# Teachers' Perception of Co-Curricular Participation on Students' Academic Performance and Self-Concept in Rift Valley Region, Kenya

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***Abstract:*** **The study sought to investigate teachers' perception of co-curricular participation on students' academic performance and self-concept. The objectives of the study were to: investigate the perception of teachers on the relationship between co-curricular participation by students and their self-concept, examine the relationship between gender, co-curricular participation perception and academic performance, and investigate gender and training of students in co-curricular participation and their influence on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. The ontology was post-positivism and the epistemology was realist/objectivist. The research method was quantitative. The research design was *ex-post-facto*. A total of 72 volleyball players, 124 football players and 82 teachers participated in the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data was collected using a Likert scaled questionnaire. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-test, Pearson r and a two way ANOVA at p >.05 level of significance. The major finding of the study showed that: participation in co-curricular activities has no significant relationship with academic performance, [*t*(194) = -1.36, *p* = .176. Based on the findings it was recommended that there was need to explore on a theory that can guide co-curricular participation in academic institutions.**

***Key Words*: teachers' perception, students', co-curricular participation, secondary schools, academic performance, self-concept, Rift Valley Region**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005) posit that the social significance of high school sports has been approached in research by many positions; the developmental theory emphasizes the 'socializing' or 'character building' effects of the athletic participation while the zero-sum theory stated that athletic participation diverts attention from academic work. Moreover, they viewed the student society as a finite system in which commitment to academic, athletic, or social values represents a loss to the other two. Besides, (Matano, 1992; McInally, 2003; Newman, 2005; Ogi, 2005; Okunbor & Mybor, 2005; Bulinde, 2006) argue that the two student cultures are casually linked and that athletics positively affects grades. Furthermore, several reviews of empirical studies of the effects of sports participation (Arnoldy, 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Guest & Schnider, 2003; Tucker, 1999; Croxton, Chiacchia & Wagner, 2006; Klomsten, Skaalvik & Espines, 2004) posit that the most commonly studied outcomes are; academic achievement, educational and occupational aspirations and attainment, and self-concept and popularity. For example, Otto and Win cited in Muniu (2009) found that sports participation of male students in the senior year of high school was positively related to the educational and occupational aspirations after controlling for the socio-economic status, Intelligence Quotient (IQ), and school grades. Moreover, in a prior study according to Otto as cited by Muniu (2009) sports participation in high school positively affected educational attainment, occupational status, and income 15 years later.

According to studies conducted by Crosnoe (2002) and Eccles et al. (2003) male and female students who participate in co-curricular activities, including athletics, derive a host of benefits such as better grades, a higher likelihood of college attendance, a lower likelihood of dropout, higher educational aspirations, more satisfaction with schools and teachers, higher life satisfaction, broader conventional peer networks, less involvement in delinquent behaviour, and less drug and alcohol use. Besides, Miller et al. (2005) highlights that the relationship between high school sports participation and scholastic achievement is a "fact well-established". Moreover, in their study (Nkopodi & Mosimege, 2009) posit that play is a relevant tool to help achieve this connection if it can be linked to school mathematics, stressed that the teacher's role should also be to enable learners to relate concepts learned to their everyday life. In addition, of greater importance might be the indirect relationship of childhood activity behaviours tracking into adulthood (Janz et al. 2000), potentially limiting the prevalence of risk factors related to cardiovascular disease in later life. Moreover, despite consensus of the positive effects related to physical activity and fitness (Strong et al., 2005), the benefits to cognitive health and the educational experience remain unclear (Castelli et al. 2007). However, in a separate study, Castelli et al. (2007) concluded that physical fitness was related to academic performance in third- and fifth-grade children, providing general support for the notion that children who are physically fit are more likely to perform better on standardized academic achievement tests, thus corroborating the California Department of Education (CDE) (2001) study.

The perception of teachers in co-curricular activities determines the level and intensity of learners' engagement in such activities (Nelson, Mbugua & Kagema, 2017). Besides, Asmat and Saleem (2009) in a study conducted in India notes that teacher's perception about co-curricular activities is determined by teacher involvement. Furthermore, Suleman, Singh and Zeeshan (2014) in a study conducted in Pakistan on the effects of overscheduled involvement in co-curriculum activities posited that teachers developed negative attitudes on co-curriculum activities when they felt that they become overcommitted in such activities. In addition, they argued that teachers developed a negative attitude towards co-curriculum activities when they felt that such activities eat their academic time and affect their academic schedules. The study concluded that teachers with a positive attitude towards co-curriculum activities are more likely to participate in the activities.

However, in contrast, many school systems have downgraded or eliminated extracurricular activities under the pretext that they are a waste of classroom instructional time necessary to improve academic performance. Besides, in some cases, this might be triggered by the absence of an effective school financial policy or the ineffective implementation of the financial policy where it exists (Mestry 2006). According to Tower (2008), controlled experimental studies in the United States, Canada and Australia have evaluated the effects on academic performance of allocating additional instructional time for PE. All five studies clearly demonstrate that physical activity does not need to be sacrificed for academic excellence (Ahamed et al. 2007; Coe et al. 2006).

Research findings indicate that participation in co-curricular activities affects students' academic performance and supports the attainment of academic objectives (Arnoldy, 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Guest & Schnider, 2003; Tucker, 1999; Croxton et al., 2002; Klomsten et al., 2004). More specifically, studies have been conducted assessing the effects of specific co-curricular activities on academic performance (Morakinyo, 2003; Bulinde, 2006; Dongfang et al., 2003; Morrison, 1994). Despite this knowledge, sport participation has been viewed in two different perspectives in Kenyan secondary schools as far as their contribution to academic performance is concerned. Some perceive sports to have positive effect on students' academic performance while others view it as a hindrance to academic success and a waste of students' precious time (Kimengi, Kiptala & Okero, 2014).

Epstein, Kehily, Mac an Ghaill and Redman (2001) showed that boys and girls in the school playground construct gender and power through their play. Besides, boys use their prowess in fighting and football (in the U.K. context) to establish their identity as "real men." Consequently, this gendering in play behaviour continues into adulthood as men play both the spectator (e.g., watch sports) and participant (e.g., play sport games) roles at a sports-themed arcade and restaurant (Sherry et al., 2004), and through their involvement in fantasy sport leagues (Davis & Duncan, 2006). Also Women engage in such sport activities, but do so to a lesser extent than men (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000). Thus, sport serves to reinforce traditional views of men holding power and status positions, while women remain on the periphery (or at least serving in a supportive position). Therefore, men are socialized into these roles with power and are more comfortable enacting roles with power than other roles (Davis & Duncan, 2006; Epstein et al., 2001; Sherry et al. 2004). However, in this study girls and boys were randomly selected without discrimination to ensure that their perception of co-curricular participation was not skewed in terms of gender.

Overwhelming scientific evidence highlight the health, social and psychological benefits associated with active lifestyles (Matano 1992; McInally, 2003; Newman, 2005; Ogi, 2005; Okunbor & Mybor, 2005; Bulinde, 2006; Muniu, 2009; Ongonga et al., 2010). Besides, the health, social and psychological contributions of co-curricular participation to the educational process by studies in the western countries as reported by Tucker (1999), Arnoldy (2005), Marsh and Kleitman (2002), and Guest and Schnider (2003) among others; and reported by Ongonga et al. (2010), Bulinde (2006), Muniu (2009) and Chesire (2007) in Kenya. These benefits are in three fold; the health benefits which include; good body physique or posture, that is, a balanced development of the whole body, the strength and fitness of all muscles. The social factors include; the transmission of values, norms and knowledge of the society, which leads to social harmony in the society. Moreover, the psychological benefits include: positive attitudes towards sports participation, positive correlation with academic performance, student's increased vigor and alertness, and internalization of mental strategies (Kimengi, Kiptala & Okero, 2014).

Despite this knowledge of the importance of sport participation to educators, there was paucity in empirically known evidence or research in the literature reviewed, on teachers' perception of co-curricular participations, academic performance and self-concept among secondary schools students. Although education is divided into two parts; curricular and co-curricular activities in Kenya, many researchers like Ongonga et al. (2010), McInally (2003) and Newman (2005) have observed that participation in co-curricular activities is not fully supported by most schools and the contribution of it to the students' academic performance have not been clearly articulated to the educators, teachers, students and even parents. Yet, the experiences and opportunities provided by secondary schools through curricular and co-curricular participation also influence students' development. Furthermore, direct interaction with the school curriculum in schools such as the degree of success or failure in various subject matters and the degree of encouragement provided for academic effort

influence self-growth, educational aspirations and values of students. Moreover, such knowledge provides them with a measure of internal stability and security. Consequently, there was need therefore, to undertake a study that would take into perspective teachers' perceptions because they are directly involved in the educational process. In addition, they were the recipients of whatever policies concerning co-curricular and academic performance made by the Ministry of Education, yet they rarely get the chance to express their views and opinions. They were therefore, on the receiving end of policy implementation, coupled with varying levels of facilities and infrastructure. Hence, the findings would become the basis for understanding the perceived contribution of co-curricular participation to the educational process and institutions.

*Objectives of the Study*

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perception of co-curricular participation on students' academic performance and self-concept in secondary school in rift valley region, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate the perception of teachers on the relationship between co-curricular participation by students and their self-concept
2. Examine the relationship between gender, co-curricular participation perception and academic performance.
3. Investigate gender and training of students in co-curricular participation and their influence on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities

## II. METHOD

*Participants*

To answer the research questions, the author sought views from the teachers and students on their perceptions co-curricular participation. A sample of 72 volleyball players, 124 football players and 82 teachers participated in the study. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data.

*Measures and procedure(s)*

Data was generated using questionnaires from students. Students responded to a Modified Self-Description Questionnaire (MSDQ) developed by the researchers. These sections were Likert type which provided the respondents with a series of statements to which they could indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement. All participants were proficient in both spoken and written English. The participants' responses were coded and categorized into information that could answer the researchers' questions and objectives, and then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Therefore, descriptive themes based on the research questions were developed. Then, the data was coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0).

## III. RESULTS

*Teachers' Perception of Students' Co-curricular Participation and Self-concept*

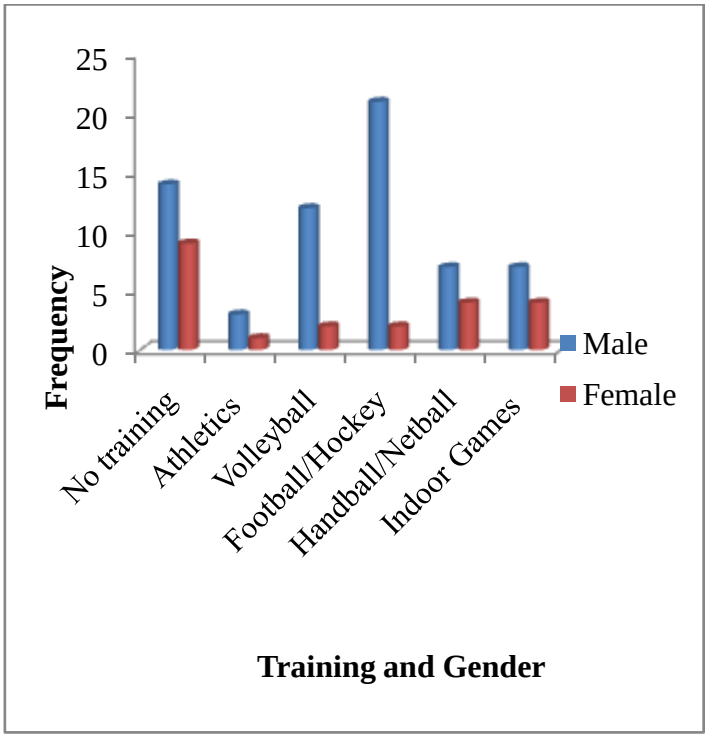
The responses were scored and the results were analyzed using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. The results showed that the Correlation coefficient $r$ (81) = .14, $p$ = .213. This result indicates that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities and their self-concept. Thus the null hypothesis that stated that teacher's perception does not influence significantly the self-concepts of students participating in co-curricular activities in Rift Valley region.

*Teachers' Training and gender*

The results of the analysis showed that gender does not seem to significantly affect teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. It is also revealed that training/coaching seems not to significantly affect teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. However there seem that gender and training have interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities.

The above results are further illustrated below by use of a Figure 1.

Figure 1 Teachers' Gender, Training and Co-curricular Participation



To test whether gender and training/coaching have a significant effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities a two way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA on teachers' perception of students' by gender and training

| | Gender | Training |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | - | 0.84 |
| Training | 2.17 | - |

a. R Squared = .220 (Adjusted R Squared = .097)

From Table 2 the results of the analysis revealed that gender and training statistically have no significant effect on the teachers' perception of students participation in co-curricular activities, $F(5,82) = .84$, $P = .362$ and $F(1,82) = 2.17$, $P = .067$ respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. But then gender and training/coaching have an interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities; $F(5,82) = 3.12$, $P = .013$. Therefore, this result allows the researcher to conclude that there exist some salient effect between gender and training and teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities.

*Students' Gender and Academic Performance*

To test whether gender and participation in co-curricular activities have a significant effect on students' academic performance a two way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results of analysis revealed that gender and participation in co-curricular activities statistically have no significant effect on students' academic performance $F(1,196) = .685$, $P = .004$ and $F(1,196) = 2.28$. $P = .012$ respectively. But gender and participation in co-curricular activities have an interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities $F(1,196) = 4.39$, $P=.022$. Consequently, the null hypothesis; there is no significant difference between gender and co-curricular participation and students' academic performance, was rejected.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study investigated teachers' perception of students' co-curricular participation and their self-concepts. The findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities and their self-concept. Thus the null hypothesis was accepted that teacher's perception does not influence significantly the self-concepts of students participating in co-curricular activities in Rift Valley region secondary schools. These findings support the arguments cited in Fejgin (1994) which reported that there is a decline in public support for athletics as well as other extra-curricular activities, which is occurring throughout the society with policy makers embracing the "back to basics" philosophy. This indicates that co-curricular activities are quite vulnerable as illustrated by this finding. It is important therefore, to explore the issues of these activities and the inherent value of participation to students' development as well as social role models (e.g., teachers and fellow students) and support influences that contribute to the students' self-concept.

The results obtained from study revealed that gender does not seem to affect teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. It is also revealed that training/coaching seems not to affect teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. However, it was revealed that gender and training have interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities. This finding concurs with those of Rehman (2001) who reported that individuals have vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concept, basic attitudes and self-directed behaviour, for example in co-curricular participation in this case. Therefore, the potentials of these students are only possible if they are given a conducive environment by the teachers/trainers and educators.

The findings also revealed that gender and training statistically have no significant effect on the teachers' perception of students participation in co-curricular activities, $F$ (5, 82) = .841, $P$ = .36 and $F$ (1,82) = 2.17. $P$ = .067 respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. But gender and training/coaching have an interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities, $F(5,82) = 3.12$, $P<.013$. This finding concurs with (Ipinmoroti & Ajayi, 2003; Kenyon & McPherson, 2005) who posited that personal attributes, significant others and socialization situations are associated with becoming involved in a physical activity (training) and sport. Therefore, the results of the combination of these influences appear to imply that participation in physical activity and sports is determined by the attitudes, perceptions, values and beliefs of those most closely associated with the development of the individual such (Dixon, 2004), as the teacher/coach in this study.

The results of analysis revealed that gender and participation in co-curricular activities statistically have no significant effect on students' academic performance, $F(1,196) = .69$, $P = .004$ and $F(1,196) = 2.28$. $P = .012$ respectively. But gender and participation in co-curricular activities have an interactive effect on teachers' perception of students' participation in co-curricular activities, $F(1,196) = 4.39$, $P=.022$. Consequently, the null hypothesis; there is no significant difference between gender and co-curricular participation and students' academic performance, was rejected. This finding is contrary to Fejgin (1994) and Tucker (1999) who reported that students who are more involved in high school competitive sports have higher grades, a higher self-concept, higher educational aspirations, a more internal locus of control and fewer discipline

problems. Other scholars who also reported findings contrary to these findings are Marsh and Kleitman (2002), Eccles and Barber (1999), Guest and Schneider (2003), Kevin and McCarthy (1997) and Ongonga et al., (2010).

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