

Factors Contributing to Low Self-Esteem among Students in Mixed Secondary Schools in Soweto, Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya

¹Jane Kibuthu, ²Wambua Pius Muasa Ph.D

Institute of Youth Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Tangaza University College, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70901>

Received: 23 August 2023; Revised: 05 September 2023; Accepted: 11 September 2023; Published: 26 September 2023

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical stage in life which affects all people during this time. Self-esteem is the self-worth a person feels the value that people put on themselves. It affects the psychological and physical growth of adolescents. It is the time when adolescents find their identity as they negotiate through life. It is the time that they lay the foundation for their academic life and their future. Global view in collaboration with UNICEF and other Non-Governmental Organizations has played a role to ensure that school going adolescents have high esteem to promote school performance. As much as these bodies have worked to promote high self esteem, students continue to manifest low self-esteem in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi. Therefore, this study had two research questions: What are indicators of low self-esteem among students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East County, Nairobi, Kenya and what are the factors contributing to low self-esteem among students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East County, Nairobi, Kenya. The study employed exploratory research design. Through purposive sampling, 15 participants were selected to participate in the study. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The results showed that the indicators of low self-esteem among secondary school students in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi were lack of self-acceptance, sense of rejection and lack of confidence. Moreover, the results showed that the major factors contributing to low self-esteem among the secondary school were negative peer pressure, mistreatment, sense of rejection and poor performance. The study recommends the schools to strengthen guidance and counselling to help the students deal with indicators of low self-esteem and factors contributing to low self-esteem. Also, the Government may need to employ qualified counsellors and psychologists in secondary schools to help students towards handling problems that cannot be addressed by paraprofessionals. Finally, counsellors and psychologists need to sensitize parents and other caregivers on handling the factors leading to low self-esteem among their children other than leaving the responsibility alone with the educators. The study recommends future studies to use quantitative or mixed method approach in order to have in-depth understanding of self-esteem among secondary school students.

Keywords: Low self-esteem, Indicators of low self-esteem, Secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem plays a crucial role in one's overall mental health and wellbeing, and it is especially important for adolescents as they navigate the challenges of puberty and the transition to adulthood (Schraml et al., 2011). The researchers argued that, low self-esteem can have serious consequences for young people, including academic difficulties, social isolation, and even mental health issues including anxiety and depression. Educators, parents, and other stakeholders who work with adolescents are encouraged to understand the indicators of low self-esteem so that they can provide the necessary support and guidance, to aid in the development of young people's self-worth and confidence (Schraml et al., 2011).

Kumari and Gartia (2012) points out that, there are several common indicators of low self-esteem among

adolescents. One of the signs is a lack of self-confidence. Adolescents with low self-confidence may be hesitant to try new things, speak up in class, or participate in group activities. They may also doubt their own abilities and feel that they are not capable of achieving their goals. Teenagers who lack self-confidence can act in a variety of ways in the classroom such as withdrawal, lack of attention, disruptive behaviours and poor academic performance. In addition, adolescents with low self-esteem may also develop a negative self-perception of themselves where they view themselves as failures and may not believe that they are capable of success. This can lead to a cycle of negative thinking that can further undermine their confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, the adolescents may view themselves as inferior to their peers, and may have negative thoughts about their appearance, intelligence, or other personal qualities (Kumari & Gartia, 2012). Furthermore, Schraml et al. (2011) point out those adolescents with a negative self-concept may be overly critical of themselves, and have difficulty accepting compliments or positive feedback from others which may lead to isolation.

A study conducted by Kang'ori and Nyutu (2016), in Kenya describes a person with low self-esteem as having a pessimistic outlook on both himself and life in general. In addition, the study revealed people with low self-esteem to manifest the following indicators: feeling like a failure, feeling useless, being tense, and emotional inability to handle one's bad performance and negative criticism, lack of self-confidence and high expectations, weak personal boundaries, and insecurity. Also, a study by Elum (2022) showed that students with low self-esteem were depressed, constantly felt inferior to others, hated themselves, easily irritated, doubted their own opinions, had trouble maintaining relationships based on trust, engaged in compulsive avoidance behaviour, struggled to say no, and focused more on self-defeating thoughts. However, low self-esteem is not a permanent condition, and there are many things that educators, parents, and other adults can do to help adolescents build their self-esteem and confidence. Though studies have shown indicators of low self-esteem with adolescents, similar studies have not been carried out with students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi and therefore, the current study sought to fill this gap.

Annette and Franz (2018) conducted a study among German secondary school students on cyber victimization, self-esteem, and social relationships. The findings reported that girls had experienced more betrayal than boys. In addition, the findings showed that that older students experience lower social exclusion compared to the young ones. Based on the findings gender can be a contributing factor to low self-esteem among the secondary schools students where girls are likely experience more betrayal compared to boys. The age can also be a contributing factor to low self-esteem among the secondary school students whereby the young students are likely to be excluded compared to the older students.

Another study was conducted by Itbar et al. (2019) on the interplay of self-esteem and academic achievements among the male and female secondary schools. The findings showed that the type of course of specialization and gender has an influence on the self-esteem of students. For instance, the findings showed that the science students had scored higher in self-esteem compared to art students. The study also revealed that the male students had scored higher in self-esteem compared to their female counterparts. This shows that that type course and the gender of students can be a contributing factor to self-esteem. The findings also showed that there was a significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement among the male students. However, there was no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement among the female students. That means whether female students have high or low self-esteem, they are likely to perform the same in their studies. The study suggested the need to enhance the self-esteem of female students and not to be denied academic opportunities based on their gender.

Katerina et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the relationship between peer acceptance and friendship with loneliness, self-esteem and self-engagement. The study was carried out with sample of 180 primarily school pupils. The findings showed that peer acceptance contributes to self-esteem of secondary school students. The loneliness among the secondary school students can be attributed to lack of security in

relationships. The findings shows that when students feel they are not accepted they are likely to experience low self-esteem. The presence of loneliness among the pupils is an indicator of low self-esteem.

Kirstie et al. (2022) carried out a study in Canada to investigate the relationship between discrimination and social support and its role to self-esteem among the transgender high school and post-secondary students. The findings revealed that the transgender students in high school experienced more victimization compared to their counterparts who were transgender post secondary students. In addition, the findings showed that indirect homophobia has significant role to low self-esteem among secondary school students. Lack of social support was also found to be a contributing factor to self-esteem among secondary students.

Janine et al. (2017) conducted a study among College women to examine the impact of self-esteem and self-compassion on daily social rejection in regard to affect and restrictive eating behaviours. The results showed that on days women reported more rejection, they also reported higher restrictive eating behaviours and greater negative affect. The findings showed that participants who had higher self-esteem reported lower levels of rejection and negative affect. The results also showed that self-esteem and self-compassion has a significant role in reducing the feeling of rejection. That means when the students have low self-esteem, they are likely to suffer from rejection.

Pandy (2012), in a study conducted in Chicago found that academic failure affects students with learning disabilities which results in low self-esteem. Learning disabilities include severe problems with math (dyscalculia), names and vocabulary (dyslexia). Students with written expressions and handwriting (dysgraphia) and spelling difficulties. Learning disabilities brings social limitations, which could lead to embarrassment by peers. Some children learn to protect themselves against worthlessness by hiding their academic failures and feelings. The study found that, students who struggles with a learning disability exhibit a range of psychosocial problems in school. The student lacks morale for academic work and as a result drops out of school due to worry and low self-esteem. They grapple with depression and deal with high levels of rejection and shame, which results to low self-esteem. Adolescents with a learning disability slip into a negative cycle, which makes them ashamed of their learning disability and as a result stay away from social pursuits.

Nabunya, Damulira, Byansi, et al. (2020), in a study in Uganda found that, Negative thoughts attributed to depression can also affect how people feel about themselves and how they behave and can even cause them to make poor decisions . Adolescents with depression are more likely to be low educational achievers, unemployed, and at an increased risk of suicide. Additionally, teens that are depressed or have other mental health problems are more likely to participate in risky behaviours such as unprotected sexual activity, having many sexual partners, and drug usage. Indeed, among adolescent girls and young women, depressive symptoms are related to cumulative HIV incidence. The current study was guided by two research questions:

1. What are the indicators of low self-esteem among adolescent students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto Embakasi East County, Nairobi?
2. What are the factors contributing to low self-esteem among students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East County, Nairobi?.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed exploratory research design to explore the indicators of low self-esteem and factors contributing to low self-esteem among adolescent students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East County, Nairobi. Through purposive sampling, the study employed a sample size of 20 participants. The sample size composed of 15 secondary students and 5 key informants which were the principal, guidance and counselling teacher and two class teachers. The study employed Interview Guide to collect data from the participants. There were two Interview Guides, one for the students and the one for the key

informants. The Interview Guide for students contained three sections. The first section collected data on the demographic details of age, gender, educational level and religion. The second section collected data on the indicators of low self-esteem and the third section collected data on the factors contributing low self-esteem among the secondary school students.

In addition, Interview Guide was used to collect qualitative data from the Key Informants. The Interview Guide contained three sections. The first section collected data on the demographic details of the key informants which were age, gender, educational level and marital status. The second section collected data on indicators of low self-esteem and the third section collected data on factors contributing to low self-esteem among the students. After authorization to collect data was sought, the researcher got informed consent from the participants to collect data including recording with the help of the researcher assistants. The interviews took 45 minutes to 1 hour. The participants were thanked by the researcher for accepting to participate in the study. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique for finding, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79).

RESULTS

The study was set out to explore the indicators and factors contributing to low self-esteem among the secondary school students. The findings were presented in the order of the research questions that guided this study. The research questions were: What are the indicators of low self-esteem among adolescent students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya?; What are the factors contributing to low self-esteem among students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya?; Using thematic analysis, the themes from the data collected was identified and supported by verbatim from the participants. Also, the discussion of the findings was provided. Before presenting the findings as per the research questions, the study presented the demographic details of the participants.

Demographic details of the Participants

The study represented the demographic details of the participants. There were two groups of participants in which one of them composed of secondary students drawn from form one to four and the second one was composed of the key informants which were drawn from the teachers. The demographic details for the students who were interviewed captured their age, gender, form, and religion. The demographic details for key informants captured the age, gender, educational level and marital status. The demographic details are provided for each group separately.

Demographic Details of the Students

The study represented the demographic details of the students that were interviewed. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Details for Students

| Participant Number | Age | Gender | Form | Religion |
|--------------------|-----|--------|------|-----------|
| P1 | 17 | Male | 4 | Christian |
| P2 | 17 | Female | 4 | Christian |
| P3 | 17 | Female | 4 | Muslim |
| P4 | 18 | Female | 4 | Christian |
| P5 | 17 | Male | 4 | Christian |
| P6 | 14 | Male | 1 | Muslim |

| | | | | |
|-----|----|--------|---|-----------|
| P7 | 17 | Male | 3 | Christian |
| P8 | 16 | Female | 3 | Christian |
| P9 | 17 | Female | 3 | Christian |
| P10 | 16 | Female | 2 | Muslim |
| P11 | 15 | Female | 2 | Christian |
| P12 | 15 | Male | 2 | Christian |
| P13 | 16 | Male | 2 | Christian |
| P14 | 18 | Male | 2 | Christian |
| P15 | 17 | Female | 4 | Christian |

Table 1 show that participants were between ages of 14 years to 18 years. The gender was almost equally represented in the study. Majority of the participants were drawn from form two and form four. Only one participant was from form one while three were from form three. Majority of the participants were Christians compared to the Muslim participants.

Demographic of the Key Informants

The study represented the demographic details of the Key Informants that were interviewed. The results are presented in table 2

Table 2 Demographic Details for Key Informants

| Key Informant | Age | Gender | Educational Level | Marital Status |
|---------------|-----|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| KI1 | 48 | Male | MA Degree | Married |
| KI2 | 36 | Female | BA Degree | Married |
| KI3 | 34 | Male | BA Degree | Married |
| KI4 | 39 | Female | BA Degree | Married |
| KI5 | 40 | Male | BA Degree | Married |

The age of key informants' ranged between 34 and 45 years. Based on gender men were slightly higher than females. All the participants had a bachelor's degree except one who had attained a master's degree. All the participants were married.

KEY FINDINGS

Indicators of Low Self-Esteem among Students in Soweto Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya

From the data three thematic themes emerged as indicators of low self-esteem among secondary school students in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi.

Lack of self-acceptance

Majority of the participants mentioned lack of self-acceptance as one of the indicators of low self-esteem among the secondary school students. This was related to sadness, poor academic performance, comparison with other students, fear and judgment from others. The theme was expressed by a student participant who said *"When I am relating with my peers, I feel sad since I found my grades are not good and other times, I feel good as they relate with me in good terms and they help me when I am in need and also when I there are always there for me"* (Participant 2). The theme was also echoed by student participant who said *"I feel confident since I manage to mingle with many of my peers, but at times I feel low especially when it comes to performance and others are getting a concept I do not seem to be getting. It also feels good when others seek help from me but all these changes when I too cannot tackle a problem, they expect me to"*

(Participant 3).

The theme of lack of acceptance in relation to poor academic performance was further observed with another participant who said *“Sometimes I feel bad and some other times sad when I find that my grades are not good, I feel good since my peers relate with me in good terms, they help me when am in need and feel good since they are always there for me”* (Participant 15). Also, the theme was supported by student participant who said *“Sometimes I feel that am low according to my life status, I also give respect to my fellow students, people from out of me and also I feel sometimes my life is unfair to me”* (Participant 9).

Sense of rejection

Some few participants expressed sense of rejection as an indicator of low self-esteem. Some participants felt that their fellow students wanted them to fail and lose focus in their studies. In addition, some participants felt rejected and unworthy when their fellow students did not want to relate with them. The theme was echoed by student participant who said *“I do not really feel good because my peers want me to fail and lose focus”* (Participant 10). The theme was further supported by student participant who said *“I feel respected and proud of myself when relating with peers in school although sometimes I feel rejected and unworthy when no one wants to associate with me including my own friends”* (Participant 12).

Lack of self-confidence

The theme on lack of confidence among the secondary school students emerged as indicator of low self-esteem. The students' lack of self-confidence was as a result of fear towards facing other peers and to accepting leading roles. It was also as a result of lack of self believe and been despised by other peers. The theme was manifested through student who said *“My self-confidence is not that much since I have fear of facing other peers in school, I would like to have self-confidence so as to lead the other peers in school and I should accept the leading role with confidence”* (Participant 15). The theme was also echoed by another participant who said *“My self-confidence first depends on those around me, their relationship with me is what brings out the impact it has on me. If I tend to believe in myself and others come to me and despise me, I tend to be low as this drops my level of confidence”* (Participant 3). The theme of lack of self-confidence was further supported by key informant who said *“Students with low self-esteem may be reluctant to try new things or be unable to tolerate typical levels of frustration. They also may pretend they don't care, or may be aggressive to cover up their lack of confidence, may leave class lesson abruptly. Others may take blame for things that are not their fault or are out of their control, or they may try to control other student's behaviour to alleviate a sense of helplessness”* (Key Informant 4).

Factors Contributing to Low Self-Esteem among Secondary Students in Soweto Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya

From the data four themes emerged as the factors contributing to low self-esteem in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi Which were negative peer pressure, mistreatment from others, sense of rejection and poor performance.

Negative peer pressure

Some of the participants mentioned negative peer pressure as one of the factors contributing to students' low self-esteem. The students low self-esteem is influenced by wanting to please their peers and mostly when making critical decisions. This theme is observed through a student participant who said *“The situations or circumstances that affect my self-worth is when I want to please my peers, when my friends ask me to do things against my decision, when I face hard situations or circumstances and also negative thoughts about my life”* (Participant 1). Moreover, the theme was expressed by another student participant who said *“When there is pressure from my friends to make decisions which I didn't want, through abuses from some people or friends around me and by having negative thoughts about myself are situations that affect my self-*

worth” (Participant 15). Likewise the theme was supported by another student participant who said *“Peer pressure from my friends who make decisions which I didn’t want, also through abuses from people or friends around me and by having negative thoughts about me”*. Situations like severe punishment; an example of being beaten by either the parents or the teachers in a way that is displeasing” (Participant 2).

Mistreatment from others

Most of the participants pointed out mistreatment as one of the factors leading to low self-esteem among the secondary school students. The mistreatments are experienced through friends, and family members. The mistreatment is expressed through abuse, and negative criticism. The theme was expressed by student participant who said *“The situations that affect my self-worth are when I am undergoing abuses from those in my surrounding, like when someone tells me that am of no value in this world”* (Participant 3). The theme is also expressed by student participant who said *“My relationship with my significant others is affected as I undergo abuse from them and at the same time having in mind that there are some of my relatives who are looking out on me”* (Participant 2). Moreover, the theme was expressed by another student participant who said *“My significant others when I get abuse from them, having in mind that there are some of my relatives who are looking up on me that really affects my self-worth”* (Participant 15).

Also, the theme was echoed by a key informant who said *“This area is well known for drugs and substance abuse and most students have had issues in the school related to the same. When I try to find out from their families, I realized that most of them come from dysfunctional families and therefore, parents do not care and this makes their children to develop low-self-esteem”* (Key Informant 1). In addition, the theme was supported by another Key Informant who said,

I have been in this school for the last seven years as a guidance and counselling teacher and what I have come to realize is that most students have low-self-esteem due to trauma. They went through abuse when they were growing up and others are overburdened by their parents with responsibilities. When they are in school you find them isolating themselves, are always moody, stressed, depressed and this affects their performances (Key Informant 2).

Sense of rejection

The theme of sense of rejection emerged from some few participants as a factor contributing to low self-esteem. The sense of rejection was based on their self-perception from others. Some have a perception that others do not like them. Also the sense of rejection was experienced on relationship with their family members in terms of name calling, abuses and unfair treatment among the siblings. This was echoed by a Key Informant who said *“In my work experience I have encountered students who have low self-esteem and most of them may make self-disparaging comments such as, “I’m stupid,” “I can’t do this,” “I always do everything wrong,” “No one likes me,” they may react to adversity by giving up, avoiding risks, or disengaging from tasks”* (Key Informant 5). The theme was also supported by student participant who said *“Relationship with my significant others such as my parents affect my self-worth when sometimes I have done something wrong, they call me names and abuse me and that affect my self-worth. To my siblings, sometimes I find my parents favoring most of my siblings and they are not even concerned about me. They usually do things to hurt me and that affect my self-worth”* (Participant 4). Likewise, the theme was echoed by another student participant who said *“Also, I find that my relatives they are not concerned about me, let’s say they take me from my parents and take me to their place they start to use me, to abuse me and even others take me to be their employee, but what I normally do is just to believe in myself”* (Participant 5).

Poor performance

Some of the participants mentioned poor performance to have a connection with low self-esteem among secondary school students. The students felt unworthiness whenever they performed poorly in their studies. The students’ self-esteem was also affected when other peers belittle them because of their performance.

The theme was observed with a student participant who said *“Circumstances that affect my self-worth is when am not performing well in class, that makes me to feel like am nothing on this world. But when am in that situation I just put myself together and talk to myself and set my goals and target, that makes me to improve in my studies”* (Participant 4). The theme was also echoed by another student participant who said *“Situations or circumstances affecting my self-worth are my financial status, my performance, my mode of dressing, my conduct and my principles which are not like others”* (Participant 5). Likewise, the theme was supported by a student participant who said *“When I fail the exams and my friends start to laugh at me and they do not respect me “* (Participant 6).

DISCUSSIONS

The study was set out to explore the indicators of low self-esteem among the secondary school students. In addition, the study was to examine the factors contributing to low self-esteem among students in mixed secondary schools in Soweto, Embakasi East Constituency, Nairobi, Kenya. From the data the themes of lack of self-acceptance, sense of rejection and lack of self-confidence emerged as indicators of low self-esteem among the secondary school students. Majority of the participants mentioned lack of self-acceptance as one of the indicators of low self-esteem among the secondary school students. This was related to sadness, poor academic performance, comparison with other students, fear and judgment from others. The findings were consistent with findings of Kumari and Gartia (2012) who found that adolescents with low self-esteem may also develop a negative self-perception of themselves where they view themselves as failures and may not believe that they are capable of success. This can lead to a cycle of negative thinking that can further undermine their confidence and self-esteem.

In addition, the theme of lack of self-acceptance was supported by findings of Schraml et al. (2011) who found that the adolescents may view themselves as inferior to their peers, and may have negative thoughts about their appearance, intelligence, or other personal qualities. The same scholars went further to explain that adolescents with a negative self-concept may be overly critical of themselves, and have difficulty accepting compliments or positive feedback from others (Schraml et al., 2011). Moreover, the findings were consistent to the findings of Kang’ori and Nyutu (2016), who found that a person with low self-esteem has a pessimistic outlook on both himself and life in general. They found that some indicators of low self-esteem include feeling like a failure, feeling useless, being tense, and emotional inability to handle one’s bad performance and negative criticism, lack of self-confidence and high expectations which were supported by the current findings. Furthermore, the findings were in line with findings of Elum (2022) who found that students with low self-esteem were constantly depressed, felt inferior to others, hated themselves, easily irritated, doubted their own opinions, had trouble maintaining relationships based on trust, engaged in compulsive avoidance behaviour, struggled to say no, and focused more on self-defeating thoughts.

Some few participants expressed sense of rejection as an indicator of low self-esteem. Some participants felt that their fellow students wanted them to fail and lose focus in their studies. In addition, some participants felt rejected and unworthy when their fellow students did not want to relate with them. The findings resonated with findings of Janine et al. (2017) who conducted a study among College women to examine the impact of self-esteem and self-compassion on daily social rejection in regard to affect and restrictive eating behaviours and reported that on days women reported more rejection, they also reported higher restrictive eating behaviours and greater negative affect. In addition, the findings showed that students with low self-esteem, they are likely to suffer from rejection. Moreover, the findings were supported by the findings of Kirstie et al. (2022) who carried out a study in Canada to investigate the relationship between discrimination and social support and its role to self-esteem among the transgender high school and post-secondary students. The findings revealed that the transgender students in high school experienced more victimization compared to their counterparts who were transgender post secondary students. In addition, the findings showed that indirect homophobia has significant role to low self-esteem among secondary school students. Lack of social support was also found to be a contributing factor to self-esteem among secondary students.

The theme on lack of confidence among the secondary school students emerged as indicator of low self-esteem. The students' self-confidence was as a result of fear towards facing other peers in relation to accepting leading roles. It was also as a result of lack of self believe and been despised by other fears. The theme of lack of self-confidence was widely supported by literature. The findings were consistent with the findings of Kumari and Gartia, (2012) who found that adolescents with low self-confidence may be hesitant to try new things, speak up in class, or participate in group activities. They may also doubt their own abilities and feel that they are not capable of achieving their goals. Teenagers who lack self-confidence can act in a variety of ways in the classroom such as withdrawal, lack of attention, disruptive behaviours and poor academic performance. They may also avoid speaking in the classroom.

Some of the participants mentioned poor performance to have a connection with low self-esteem among secondary school students. The students felt unworthiness whenever they performed poorly in their studies. The students' self-esteem is also affected when other peers belittle them because of their performance. The findings were in line with findings of Nabunya, Damulira, Byansi, et al. (2020), who conducted a study in Uganda and found that adolescents with depression are more likely to be low educational achievers, unemployed, and at an increased risk of suicide. Additionally, teens that are depressed or have other mental health problems are more likely to participate in risky behaviours, such as unprotected sexual activity, having many sexual partners, and drug usage.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that indicators of low self-esteem among secondary school students in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-Constituency are lack of self-acceptance, sense of rejection and lack of self-confidence. Lack of self-acceptance is related to sadness, poor academic performance, comparison with other students, fear and judgment from others. Some participants felt rejected and unworthy when their fellow students did not want to relate with them. The students' self-confidence was as a result of fear towards facing other peers in relation to accepting leading roles. It was also as a result of lack of self believe and been despised by other fears. Factors contributing to low self-esteem among secondary school students in Soweto, Embakasi East Sub-County, Nairobi were negative peer pressure, mistreatment from others, sense of rejection and poor performance. The students low self-esteem was influenced by wanting to please their peers and mostly when making critical decisions. The mistreatments were experienced with friends, and family members through abuse, and negative criticism. The sense of rejection was based on their self-perception from others. Some had a perception that others do not like them. Also the sense of rejections was experienced on relationship with their family members in terms of name calling, abuses and unfair treatment among the siblings. The students felt unworthiness whenever they performed poorly in their studies. The students' self-esteem is also affected when other peers belittle them because of their performance.

REFERENCES

1. Annette Lohbeck & Franz Petermann (2018) Cyber victimization, self esteem, and social relationships among German secondary school students, *Journal of School Violence*, 17:4, 472-486, DOI: 10.1080/15388220.2018.1428194
2. Auerbach, R. P. et.al (2011). Conceptualizing the prospective relationship between social support, stress, and depressive symptoms among adolescents. *Abnorm. Child Psychol.*39, 475-487. doi: 10.1007/s10802-010-9479-x
3. Bunya, P,et.al (2020) Prevalence and correlates of depressive symptoms among High school adolescent girls in southern Uganda
4. Cakar, S. F and Karatas, Z (2012)The Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Hopelessness in Adolescents: The Structural Equation Educational Consultancy and Research Center www.edam.com.tr/estp

5. Desjardins, T. L., and Lead beater, B. J. (2011). Relational victimization and depressive symptoms in adolescence: moderating effects of mother, father, and peer emotional support. *Youth Adolesc.*40, 531–544. doi: 10.1007/s10964-010-9562-1
6. Dutton, Y., E. C., Choi, J. I., and Choi, E (2020) Perceived Parental Support and Adolescents' Dissertation Abstracts International, 66, 2315
7. Elum, A. I. (2022) Correlation between Self-esteem and Depression among Poorly Performing Students of African Nazarene University, Kenya. Tangaza University.
8. Itbar Khan, Azhar Mahmood & Usman Zaib (2019) Interplay of selfesteem with the academic achievements between male and female secondary school students, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 29 (8), 971-978, DOI: 10.1080/10911359.2019.1611517
9. Janine B. Beekman, Michelle L. Stock & George W. Howe (2017) Stomaching rejection: Self-compassion and self-esteem moderate the impact of daily social rejection on restrictive eating behaviours among college women, *Psychology and Health*, 32, (11), 1348-1370, DOI: 10.1080/08870446.2017.1324972
10. Karin Schraml, Aleksander Perski, Giorgio Grossi, Margareta Simonsson-Sarnecki,(2011) Stress symptoms among adolescents: The role of subjective psychosocial condition lifestyle, and self-esteem, *Journal of Adolescence*, 34, 5
11. Katerina Antonopoulou, Anastasia Chaidemenou & Sofia Kouvava (2019) Peer acceptance and friendships among primary school pupils: associations with loneliness, self-esteem and school engagement, *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35 (3), 339-351, DOI: 10.1080/02667363.2019.1604324
12. Kirstie Taylor, Simon Coulombe, Todd A. Coleman, Ruth Cameron, Charlie Davis, Ciann L. Wilson, Michael R. Woodford & Robb Travers (2022) Social support, discrimination, and Self-Esteem in LGBTQ + high school and Post-Secondary students, *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 19 (3), 350-374, DOI: 10.1080/19361653.2020.1812465
13. Kumari R, Gartia R. (2012). Relationship between stress and academic achievement of senior secondary school students. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Psychology* 1(3), 153–160.
14. Loades ME, et.al (2020). Rapid systematic review: The impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of covid-19. J
15. McClure, A. C., Tanski, S. E., Kingsbury, J., Gerrard, M., & Sargent, J. D. (2010). Characteristics associated with low self-esteem among US adolescents. *Academic pediatrics*, 10(4), 238–44.e2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2010.03.007>
16. Orth, U., Robins, R. W., and Widaman, K. F. (2012). Life-span development of self-esteem and its effects on important life outcomes. *Pers. Soc. Psychol.*102, 1271–1288. doi: 10.1037/a0025558
17. Pandey, I.R. (2012). Learning disability and self-esteem. Governor's State University. Illinois
18. Positive Self-Beliefs and Levels of Distress Across Four Countries. Department of Psychology, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
19. Rueger, S. Y., Malecki, C. K., and Demaray, M. K. (2010). Relationship between multiple sources of perceived social support and psychological and academic adjustment in early adolescence: comparisons across gender. *Youth Adolesc.*39, 47–61. doi: 10.1007/s10964-008-9368-6
20. Shelley A. Riggs, S.P and Kaminski, P. (2010) Childhood Emotional Abuse, Adult attachment and Depression as Predictors of Relational Adjustment and Psychological Aggression. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*
21. Spilt, J. L., Van Lier, P. A., Leflot, G., Onghena, P., & Colpin, H. (2014). Children's social self-concept and internalizing problems: The influence of peers and teachers. *Child development*, 85(3), 1248-1256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12181>
22. Sternke, J. C (2010) Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Adolescents with Learning Disabilities. University of Wisconsin-stout
23. Syakarofath, N. A., Biorohmi, N.A& Latipun. L., (2021) The Role of Peer Rejection in Adolescence Internalizing Problems. Research Gate.DOI:14710/ jp.20.2.140-151