers like Mureithi (2013) have examined the effects of several classroom activities on students' sense of academic identity, it is unclear how much each factor contributes.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a survey method to collect data as it allows for the investigation of the current status of the phenomena in question (Creswell, 2014). Given the research focus on teacher-learner interactions, data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative information, where questionnaires were used for quantitative data, and interviews for qualitative insights. This study employed concurrent triangulation, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide a comprehensive view of teacher-learner interactions' role in shaping academic self-concept.

3.2 Location of Study

The study was conducted in Kibra Sub-County, an informal settlement located five kilometers from Nairobi's Central Business District, with a population of 185,777 people. This research focused on primary schools in this region, which rely heavily on non-formal schooling. Given the recent effort to register such schools with the Ministry of Education and the documented challenges in education, including student disengagement and low self-concept, this area was chosen as the study location.

3.3 Target Population

In Kibra Sub-County, there are 138 non-formal primary schools that meet the Ministry of Education's registration guidelines, providing an education based on the regular curriculum. The target population for this study consisted of 138 headteachers, 203 teacher-counsellors, and 9,536 Class VII learners, totaling 9,877 potential respondents.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study employed stratified sampling, dividing Kibra Sub-County into seven zones. To ensure representative findings and evaluate the influence of teacher-learner interactions, purposive sampling was used to

select 35 principals and 35 teacher-counsellors, while 315 students in Grade VII were randomly chosen from the sampling schools. The sample size was determined using Yamane's Formula, resulting in a desired sample size of 385 respondents, focusing on the role of teacher-learner interactions.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments included questionnaires for Class VII students with Likert Scale questions and interview guides for headteachers and teacher-counsellors. The questionnaires assessed aspects related to teacher-learner interactions and their influence on academic self-concept.

3.6 Piloting of Research Instruments

The research instruments were pilot-tested with 38 respondents from informal primary schools in Kibra Sub-County, ensuring their relevance and clarity. This process was essential for assessing instrument validity and trustworthiness.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher, with the necessary permits and authorization, conducted data collection through visits to the schools. Research assistants were trained for questionnaire administration. Interviews were conducted with head teachers, teacher-counsellors, and students in Class VII.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis involved coding, frequency counts, and thematic analysis to examine the influence of teacher-learner interactions on academic self-concept. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted using statistical software. The study's quantitative results were presented through tables, charts, and narrative formats, focusing on teacher-learner interactions' role in shaping academic self-concept.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Teacher-Learner Interactions and Pupils' Academic Self-concept

The study sought to determine the extent to which teacher-learner interactions in primary schools in the informal settlements influence development of academic self-concept among pupils. Figure 4.10 displays the outcomes of the collection of descriptive data.

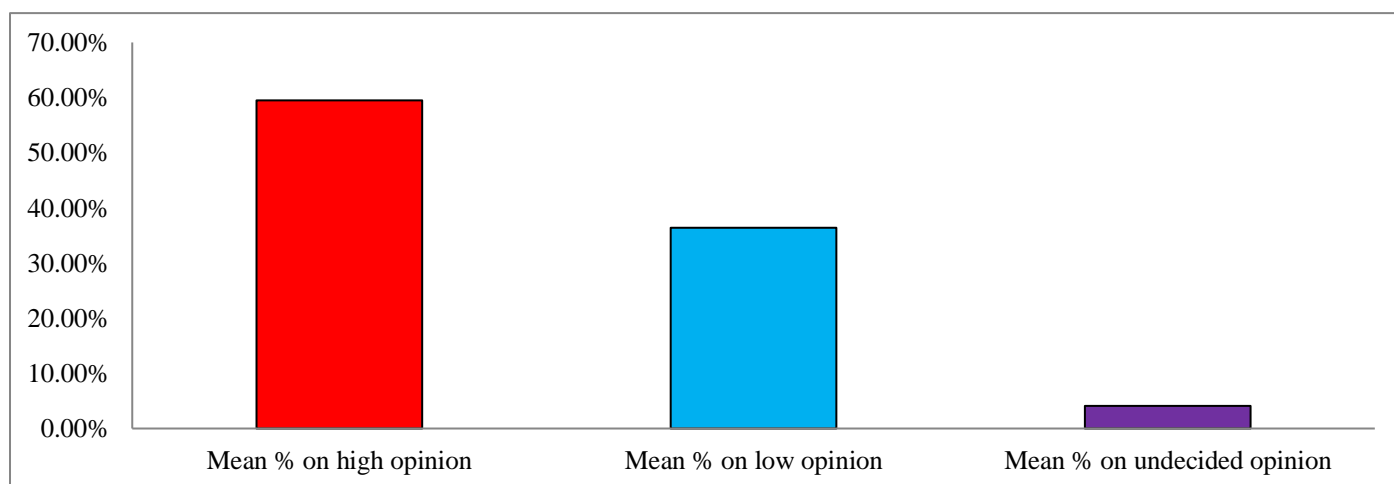


Figure 1

Views of Learners in Class VII on the Influence of Teacher-Learner Interactions on Academic Self-concept of Pupils in Primary Schools in Informal Settlements in Kibra Sub-County, Nairobi County.

Figure 1 reveals majority of learners believed that the interactions between teachers and learners influence academic self-concept of pupils in primary schools in informal settlements (59.5%). This was followed by those of the

contrary opinion (36.4%). This was further enhanced by the view that primary school teachers need to adopt supervision activities which make learning interesting and that there is a lot of interaction between the learners and the teachers. Most of the headteachers and teacher-counsellors also stated that the supervision activities undertaken by the teachers are aimed at making learning appealing and interesting to the pupils. Headteacher, H13, stated:

In my school, I have encouraged teachers to adopt hands-on teaching and supervision approaches to make learners enjoy and master concepts.

This was echoed by the Teacher Counsellor who noted that they often adopt supervision activities which enable them to understand whether pupils have mastered concepts or not. Teacher-counsellor, TC10, observed:

I have always embraced supervision activities which encourage learners to master concepts taught and assess the extent to which they have acquired knowledge and skills.

These results provide support for the claims made by Allen et al. (2014), namely that students' social and academic success may be predicted by the strength of their interactions with instructors. Allen et al. (2014) claim that students are better able to acquire and employ appropriate social skills to negotiate and manage problems if they have pleasant relationships with teachers. This suggests that instructors' methods of instruction and supervision have a significant role in ensuring that students succeed academically and socially, and in shaping the students' attitudes about school as a whole. Class VII students agreed highly with the statement that instructors motivate students to succeed in primary school, according to the study's findings. Headteachers and school counselors echoed students' sentiments during interviews that instructors play a crucial role in inspiring students to put forth maximum effort in the classroom. Headteacher, H14, noted:

Teachers in my primary school have often encouraged pupils to take their academic activities seriously. They have always advised them to work hard and pass their examinations since their future depends on it. In fact, we have set up career guidance unit headed by a teacher-counsellor tasked to advise and encourage pupils to invest much of their time in academic activities.

This view was also shared by the teacher-counsellors. They stated that, other than teaching and equipping pupils with knowledge and skills, their work also entails encouraging learners to work hard in their studies. Teacher-counsellor, TC11, stated:

I have often spent most of my time including time for teaching just talking to my pupils to work hard and take their studies seriously. I have often encouraged them to concentrate on their studies despite their socio-economic background for education is the key for unlocking their potential and change their current situation.

These results are consistent with those of a Dutch study conducted by Burchinal et al. (2012), who found that children who lack social resources are more likely to not attend school, to feel lonely, and to exhibit low levels of academic and social competence, all of which impede the development of their academic self-concept. This implies that teachers' encouragement serves the purpose of motivating pupils to value education and view it as the cornerstone for socio-economic growth and development.

This is consistent with the findings by Johnson, J. A. (2022) on promotion of positive teacher student relationship as a component of positive school climate which found that when teachers engage favorably with their students, they create learning environments that are more conducive to meeting students' emotional, social, and cognitive needs.

Study findings suggest that instructors may better supervise and monitor students' learning via the use of effective classroom interaction methods; this, in turn, can increase students' intrinsic drive to learn and their subsequent knowledge acquisition. In the interview, headteachers and teacher-counsellors also supported the views expressed by the pupils that they always get concerned when pupils fail to turn up in school. Headteacher, H15, affirmed:

We always ensure that all learners attend school activities and whenever any one of them absents himself or herself from school or fails to undertake their homework, we always do a follow-up to find out why.

Teacher-counsellors also stated that they always do a follow-up to find out why some pupils miss school. Teacher-counsellor, TC12, noted:

In my class, I often ensure that all learners are present and, for those absent from school, there must be an explanation towards the same. I always call their parents or guardians to find out why pupils miss school. In other words, I am always concerned.

These results highlight the value of instructors' attention and interest in their students' learning. This lends credence to the findings of a German study conducted by Ladd et al. (2009), who found that positive teacher-learner

interactions are characterized by a lack of conflict and dependency on the part of the teacher, as well as closeness, respect, and caring on the part of the learner.

During the interviews, the headteachers and teacher counsellors also stated that formation of groups for learners is important since it helps in identifying individual learner’s specific weaknesses, separate them and undertake remedial teaching for them. Headteacher, H16, stated:

In my school, teachers put learners into different discussion groups and assign them tasks. This helps the teachers identify capabilities of every learner and seek strategies of areas of weaknesses.

Headteachers also concurred with teacher-counsellors also stating that cooperative learning approach has become the most appropriate strategy for helping learners who are considered weak to master concepts. Teacher-counsellor, TC13, noted:

In my class, I often group learners as high and low achievers. This has enabled me to identify individual learner needs, preferences and weaknesses and thus design a teaching and learning strategy to solve those challenges.

These findings indicate that teachers consider group work strategy as an approach for improving mastery of concepts among pupils attending primary schools located in informal settlements. In other words, use of grouping strategy enables teachers to apply individualize education strategies to help slow learners catch up with the rest.

Headteachers and teacher-counselors supported the views expressed by most learners that teachers have embraced counselling. Headteacher, H17, noted:

In my school, counselling of learners has become a priority for all teachers. We have set up counselling department to provide an avenue where pupils can air their grievances and get listened to and solutions sought.

This was supported by the teacher-counsellors who admitted that they have taken counselling programmes to equip them with skills to handle daily challenges which bedevil learners at all times. Teacher-counsellor, TC14, stated:

I have undergone through training on counselling programmes to enable me have prerequisite skills to understand challenges which pupils face and offer solutions. In my school, we have a counselling department which exclusively deals with behavioural and academic challenges which learners face.

These results lend credence to the claims made by Guhn et al. (2013) that positive teacher-student interactions have a significant positive effect on primary school students' relational and social skills, which are essential for the growth of a healthy academic identity. This lends credence to the claims made by Allen et al. (2014), namely that students benefit from successful social skills training via positive teacher-student interactions like counseling. This demonstrates the importance of counseling since it helps students connect with resources at school that may help them succeed academically and socially and help them have a more positive outlook on school as a whole.

4.2 Levels of Academic Self-concept of Pupils in Primary Schools in Informal Settlements

The study aimed to determine the academic self-concept levels of students attending primary schools in informal settlements. Data was gathered from each of the selected students in the seventh grade, and the summarized results are presented in Figure 2.

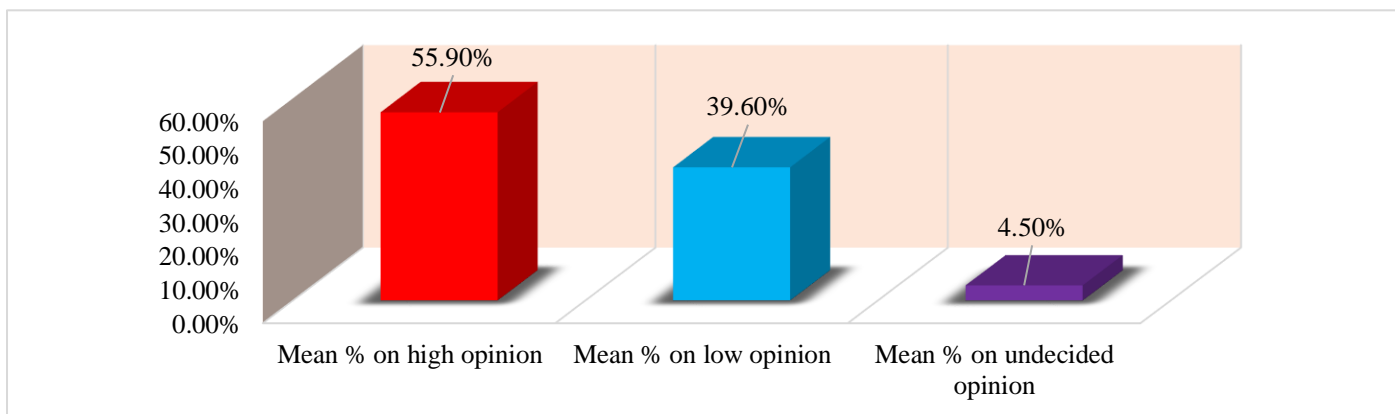


Figure 2

Views of Learners in Class VII on the Levels of Academic Self-concept of Pupils in Primary Schools in Informal Settlements

According to Figure 2, the majority of students expressed a strong positive opinion about the academic self-concept of pupils in primary schools within informal settlements. They had a mean rating of 55.90%, indicating that they believed most pupils did not set academic goals, and as a result, their academic self-concept was not well-developed. On the contrary, a lower percentage, with a mean of 39.6%, indicated that some students did set academic goals. A small percentage, 4.5% of the participants, revealed that they did not understand the concept of setting academic goals. These findings align with the idea that students who set academic goals tend to have a higher academic self-concept, as they are actively shaping their educational path and believe in the value of education for their future (Sharma, 2020).

During the interviews conducted as part of this study, both headteachers and teacher-counsellors corroborated the students' perspectives that pupils in informal settlements have a strong interest in education as a means to improve their future lives. This motivation can be attributed to the challenging living conditions in informal settlements and the longstanding government message, dating back to independence, that education is the key to a better life. These factors drive students to attend school and pursue education with the hope of achieving a better future. One Headteacher whom we will refer to as H1, noted;

In my school, pupils have shown interest in their academic studies and consider education as a key factor in improving their future life. They believe that with education, they will be able to have a bright future.

Similar views were expressed by the teacher-counsellors who noted that pupils have developed immense interest in education as the only way of unlocking their potential and securing their future life. One Teacher-counsellor whom we will refer to as, TC1, observed;

In my class, my learners have developed interest in their academic activities and education as the only way to improve their future life. They hold the view that, with good education, they can get good jobs and improve their lives and that of their family members.

These quotations further emphasize the critical importance of the education provided to pupils in informal settlements. They align with the arguments put forth by Oluwole and Ocholla (2017), who asserted that in primary schools in Nigeria, the academic success of learners at these levels is significantly influenced by their cognitive readiness and self-concept. These findings underscore that the value and interest that learners in informal settlements place on education play a pivotal role in how they approach and develop their self-concept. This, in turn, affects their motivation to work hard and excel in their academic pursuits. Despite their interest in education, the study revealed that seventh-grade learners do not feel sufficiently motivated to set academic goals, which are essential for them to pursue their education and cultivate a positive self-concept, enabling them to unlock their full potential. This lack of motivation, in turn, results in many learners in informal settlements not attending lessons for the entire term.

On their part, the headteachers and teacher-counsellors disagreed with the pupils. Headteacher, H2, stated;

In my primary school, we ensure that the environment is conducive to motivate learners to attend school activities, set their academic goals and concentrate on their studies. This has enabled many pupils to pursue their education unhindered.

The views of the headteachers were corroborated by those of teacher-counsellors who also indicated that primary schools in informal settlements have attempted to make the schools attractive to motivate pupils to pursue their education. Teacher-counsellor, TC2, stated;

In my primary school, albeit the challenges, the management has created environment which allows learners to pursue their academic dreams. There are career guidance, mentorship and counselling programmes set up by my school to motivate learners to set their academic goals.

While there are differing perspectives among pupils, headteachers, and teacher-counsellors, these findings highlight the critical importance of establishing a conducive school environment. This environment is crucial for enabling pupils to achieve their academic aspirations.

In summary, these findings collectively indicate that pupils attending primary schools in informal settlements have a genuine interest in education and a strong desire to excel in their academic studies. However, numerous complex school-related factors work against the development of their academic self-concept. Consequently, they often struggle to focus on their academic activities, complete assignments, and, as a result, their overall performance in school is negatively impacted.

4.3 Inferential Statistics

To test the null hypothesis, H_{04} : *There is no statistically significant influence of teacher-learner interactions on development of academic self-concept among pupils in primary schools in informal settlements*, data were collected from the 30 teacher-counsellors on the number of occasions when teachers interact with learners in primary schools in informal settlements (during class instruction, supervision of learner activities, allocation of tasks and during counseling sessions) and the number of learners sampled in class VII who set academic goals. The results are shown in Figure 3.

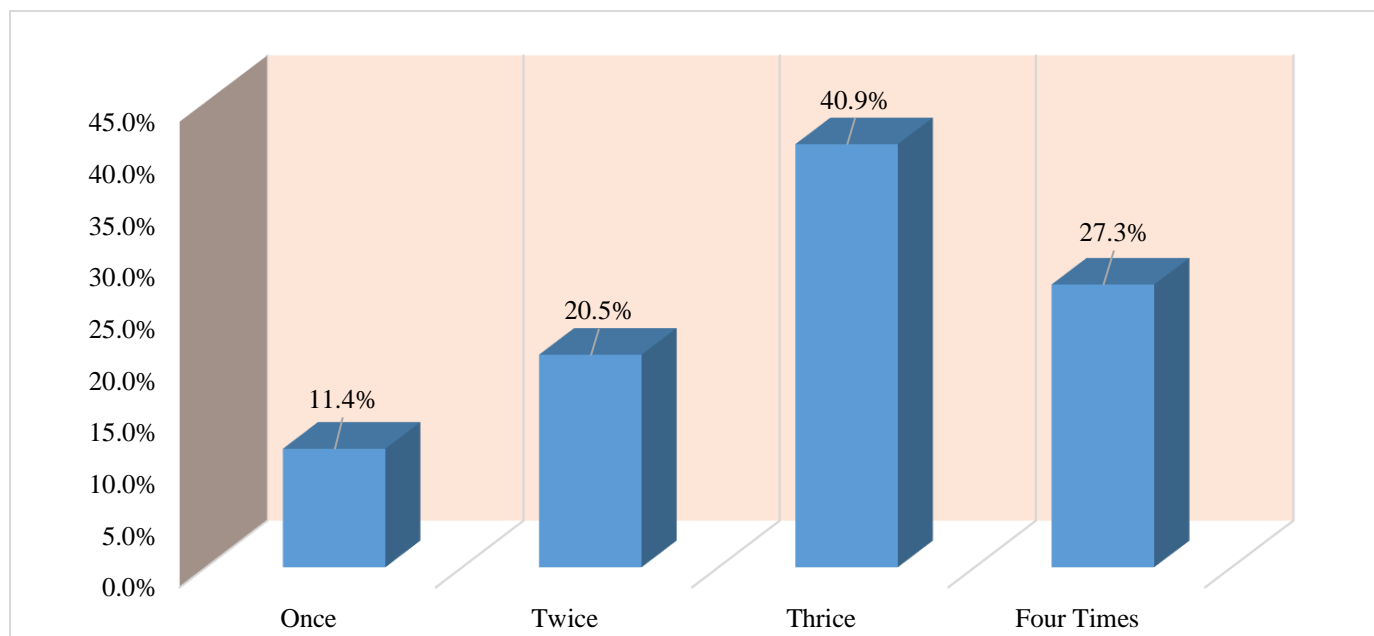


Figure 3
Number of Occasions Teachers Interact with Learners and the Number of Learners Who Set Academic Goals

Students in primary schools in informal settlements stated that teacher-student interactions influenced students' academic self-concept more than any other factor (Figure 4.11). This suggests that interactions between teachers and students in primary schools in informal settlements have a role in shaping students' perceptions of their own abilities in the classroom. This suggests that the more opportunities instructors have to engage with students, the more students will build a positive view of themselves as students and be motivated to strive for greater academic success. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis was performed, and the findings are shown in Table 4.5;

Table 1
Pupils' Academic Self-concept Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis Showing Relationship Between Teacher-Learner Interactions and

		Pupils' Academic Self-concept
Teacher-Learner Interactions	Pearson Correlation	.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was performed to examine the link between instructors' frequency of contact with students and their perceptions of their own academic abilities, as shown in Table 4.5. The test yielded a significant level (p-value) of 0.000, which was lower than the threshold of 0.05 set for statistical significance ($r = 0.598$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. These results provide additional

confirmation of the importance of teacher-student interactions in shaping students' perceptions of their own academic abilities in primary schools located in low-income neighborhoods.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role that teacher-learner interactions play in influencing the academic self-concept of pupils attending primary schools in informal settlements. It is evident that these interactions encompass various aspects, including supervision, homework checks, encouragement, and counseling. Students who experienced positive interactions with their teachers tended to develop a more positive academic self-concept, which was linked to higher academic aspirations and motivation. The rejection of the null hypothesis further strengthens the argument that the more teachers engage with their students, the more likely students are to develop a positive view of their academic abilities. This, in turn, encourages them to strive for greater academic success. The study aligns with prior research indicating the importance of nurturing strong connections between teachers and students to enhance academic and social development. The implications of these findings extend to the potential to implement strategies that promote such positive interactions between teachers and learners in schools located in informal settlements.

5.2 Recommendations

Educational institutions and authorities should focus on equipping teachers with training to foster positive teacher-learner interactions. This includes implementing programmes that teach educators effective supervision techniques, communication skills, and counselling approaches. Schools should create an environment where teachers are encouraged to actively engage with students beyond traditional classroom teaching. This might involve periodic assessment of students' academic progress, active mentoring, and guidance on setting academic goals.

The role of counselling services in schools, especially in informal settlements, cannot be understated. Educational institutions should allocate resources to establish and strengthen counselling departments, ensuring that they can address both behavioural and academic challenges students face.

There is a need for more research in the field of teacher-learner interactions and their impact on academic self-concept, especially in diverse educational settings. Studies in different contexts can provide a deeper understanding of these dynamics and lead to more targeted interventions. Encouraging parents to actively engage in their children's education is also crucial. Schools can organise programmes to educate parents on the importance of teacher-learner interactions and how they can support these interactions at home.

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