The Relationship between Classroom Streaming and Self-Esteem among Students in Secondary Schools in Uganda: Evidence from Apac and Jinja Districts

*Paddy Atuha[1], Samuel Karuhanga[2], Justus Ahimbisibwe[3]

[1]Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, Kyambogo University

[2]Department of Psychology Faculty of Social Sciences, Kabale University

[3]Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ibanda University

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at understanding the relationship between classroom streaming and self-esteem, the possible strategies and interventions that can help reduce the negative effects of classroom streaming on students' self-esteem. Four secondary schools were selected for this study, these schools were chosen from the districts of Apac and Jinja, giving a total sample size of 240. Results on the self esteem of secondary school students indicated that most of these students had low self-esteem. 23% occasionally felt like they were not very good, 19% think they do not have many things to be proud of,23% said that they occasionally feel useless,38% wished they were able to appreciate themselves more, 51% feel they do not have much to be proud of and 35% strongly agreed that had the impression that they had failed. On the other hand, further findings revealed that some had a high self esteem. 19% confirmed that they in general felt pleased with themselves and 33% believed they possessed a variety of positive characteristics. On the relationship between classroom streaming and self- esteem, results show that those in group one had a mean score of 32.28, which is higher than the mean score of 16.51 of group two. The standard deviation of 3.61 of scores in group one shows a wider distribution than the standard deviation of 2.90 of scores of group two. The relationship between streaming and self-esteem, the p-calculated value was found to be 0.0001.The conclusion is that classroom streaming has an effect on self esteem. The comparison of the mean scores and standard deviations indicates that those in group one had a higher self-esteem than those in group two (p=0.05, df=238)

Keywords: Classroom, Streaming, Self-esteem, interventions

INTRODUCTION

Traditional teaching methods have undergone a considerable transformation in the modern educational environment due to the use of technology. One such innovation is classroom streaming, which entails live transmission of classroom activities to distant students. A recent publication by Alshamrani (2023) reported that a new era of accessibility and convenience in education has arrived thanks to this technological development, especially for secondary schools. According to another recent study on new teaching and learning strategies by Bathula et al. (2023), the effects of classroom streaming on different facets of education are being closely examined as educators and legislators work to improve the educational experience for students. The impact of classroom streaming on students' self-esteem, a crucial aspect of their entire academic and personal development, is one of the important considerations to enhance critical thinking among students (Namaziandost et al., 2023).

For the purpose of developing successful pedagogical practices and building a supportive learning environment, it is essential to comprehend the complex relationship between classroom streaming and self-

esteem among secondary school students (Wang et al., 2023). This thorough investigation examines the many facets of classroom streaming and how it could affect students' self-esteem, illuminating both the opportunities and difficulties that come as technology continues to change the way that the world learns. Although the historical background and initial justification for classifying students according to their academic aptitude have been discussed, comprehensive studies that look at the long-term effects and equity implications of this practice while considering a variety of student populations and modern educational objectives are lacking (Meth et al., 2023).

Wang and Chu (2023) reported that despite the widespread usage of academic ability-based grouping, little research has been done to fully examine the effects of this practice in relation to various student demographics and educational situations. The historical data that is now available sheds light on the original goals of grouping, but more extensive and long-term studies are required to fully comprehend how this strategy has affected equity and educational achievements (Zubair et al., 2023).
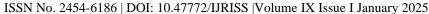
Globally, the issue of classroom streaming has sparked a lot of debate and interest in the current educational environment (Khlaif et al., 2021). According to Liu et al. (2020), classroom streaming, which is the practice of grouping students based on their perceived academic ability, can lead to the creation of several academic success levels within a school as asserted by its supporters because it enables teachers to adapt classes to the needs of each student. However, its critics express concerns about how it can affect students' self-esteem, particularly in secondary schools around the world (Baguri et al., 2022). However, the above scholars never mentioned what particular strategies or interventions can be applied within classroom streaming practices to mitigate potential detrimental effects on students' self-esteem, while still upholding the advantages of adaptive teaching and attending to varying academic needs in their studies thus a knowledge gap. Researchers could offer insights into which tactics are most successful in fostering positive self-esteem outcomes for students while maintaining the benefits of classroom streaming by performing empirical studies across various educational situations.

According to Pregowska et al. (2021), this new trend of classroom streaming which is one of the new teaching and learning opportunities created in recent years by the use of technology in education has become quite popular across the globe, particularly in Africa, where it could help close educational gaps and provide access to high-quality education. It is crucial to remember that while classroom streaming offers many advantages, there are some drawbacks as well. To ensure its successful implementation and good impact on students' self-esteem and learning results, it is necessary to consider a number of elements, including technical difficulties, the digital divide, and the need for appropriate teacher training.

In Uganda, as in many countries, education plays a vital role in shaping the future of individuals and societies with the help of secondary school system that aim at providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills for their personal and professional development (Falk et al., 2022). However, according to (Tus, 2020), several factors can influence students' educational experiences and outcomes, including classroom streaming and its impact on students' self-esteem. The consequences of classroom streaming extend beyond academic considerations and can significantly impact students' self-esteem (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Self-esteem, an individual's overall evaluation of their worth and capabilities, is a critical aspect of psychological well-being and personal development (Busebaia & John, 2020). High self-esteem is associated with positive outcomes, such as academic achievement, mental health, and social skills. On the other hand, low self-esteem can hinder students' motivation, engagement, and overall academic performance (Busalim et al., 2019). Even though the link between self-esteem and academic success has been established, more research is necessary to understand the complex interactions between teaching methods, learning settings, and students' self-esteem development. Although the material given acknowledges the link between self-esteem and academic success, more research is needed to determine how classroom activities, school culture, and larger educational institutions affect students' self-esteem development and fluctuations.

Therefore, carrying out the study to understand the relationship between classroom streaming and students' self-esteem is crucial, particularly in the context of secondary schools in Uganda. This East African nation faces various challenges in its education system, including limited resources, large class sizes, and disparities

in educational opportunities where Apac and Jinja are not left out (Kawalya, 2021). It is essential to explore how classroom streaming practices within this context impact students' self-esteem and subsequently influence their educational experiences and outcomes. This study aims to investigate the effects of classroom streaming on self-esteem among students in secondary schools in Uganda. Additionally, the study will find out the relationship between streaming and self-esteem, and the possible strategies and interventions that can help reduce on negative effects of classroom streaming on students' self-esteem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was conducted in Apac and Jinja District, Uganda (Jaka, 2018). Apac District is bounded to the north-east by Oyam District, the north-northeast by Kole District, the north-northeast by Lira District, the east by Dokolo District, the south-southeast by Amolatar District, the south-west by Nakasongola District, and the west by Kiryandongo District. The largest metropolis in the Lango sub-region, Lira, is situated about 62 kilometres (39 mi) to the south-west of Apac, the district's largest town. The distance between this location and Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest metropolis, is approximately 230 kilometres (140 miles) by road. Jinja District is bounded to the north by Kamuli District, the east by Luuka District, the southeast by Mayuge District, the south by Buvuma District, the west by Buikwe District, and the north by Kayunga District. The district's administrative centre is in Buwenge, which is 96 kilometres (60 mi) by road east of Kampala, Uganda, Uganda's biggest city and capital.

Population Selection

Four secondary schools were selected for this study. These schools were chosen from the districts of Apac and Jinja. The number of schools selected for the could have been greater but for the time and financial constraints only a few were selected. The 240 subjects, including boys and girls, were chosen from the four schools, with 30 subjects coming from each of the chosen streams. The sample size used was sufficient to serve as an accurate representation of all students in the two districts. Given that government grant aided boarding schools generally have the same characteristics, these schools can be utilized to generalize about Uganda as a whole.

Description of the Subject

The subjects were randomly sampled from senior two and senior three in each of the four schools that participated in the study. The researcher did not choose classes outside the two mentioned because; senior one student had not yet sat for end of year examinations for streaming, the senior four students were busy preparing for U.C.E. Examinations and generally advanced: level students are streamed according to their respective subject combinations. Participation in the research is indicated in table 1 below: the same characteristics. The study was conducted with them in the third week of the third term 1995. In order to control for variables in the conditions under which the students learn, only government grant aided boarding secondary schools and fairly well established were selected as stated above. Therefore, they are generally similar in the conditions under which the student's study. The choice of sample area was dictated upon by the fact that these were the schools which streamed according to academic abilities.

Description of the Subject

In each of the four participating schools, senior two and senior three students were randomly chosen as the study's subjects. This is because senior one students had not yet taken the end-of-year exams for streaming, the senior four students were busy preparing for U.C.E. examinations, and generally advanced level students are streamed according to their respective subject combinations, so the researcher did not choose classes outside the two mentioned as shown in **Table 1.**

Table 1. Selected schools for the study

Schools	S. 2	S. 3	Grade totals
Aduku SS	30	30	60

Nhai SS	30	30	60
Jinja SS	30	30	60
Wanyange	30	30	60
Total			240

Source: Primary data 2024

Description of Instruments

The GSE (Rosenberg) Self-esteem scale

Students' self-esteem was measured using the GSE (Rosenberg). Ten components make up this scale, five of which are positive and five of which are negative. Peers, homes, schools, and personal interests are all taken into account on this scale that measures self-esteem (Bianchi et al., 2021). Rosenberg determined its validity to be 0.60 and reliability to be 0.92. Each instrument has ten things on a scale with SA, A, D, and SD as its four levels. This was chosen because, according to (Kalkbrenner, 2023), using more response alternatives improves a scale's internal consistency.

Attitude towards streaming

The researcher created this and used it to gauge how the pupils felt about steaming. The 37 things on this scale. The fact that these topics were addressed by colleagues in the guidance and counselling program established the validity of these materials. The department's professionals also gave their ratings for these goods. These items were subsequently put through a pilot test, and the outcomes were reliable.

Scoring

Examination results from terms one and two contributed to the academic success. These tests were designed to determine whether individuals' attitudes toward streaming were good or negative, as well as whether it had any substantial impact on their academic performance and sense of self-worth.

RESULTS

Self-esteem of secondary school students

Respondents were asked to rate themselves along a given scale and their scores were as presented below.

Table 2 Self-Esteem of Secondary School Students

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
In general, I am pleased with myself.	50	21	55	23	50	21	40	17	45	19
I occasionally feel like I am not very good.	40	17	50	21	45	19	55	23	50	21
I believe I possess a variety of positive characteristics.	55	23	-	-	50	21	55	23	80	33
I can perform tasks on the same level with the majority of individuals.	75	31	60	25	50	21	30	13	25	10

I don't think I have many things to be proud of.	75	31	75	31	-	-	45	19	45	19
I do occasionally feel useless.	65	27	50	21	55	23	40	17	30	16
I view myself as a valuable person who, at the very least, is on the same level with others.	25	10	40	17	45	19	50	21	80	33
I wish I were able to appreciate myself more.	-	-	80	33	40	17	30	10	90	38
I generally have the impression that I failed.	25	10	20	8	35	15	75	31	85	35
I have an optimistic attitude about myself.	40	17	45	19	50	21	55	23	50	21

Source: Primary data 2024.

Results from Table 2 above indicate that most of these students had low self- esteem. 23% occasionally feel like they are not very good, 19% don't think they have many things to be proud of, 23% said do occasionally feel useless, 38% wished they were able to appreciate themselves more, 51% feel they don't have much to be proud of, and 35% strongly agreed had the impression that they failed. On the other hand, further findings reveal that some had high self-esteem. 19% confirmed that they in general, felt pleased with themselves, 33% believed possessed a variety of positive characteristics, 33% viewed themselves as valuable people who, at the very least, were on the same level with others, 23% said that they can perform tasks on the same level with the majority of individuals, and 21% said they had an optimistic attitude about themselves. The drop in self-esteem affected both low and high ability groups though at different levels and intensity. This therefore shows that most students had low self -esteem though they at times feel they have some value in them.

Relationship between Streaming and Self-esteem

The second hypothesis was that, "there is no significant relationship   between streaming and self-esteem". The results to test the second hypothesis are presented in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3: Relationship between streaming and self-esteem

	N	**M/Score**	**SD**
GP1	120	32.28	32.62
GP2	120	16.51	2.90
Total	240		

Based on the results in Table 3, it shows that those in group one has the mean scores 32.28 which is higher than the mean score 16.51 of group two. The standard deviation 3.61 of scores in group one shows a wider distribution than the standard deviation 2.90 of scores of group two.

Table 4: t- test for relationship between streaming and self-esteem

No of cases	**P-critical**	**P-calculated**	**Results**
240	0.05	0.0001	significant

As indicated in the t-test for relationship between streaming and academic achievement, the P-calculated value was also found to be 0.0001. Since P-0.05, the conclusion is that streaming has effect on self-esteem. The comparison of the mean scores and standard deviation indicates that those in group one had a higher self-

esteem than those in group two (at p=0.05 level of significance df = 238). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between streaming and self- esteem was rejected. The researcher used pooled variance because the number of cases were still equal.

Qualitative data Strategies and Interventions to Reduce Negative Effects of Classroom Streaming on Students' Self-esteem

"Nixing students of different abilities in groups emphasizes shifts from competition to cooperation," one participant said. This can encourage a friendlier environment and lessen lower-stream students' feelings of inadequacy.

Making sure difficult kids receive specialized help prevents them from falling behind. As they advance, their sense of accomplishment may help their self-esteem, giving pupils consistent praise encourages them to see their efforts and development while reducing the negative effects of academic comparisons. …….. instructor said.

Additionally, it was discovered that "concentrating on individual abilities and talents highlights that self-worth extends beyond academics, cultivating a more balanced self-esteem. Additionally, he said that placing students from various streams together for mentorship fosters cross-stream relationships that lessen preconceptions and promote togetherness.

"Involving pupils in self-evaluation fosters autonomy and personal development while favorably affecting how they perceive their talents. Strong anti-bullying tactics also stop the depletion of self-esteem brought on by harmful social interactions by fostering a safe environment. Others who responded said.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis stated that "There is no significant relationship between classroom streaming and self-esteem". The data that was collected and analysed using the t-test statistics at P≤0.05 level of significance revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between streaming and self-esteem.

The findings revealed that those in the top streams have high self-esteem, while those in the bottom streams had lower self-esteem. This agrees with Atkinson (1990) when he noted that those students who are placed in bottom streams have low morale in getting work done.

The researcher agrees with this observation because the way one looks at himself, compared to others and the way the significant others look at somebody has a bearing in one's life. It has been noted that those in the bottom streams end up with depressed mood because of lack of regard from the classroom teachers and the significant peers who are placed in the top streams.

When the researcher attended some; lessons, the social climate in bottom classes was not at all conducive to learning; situation since the students were not at all encouraged by the classroom teachers. There was tendency to shy away. When questions were asked most of the students pretended to be occupied with other activities. The students looked as if they were regretting being in that situation because the work was seen to be rather boring and not meaningful to them, there was tendency of dosing. Some sought for permission to go outside, and in most cases, a few would return to the classrooms quickly. In the top streams, the students had high morale; in most cases work was done with ease and the teachers looked lively and interested in their work. There were comments from the students that they preferred their own class because it was a better class, the top class in the school. There were also comments such as "Other streams are not as clever as us", "I would not Like to be in lower stream", There were also comments from teachers in some cases to the top streams that if they did not perform well, they would go to the lower stream.

All these comments are disheartening to the students from the lower streams. The researcher agrees with Rosenberg (1965) when he noted that students with low self-esteem tended to have very unstable self-pictures.

Phan & Ngu, (2018) supported the findings of Rosenberg when he observed that those who are placed in

bottom streams have very low morale', they lack the zeal of getting work done. In most cases they lack encouragement from the significant others. As stated above, the researcher observed this state of affairs when he attended some lessons.

While Smale-Jacobse *et al*. (2019) define classroom streaming as an academic practice where students of similar academic level and ability are placed within the same group for instruction, it is also known as ability grouping. Classroom streaming is a common practice where students are placed into different classes based on their past academic achievement, performance, and ability in order to differentiate instruction that meets their academic needs.
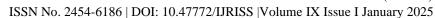
According to Kisakye *et al.* (2019) in Uganda, ability-based streamlining was used from the primary to secondary levels after new educational policies have been advanced, such as free and compulsory primary education in 1997 and secondary level education in 2007. Free in the sense that all government schools' primary and secondary tuition is extensively subsidized by the government. Children who reached the age of compulsory education were legally required to attend school. Denying this age group of children their right to an education has been made illegal for parents and guardians. Regardless of their performance in the primary seven, students who received a free and compulsory education were automatically promoted from primary to secondary school (Abenawe, 2022). Numerous students of different academic backgrounds enrolled in secondary schools, some of whom had very little reading and writing skills. Many schools were compelled by this situation to implement an ability streaming system in an effort to address the educational difficulty.

Streaming, also known as channelling and tracking is the practice of placing students in groups based on their propensity for academic success (Zhang et al., 2022). When allocating students to courses, teachers may make adjustments based on mixed ability, within-class ability grouping, between-class ability grouping, and subject-specific ability grouping (Wilkinson & Penney, 2023). Each group's unique needs and capabilities are taken into consideration as teachers adapt their lesson plans and content. This enables them to more successfully handle the various learning needs of children within each group. Currently, the practice of streaming is widespread at various schools in Uganda in order to satisfy the high standards for academic competence that are placed on them by school authorities like churches, governments, and privately owned schools, school heads stream their students (Molina & Lamb, 2022). Some school administrations reward teachers and headmasters for passing rates that are higher. As a result, slow learners are discriminated against because they will never succeed at learning, hence there is no financial benefit to teaching them.

Odongo *et al*. (2021) classroom streaming may result in academic and societal disparities, the reinforcement of stereotypes, and a detrimental influence on students' self-esteem and motivation. Students in lower tracks may have fewer resources and opportunities than those in higher records, perpetuating inequality. The consequences of ability grouping on students and the justification for this practice need to be investigated (H. Wang et al., 2023). On ability streaming, there are two opposing schools of thought. The idea that ability grouping is an organizational technique that expands learning chances for both high ability and low ability learners is presented on the one hand (Alqudah et al., 2020). As a result, teachers must take into account how individuals differ in a variety of ways, including interest, ability, social skills, ideas, and attitudes (Jabbarov, 2020), and modify their instruction to take these differences into account. Ability grouping enables teachers to provide for individualized attention in the form of remediation, extended work, and instructional tempo, allowing students to advance through the learning process at their own rate without being hurried or held back by other students.

Shadiev and Huang (2020) highlights further that in mixed-ability classes, low-ability students are overworked while high-ability students' intellectual potential is underutilized. However, ability grouping is viewed as a tactic for class division among students of various capacities that disadvantages those with lower abilities (González & Bonal, 2021). Low quality instruction, poor resource allocation, and labelling of lower ability students as dumb are just a few of the drawbacks.

Those who oppose streaming are in support of mixed-ability groups (González & Bonal, 2021). The main justification offered by advocates of mixed ability courses is that students learn to get along with people of different backgrounds and political ideologies, which is a common social phenomenon. The use of mixed

ability groups helps students fit into society because people there are a diverse population. As small societies, schools ought to reflect society (Haugen, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Findings in the study stated that the students from bottom streams have lower self-esteem than their counterparts in the top streams because of the reasons outlined below.

The teachers do not encourage the students in their day-to-day classroom activities and therefore the students remain reserved. Devenney and Toole (2021) supported this reason when they stated that 1ack of motivation is a key factor responsible for poor school attendance and achievement. When students are encouraged, they get motivated, ready to perform tasks set before them. The student feels defeated in all their endeavours, and therefore lose interest because there is no hopeful outcome which can arise from it. This remark is supported by Filgona et al. (2020) who said that if a student believes that there is little connection between what he is learning in school and his/her life goals, he may feel that continuing his education is a waste of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of this study were mainly derived from small parts of Apac and Jinja. Thus, this generalization may not be a true and reliable reflection of the situation in the whole country.

Furthermore, all schools in the nation conduct termly exams, however this study was limited to senior two and three students in terms one and two of 2024. The 2024 performance is therefore most likely not a representative example of the difference between performance and self-esteem, as connected to classroom streaming.

Financial limitations and other problems were the cause of the restriction. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that the study might potentially be expanded to include numerous samples of participants from different regions (districts) of Uganda. For a more accurate, trustworthy, and truthful generalization, this might also be extended to include several years of secondary education.

The researcher conducting the research intends to shed more light on areas where educators and instructors should work together to identify more effective and supportive teaching strategies.

The impact of classroom streaming on secondary school students' academic success and self-esteem is not claimed to have been fully explored by the study. Further investigation is necessary to learn more about streaming and associated topics like socioeconomic position, study habits, tribes, etc. that were not covered in the study. It might be more trustworthy and acceptable to generalize findings in this way.

The study also suggests that teachers should engage their students' interest in learning by using engaging teaching strategies.

The study also advises that career teachers and counsellors should pay close attention to kids who are enrolled in the lower streams. In the long-term, this will raise their self-esteem and consequently their academic achievement.

Declarations of Interests

This research did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial or non-profit sectors

Conflicts of Interests

The author declare that they have no competing interests.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study will be available on request

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