

The Impact of Social Relationships on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Meru District Council, Arusha, Tanzania

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Abstract— The study assessed the impact of social relationships on students' academic performance in secondary schools, Meru District Council, Arusha Tanzania. The following specific objectives: to assess the forms of relationships among students in secondary schools and their impact on students' academic performance; and to investigate on the effects peers, family, school, and neighbours on students' academic performance were studied. The study surveyed 504 secondary school students, and the data was analysed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square test for independence and one-way Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA. Findings revealed six forms of relationships among students including: Friendship, Peers, Acquaintances, Classmates, Support groups, and Romantic. The forms of relationships found to have a significant impact on students' academic performance. It was also found out that there are a significant effect of family, peers, schools and neighbours' interactions on students' academic performance. The study recommends that teachers pay attention on the kind of relationships among students because they may have both positive and negative outcomes, design guidance and counselling systems to guide students' social interactions; Schools should establish a mutual relationship between the school members and family members for the sake of understanding and follow ups of students both academic and behavioural progresses.

Keywords— Academic Performance, Family and Friendships

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The concept of social relationship involves the connections that exist between people who have persistent interactions that are perceived by the participants to have personal meaning. It includes the relationship between family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers (August & Rook, 2013). Social relationship includes factors such as family, school, social economic status, peers and neighbours (Junio & Liwag, 2016). According to various literatures, social relationships are among the factors that have impact to students' academic performance. The Family involves a unit that composes of father, mother, children, adopted or blood related and other close relatives including grandfather, grandmother, uncles,

aunties, cousins, nephews, and nieces who live in a household (Law of the Child Act, 2009). Researchers have shown that family environment contributes largely to the growth and performance of a child, for example, Priyanka and Komira (2017) stated that the home comprises of such atmospheres which foster growth and development of family, trust, and confidence, sharing of ideas, parental support, parental approval, parental engagement, affection and support of siblings. Again, according to Priyanka and Komira (2017) in the study conducted in India showed that parental influences were positively correlated to actual academic performance of students. Also, the study by Cohen and Khan (2010) revealed that parents' contribution to their children's education has consistent and positive effects on academic performance and on the self-concept.

Peers are a group of people who have similar interests, age, background and social status; peer relationship involves the types and quality of social interactions among same aged peers (Cillessen, 2000). Studies on peer relationship have indicated that throughout development people seek to acquire an attachment to a group in the society (Castro Giovanni, 2002). Peer relationships in school or home have a big role in the socialization of children, which may further affect their academic performance (Olalekan, 2016).

A school is an education institution designed to provide teaching and learning process in a way that supports students' learning (Steiner, Hamilton, Peer & Pane, 2015). Examining on the school characteristics and its influences on students' academic performance; Kosgei, Mise, Odera, and Ayugi (2013) suggest that there is no significant relationship between teacher qualifications and students' academic performance however Ekperi (2018) established that teacher knowledge of the subject matter and teaching method correlate significantly with students' academic performance.

Neighbours can interact and affect students' academic performance. A neighbour is a person living next door to or every near to another, a person or place in relation to others next to it. Neighbours are considered as a social group that has an influence on student's performance. Coker (2016) revealed that there is a negative relation between neighbourhood disadvantage to both GPA and educational performance.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students' academic performance has been a problem year after year for example the study by Brighton (2017) on the factors affecting students' performance in Certificate of Secondary Education Examination in Tanzania found that low performance was due to shortage of teaching and learning materials, lack of readiness of students in learning, poor entry scores in form one and three, poor parental involvement in leaning of their children and un-clear education policy. Again, the study by Nghambi (2014) in community secondary schools in Urambo district found that poor performance in form four examinations was associated with poor working environment for teachers, poor supply of teaching and learning materials, high teacher -students ratio, and poor teaching methodology.

Moreover, as a remedy for poor performance in the government secondary schools, Kagu (2011) recommended that the government should increase the number of teachers, provide teaching and learning

materials such as textbooks, Laboratories, classrooms, lunch to students staying away from schools, and introduce bonus schemes for teachers serving in difficult environment. Among the recommendations by Boa (2014) is that every teacher should have favourable environment for teaching and learning for students' high academic performance.

It has been established by Ngassa and Gundula (2019) that parents are committed to monitor students' learning activities and give all kinds of support needed. Also, Orestes (2014) found that there is a close relationship between parental social economic status, and the society at large in students' academic performance.

Despite all the above-mentioned studies, yet students' academic performance continues to be poor in Tanzania, Meru District inclusive. Many studies have been done asking if relationships may affect students' academic performance, this is why the researcher decided to assess if students' academic performance may be affected by the social relationships. The current study, therefore, explored on the forms of relationships among students in secondary schools, the impact of those relationships on students' academic performance, and the effects of family, Peers, school and neighbours on students' academic performance.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study addressed the following two specific objectives

1. To Find out the forms of relationships among secondary school students in Meru District Council and their impact on students' academic performance
2. To investigate on the effects of peer relationships, family members relationships, school members interactions and neighbours' relationships to students' academic performance in Meru District Council.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will add to existing literature on the factors that contribute to students' academic performance. Teachers, parents, and policy makers can take the advantage of the findings to improve students' performance in schools. This study is significant to social workers, counsellors and other practitioners who work in the school settings because it helps to have evidence on the existing social relationships how they affect students' academic performance. This study can be used as a baseline to gain information which can help on designing

students' guidance and counselling programs and other life skills sessions.

V. DEFINITION OF TERMS

5.1 Academic Performance

Academic performance is defined by several authors as a level of achievement attained by a student through effects or skills during the learning processes which is either by theory or practical and has effects on the standard of education. It signifies the knowledge gained and is assessed by teachers considering the set of instructional goals (Abaidoo, 2018). In this study academic performance meant scores and grades obtained by a student after attempting a test or an exam during and/or after classroom instructions.

5.2 Family

A family means groups of people consisting of father, mother, children and/or relatives and their dependants forming one household living in same place with different roles, and influencing one another to meet psychological, social, cultural, and economic needs of each other (Gunindi & Demirciogulu, 2012). In this study, family meant the people who live with the students notably, parents, guardians and siblings.

5.3 Friendship

Is a close, voluntary relationships between two same age peers that is characterized by mutual affection or liking. In friendship people have similar social skills and competencies which in turn, help to foster feelings of equality between the people who are friends such feelings are distinct from the feelings children have towards their parents (Rubin, Chen, Coplan & Bowker, 2015). According to Ryan (2000) students with high achieving friends have greater academic achievement over time as compared to students with lower achieving friends. Spadofora, Schiralli and Jbouri (2019) suggested that, by associating with friends who have positive attitudes towards school, youth may enhance their own satisfaction with school. In this study friendship meant people like best friends, the people who are not necessarily of same age, same interest or hobbies but share some kind of closeness and/or sometimes may be used interchangeably with peers.

5.4 Neighbours

According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition), a neighbour is a person living next to or very near to another. A person or place in relation to others next to it. In this study neighbour meant a person

who lives close to the students' home and the community close to the school.

5.5 Peer Acceptance

Peer acceptance can be defined as the way an individual is liked by others. According to Rubin *et al.*, (2015), peer acceptance refers to the extent to which a child is collectively liked by his or her peers and it is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, such as competence (Gordon & Asher, 2005). In this study peer acceptance bears similar meaning to these provided by scholars in this section.

5.6 Peer Groups

Peer groups are of people of approximately the same age who have similar interests, background, or social status. Peer groups have an important influence on youth performance, beliefs, and behaviours in the school context (Filade, Bello, Uwaoma, Anwanane & Nwanghuruka, 2019). In this study peer groups meant all individuals who have same similar interest, who work to get, share hobbies, and have similar age.

5.7 Peer Pressure

Peer pressure means people of your same age encourage you to do something or stop from doing something no matter if you personally want to do it (Ryan, 2000). In this study peer pressure meant the way peers interact and motivate each other to achieve a certain goal.

5.8 Peer Rejection

The online Merriam –Webster dictionary defines peer rejection in the essence of one's refusal to accept someone of similar age, grade or status into a social group. In this study peer rejection meant the situation where by an individual person is being segregated from any kind of interactions by his/her peers. This segregation may happen in different environment such as in school, classroom, class activities, in extracurricular activities. The individual is affected to the extent that the situation affects his daily functioning in emotional, social, and psychological wellbeing. One can be rejected in the group due to the fact that he or she demonstrates shyness, withdrawn or anxious behaviour or struggling with externalizing behaviours such as aggression that may lead to a cycle of bullying followed by victimization (Killen, Mulvey and Hiti, 2013). Children who are shy, withdrawn or anxious, are always victims of interpersonal rejection because their peers perceive these up and down differences as social deviants that mark them as nonthreatening and unlikely to strike back (Olweus, 1993).

5.9 Peer Relationship

Is the way or form and reasons close friends of the same sex or different sex, communicate among themselves whether in open or exclusively (Olalekan, 2016). Peers work in a group to fulfil their goals, interests and work together to achieve common expectations. In this study peer relationships meant the ways peers work together to reach their ambitions.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1 Theoretical Literature Review

This study was guided by the Ecological Systems Theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner in (1979). According to the theory, children normally find themselves trapped in various ecosystems, from the friendliest home ecological system to the larger school system, and then to the most expensive systems, which include society and culture.

In this theory, Bronfenbrenner presents an environment as an arrangement of connected structures with those closer to the developing individual being enclosed within those further afield (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). According to Bronfenbrenner (2005) as cited by Harkonen (2007) there are five systems in child development and learning which are Microsystem, Mesosystem, Ecosystem, Microsystem and Chronosystem which affect change and learning process. These structures can be described as follow

Microsystem is referring to the immediate environment of the child such as the family, peers, School and neighbours. According to Bronfenbrenner, the development of a child takes place because of the processes consisting of complex, reciprocal interactions among the persons, objects and symbols in the immediate environment (Beck, 2000; Taylor & Gebre, 2016).

Mesosystem is the relationship between the family's interaction with the schools, the schools to the community, and the family to peers; such interactions have a great impact on the student's development and school performance in general. For example, achieving home-school consistency and information between the two parties are important for academic, personal and social development for the child (Beck, 2000; Kocayoruk, 2016).

Ecosystem presents the external activities that influence a child's development for example parents work, policies existing in the government, social changes and economic circumstances. Studies have indicated that there are factors beyond the school that influence child's educational outcomes. These factors are such as poverty,

domestic violence, parental drug abuse, neglect and physical or sexual abuse. The ecosystem interactions have various effects on the development of the child emotionally, socially as well as cognitive (Ryan & Jacob, 2018).

Macrosystem is the broader communities' culture, views and norms. The macrosystem contains overarching values, ideologies, laws, worldviews and customs of a particular society (Wahedi, 2012). Student's interactions with his society effects the way a student is learning for example ways of communication, the language, cultural practices all these factors have an impact to the students' performance (Beck, 2000).

Chronosystems are events that occur over a lifetime at critical periods of development. Among the dimensions of the chronosystem includes changes in personal overtime (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Changes in student's life can affect their access to general education content and context (Gerdin, Allcock & Ruppar, 2016). It is highlighted that the development of science has changed traditional kind of learning to a more modern learning. Students have a clear remarkable interaction resulting from the development of science and technology. The advancement of internet use, computers and mobile phones and social media have a great influence on the way a student is learning. These changes overtime happening in the student's life and influences his or her learning has a developmental function in the students' educational achievement (Beck, 2000).

In this theory, Bronfenbrenner argues that, because students interact with the systems, a greater attention should be given to thoughtful how students network through these systems as means of attaining educational goals.

The Ecological systems theory lays stress on the quality and context of the child's surroundings (Harkonen, 2007). The theory emphasises that a child's own biology is a primary environment fuelling his/her surroundings. The Interaction with the growing biology, the child's interaction with the immediate family or community, environment and the societal scenery fuels and directs the child's development (Paquette and Ryan, 2011; Hudson, 2013).

This theory is related to the current study because the assumptions from the founder are similar as the study variables. For example, the assumptions that the environment that surrounds the student such as the family, the peers, the teachers and the neighbours interact and affect child's development and learning is related to the variables of this study. As this theory shows the variables such as peers, school, family members and the community (neighbours) are exactly the variables of my study.

While in the school the student finds himself in the groups of peers in which various interactions are carried out, this interaction is very important as it influences student's studies and the performance. Peers work in a group to fulfil their goals, interests and work together to achieve common expectations (Olalekan, 2016).

The family interactions with the student have been proved to have influence on students' academic performance. Ngassa and Gundula (2019) have supported that parent affect students' academic performance because they are committed to monitor students' learning activities and give all kind of support they need. The school is also another important variable interacting and relate with the students' academic performance. In the schoolteachers are key players to create a good environment which enables teaching and learning for high academic performance

among students (Boa, 2014).

The community is another variable in this study known as the neighbours are the people in the community that interact with the student. Studies have shown that neighbours as a social group have influence on students' academic performance for example Coker (2016) revealed a negative relation between neighbourhood disadvantage and both GPA and educational Attainment.

This theory reveals and gives much understanding of the context in which a student develops and interacts, it draws the importance of social relationships in the development and learning of the student and is a benchmark to the topic under study which explores on the social relationships and the impact they have on students' academic performance.

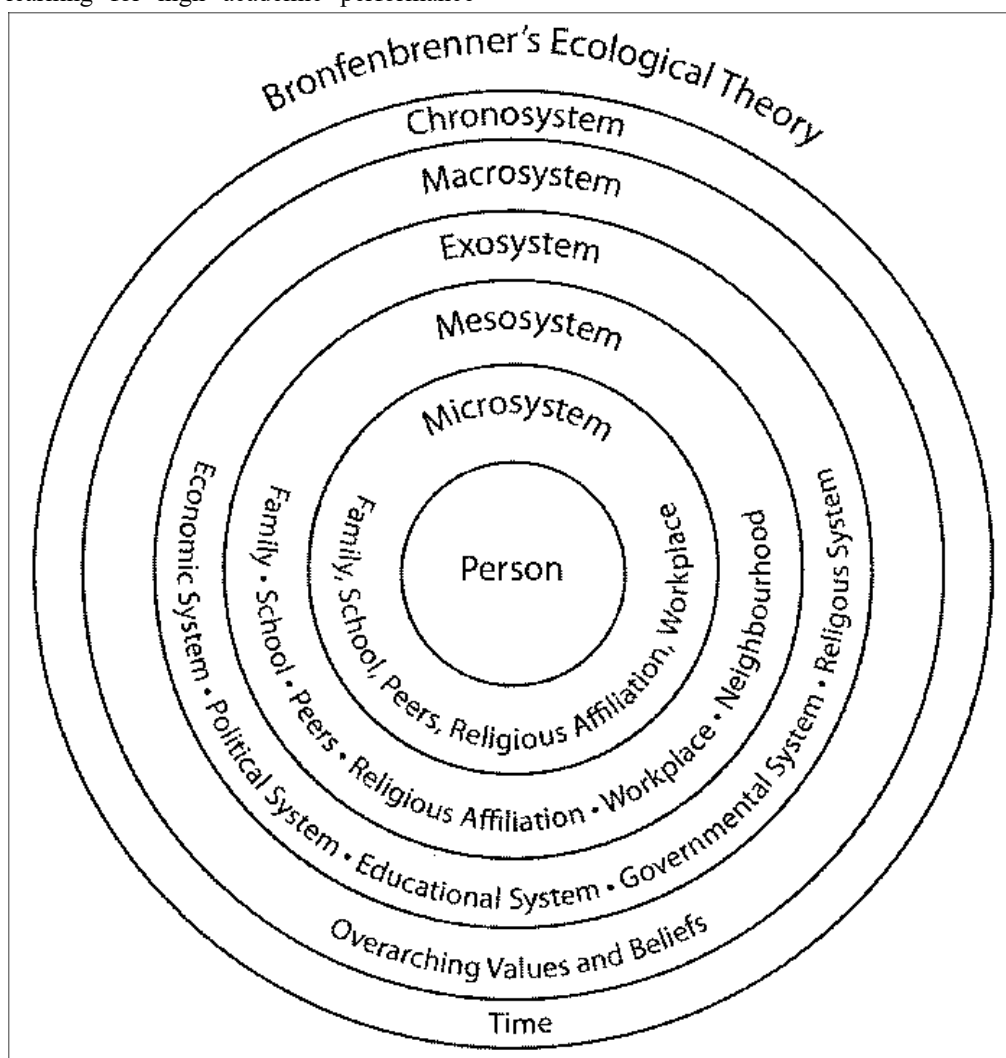


Fig.1: Bronfenbrenner Ecological System Model, adapted from Berger, 2007.

6.2 Empirical Literature Review

6.2.1 Social Relationship and Students' Academic Performance

Study on academic progress in junior high school of the Dutch school system indicated that students who were accepted by their peers had lower probability to retain a grade or move to downward grades. This means peer

relationship is associated with good academic performance (Lubbers, Werf, Snijders & Creemers, 2006).

A study of neighbourhood effects on youth educational achievement in the Netherlands indicated that the impact of neighbourhood conditions on certain groups of youth may be obscured in studies that measure average neighbourhood effects across all individuals. It highlights that future study will examine the link between the neighbourhood, family and school context to better determine the neighbourhoods in youth education. The study indicated that students who had relatives in Netherlands achieved better compared to those who had not (Kuyper, 2008).

The study by Olalekan (2016) conducted in secondary schools of Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State suggested that pupils are closer to their friends than their teachers and parents concerning their academics and that parents monitor their children's peer groups associations. In the study conducted in Jagobiao, Mandaue city argue that students' peer pressure in school affects the academic performance among students in terms of various content. (Moldes *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, Mosha (2017) in her study conducted in secondary school somewhere in Tanzania presents that peer groups have both positive and negative influences on adolescent students' academic performance. Mosha also highlights that there are several factors that influence students' academic performance. These factors are such as peer relationships, socialization, environment, globalization and drug use.

The study conducted by Kayombo (2017) in Ilala Municipality Tanzania found that parents are engaged in the school committees to discuss students' matters such as attendance and school dropouts. These studies stand as important information to tell the researcher that the people who are close to the student (parents, teachers, neighbours, peers) are crucial for the achievement of the students' academic.

6.2.2 Peer Relationship and Academic Performance

In the course of being in schools, children find themselves attached to other people, the kind of relationship known as peer relationship. Peers are a small group of related age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities (Castro Giovanni, 2002). Peer relationships in schools and homes play an important role in the socialization of children (Olalekan, 2016). Furthermore, the nature of friendship students keep has the potential influence on their relationships at school rather than academic matters (Mosha, 2017). According to the cognitive development theory developed by Piaget (1932),

children's relationship is clearly distinguished from their relationship with their parents or other adults.

On the other hand, Feldman (2009) describes peer rejection as something that can lead to academic decline. Rejected peers are less likely to participate in classroom activities (Passer & Smith, 2007). Moreover, Mosha (2017) presents peer groups to have both positive and negative influences on adolescent students' academic performance. The study by Lubbers *et al* (2006) revealed peer relationship to be associated with good academic performance. According to Ryan (2000) students with high achieving friends have greater academic performance over time as compared to students with lower performing friends. Spadofora *et al* (2019) suggest, by associating with friends who have positive attitudes towards school, youth may enhance their own satisfaction with school.

6.2.3 Family Members and Students' Academic Performance

A study done by Baba and Yunus (2014) on the effect of family environment on student academic performance and adjustment problems in schools found that family environment has no effect on students' academic performance although family environment has effect on school adjustment which suggests the need for parents to pay attention on their relationship with children while in school as it may have effect on them negatively.

Another study by Boyraz, Akkus, Yoruk and Akkus (2012) found that fathers help their children on educational issues more than other members of the family. The latter study repeated that students have the idea of good self-motivation driven by the parents while other siblings took the lower rank. The study by Muthoni (2013) Conducted in secondary schools in Kenya reveals that parental marital status; family size, parental education level and family financial status had a positive relationship with academic performance of students. Parents with low level of education are less responsible for children schooling, low income of parents lead to insufficient home needs and school requirements for children; the situation that lead to students' poor performance (Mauka, 2015).

6.2.4 School Members Interaction and Students' Academic Performance

Supportive teacher-student relationships and academic press are significantly related to behavioural and emotional student engagement (Lee, 2012). The school climate (norms, values and expectations) is a leading factor in explaining student learning and achievement (Maxwell *et al.*, 2017). Teacher –student relationship is important to

student success (Tisome, 2009). Results supported the hypothesized reciprocal model, indicating the relationship between teacher acceptance and achievement in both directions (Kosir and Tement, 2013).

6.2.5 Neighbours and Students' Academic Performance

Neighbourhood is among the factors that can have impact on students' performance. Drawing on a unique data set that permits simultaneous estimation of neighbours and school contribution to student test score gains, it was found that the two are most important contextual settings in students' lives (Carlson & Cowen, 2014). In the study using meta-regression, it was found that the relations between neighbourhoods and individual educational outcomes is a function of neighbourhood poverty, the neighbourhood education climate, the proportion of ethnic/migrant groups, and social disorganisation in the neighbourhood (Nieuwenhuis & Hooimeijer, 2015). In the study exploring the effects of the neighbourhood in which a school is located on children's mathematics achievement in Chile, results indicate the positive effects related to participation in neighbourhood organisations. One critical finding in this study is that socio-economic polarisation has a negative and significant impact on the education achievement of sixth graders (Otero et al, 2017).

VII. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Methods

The study employed quantitative research approach and purposeful sampling was used to give 18 schools (9 public and 9 private) as well as form three and four students. Data was collected from 504 students. The researcher used purposeful technique because he wanted to collect data from schools, which are boarding and none boarding. This technique also was used to select schools which have both males and females' students. The population of form three and four which consist of 8064 (Field data from Meru District Education officer, 2019) was used to draw the sample of this study and the formular adopted from (Loru, 2020) was applied.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = represents the number of schools required

N = all schools in Meru DC

e =significance level (0.05)

l=K (constant)

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{8064}{1 + 8064(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{8064}{1 + 8064(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{8064}{21.16}$$

$$n = 381$$

Therefore, sample size in this study was 381.

The number of schools to survey were also obtained using the following formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Whereas;

n = represents the number of schools required

N = all schools in Meru DC

e =significance level (0.02)

l=K (constant)

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{68}{1 + 68(0.02)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{1 + 68(0.02)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{1 + 68(0.04)}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{1 + 2.72}$$

$$n = \frac{68}{3.72}$$

$$n = 18.27$$

It was noted that many students showed up in the research making a total of 504 participants. Data collected through questionnaires were processed and analysed quantitatively. After data collection, questionnaires were

assigned with identifications (id) and data were coded. Coding is assigning numbers to the variables so that they can be analysed by computer software program (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Rubin and Babbie highlighted that a code book is a document that describes the location of variables and lists the assignments of coded variables to the attributes composing those variables. The codebook is the primary guide used in the coding process, it helps locating variables and interpreting codes in the data file, it tells where to find the variable when needed for correction or any treatment. After the data has been coded and a codebook is constructed, data were entered into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version_20) to undergo a descriptive statistics analysis.

7.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are systems of principles which govern the dynamics of decision making of the choices of what is wrong or right. Scientific research work, as all human activities are governed individuals, community and social values (Fouke & Mantzorou, 2011). Understanding the importance of ethics in research, the researcher ensured the participants safety of their participation, such as confidentiality and through assurance of informed consent. An informed consent according to Feldman (2015) is a

document signed by participants affirming that they have been told the basic outlines of the study and are aware of what their participation will involve. For ethical considerations, each participant had the freedom to choose or refuse to participate; a research clearance was sought from the Directorate of Research and Publications, and a research permit was obtained from Meru District Council Director.

VIII. RESULTS

8.1 Forms of Relationships among Students in Secondary schools.

Respondents were asked to rate the forms of relationships among students in Meru secondary schools. Data indicated; Friendship 100%, Acquaintances 74.9%, Classmate 96.8%, Peers 96.2%, Support 89.3% and Romantic 8.4%. As summarized in table 1, it can be concluded that; friendship, acquaintances, classmates, peers and support are forms of relationships found among students in Meru secondary schools. It can also be said that romantic relationship is not much prevalent among students compared to other forms of relationships

Table 1 Descriptive analysis of Forms of Relationships among Students in Secondary Schools

Forms of relationships	SA	Ag	Und	Dis	SD	N/A	Cum
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Friendship	94.1	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
Romantic	3.5	4.9	7.0	9.1	9.8	65.9	100
Acquaintances	42.5	32.4	5.9	0.7	18.5	0.0	100
Classmate	49.1	47.4	3.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	100
Peers	73.9	22.3	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
Support	80.0	3.8	9.3	6.3	0.7	0.0	100

Source: Field data, 2020

8.2 Impacts of Friendship, Romantic, Acquaintances, Classmates, Support & Peers on Students Academic Performance

Descriptive analysis was done to find out the impact of friendship, romantic, acquaintances, classmates, support,

and peer relationships on students' academic performance. From Figure 2 it can be presented that relationships do contribute much on students' academic performance by; I did well in my exams because of my friend's help (friendship)-82%, Discussion with my acquaintances helped me to get good grades (acquaintances)-84%, My classmates have helped me to do well in my studies

(classmates) 91%, I have passed my exams due to help I receive from my peers (peer)-84%, there is someone who is like my brother or sister in the school, this person

encourages me to study hard (support)-62%, my boyfriend/girlfriend encourage me to study (romantic)-13%.

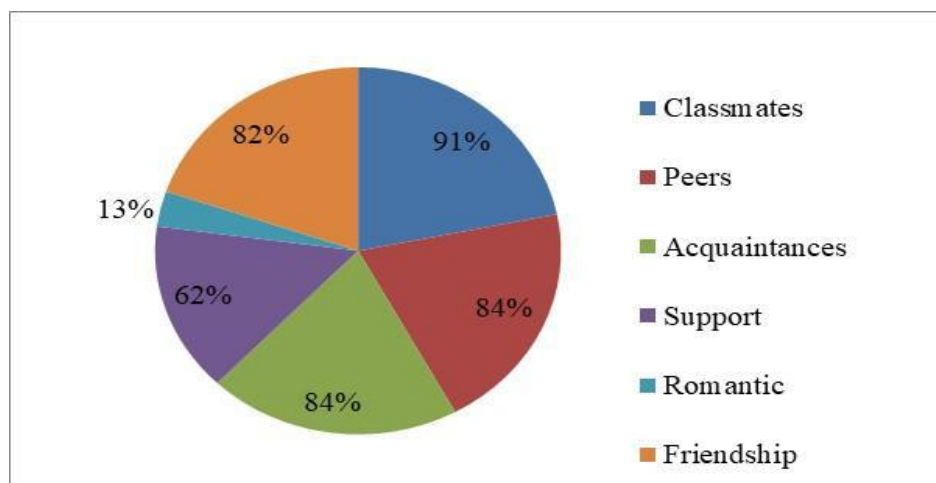


Fig.2: Impacts of Friendship, Romantic, Acquaintances, Classmates, Support & Peers on Students Academic Performance

8.3 Effects of Peers, Family and Neighbours on Academic Performance

In this section Kruskal –Walli’s test was run through one way groups’ analysis of variance (ANOVA) to find out the effects of peers, family, school and neighbours on students’ academic performance. Total scores on peers,

family members, school members and neighbours were compared to obtain the medium that were used to report these findings. Results in table 3 indicated that family members have higher contribution (26.00 median) to students’ academic performance followed by peers (25.00 median) and neighbours (18.0 median).

Table 2: ANOVA analysis of Effects of Peers’, Family, School and Neighbours on students’ academic performance

Sex		Total peer Effect	Total family Effect	Total school Effect	Total neighbors Effect
Male	N	293	293	293	293
	Median	24.00	26.00	22.00	17.00
Female	N	281	281	281	281
	Median	27.00	26.00	22.00	18.00
Total	N	574	574	574	574
	Median	25.00	26.00	22.00	18.00

Source: Filed data, 2020

IX. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

9.1 Forms of Relationships among students

Regarding the first objective, this study found out a few forms of relationships among students in secondary schools. The forms of relationships found are Friendship

100%, Acquaintances 74.9%, Classmate 96.8%, Peers 96.2%, Support 89.3% and Romantic 8.4%. In an open-ended question, which asked respondents to name other forms of relationships they know; roommate, religious, subject and sports relationships were highlighted. These relationships the researcher classified them under peer relationships.

From these findings it can be concluded that friendship, acquaintances, classmates, peers and support are forms of relationships among students in secondary schools in Meru District Council.

According to various studies, friendship in adolescents has influencing role on social development, shaping behaviour, fostering academic performance but also may lead to risk behaviours.

Individuals select peers as friends who are similar to themselves in specific behaviours or attitudes (Homphily, lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). Friends and peers communicate in an easier way and find each other more trustworthy and predictable (Veenstra *et al.*, 2013).

These studies lie in line with the current study which investigates on the role of friendship in students' academic performance. They confirm that there are friendships that exist among students and that this relationship has something to do with students' progresses.

Peer relationship is a very famous kind of social relationships found among students. Apart from this study, other studies indicate the importance of peers in shaping student's development. Peers are available at home; school or other places where they meet and interact, share interests, hobbies and communicate in open or exclusively (Castrogiovanni, 2002; Olalekan, 2016). While in school settings, students meet with other students for group discussions. In this kind of relationships students are meeting to discuss a particular thing let say an assignment and the relationship marks to an end when the discussion is over. This kind of relationship is called acquaintance (Ekberg, 2013). Classmates mean everybody who is in the classroom except the teacher. Classmates offer informal support, and they are expected to naturally interact with their peers in many informal ways, particularly when they interact outside of the school setting (Ansong, Okumu, Bowen, Walker & Eisensmith, 2017). In the school students find other people who are like brothers and sisters in this study identified as support relationships. All these forms of relationships found among students have a potential role in shaping developing and moulding the student towards his or her academic performance.

9.2 Impacts of Friendship, Romantic, Acquaintances,

Classmates, Support & Peers on Students Academic Performance

Results from the descriptive analysis frequencies on the impact of the forms of relationships indicated friendship impacts was 82%, Acquaintances 84%, Classmates 91%, peers 84%, support 62% and romantic 13%. Other Studies also reveal how some of these

relationships impact students' academic performance. Students with high achieving friends have greater academic performance overtime and by associating with friends who have positive attitudes towards school; students may enhance their own satisfaction with school (Ryan, 2000; Spadafora, Schriralli & Jbouri, 2019). The discussions under peers, acquaintances, support, and friendship indicated the truth behind these social relationships impacts to students' academic performance.

9.3 Effects of Peers, Family, School and Neighbours

One way ANOVA analyses by Kruskal- Wallis test was conducted to find out the effects of peers, family, school and neighbours' relationships on students' academic performance. Results indicated to higher effects on students' academic performance with (26.00 median). According to Bronfenbrenner ecological system theory, the family is the immediate environment of the child. The student's interactions with family members influence school performance (Tylor & Gebre, 2016). It is pointed that parents are committed to monitor students learning activities and give all kind of support needed (Ngassa & Gundula, 2019).

Moreover, Baba and Yunus (2014) revealed that family environment has effect on student's school adjustment and suggested parents to pay attention on their relationships with children. Furthermore, Muchoni (2013) revealed parental marital status, family size, parental educational level and family financial status to have positive impact on student's academic performance.

This study also found that peer relationships (25.00 median) have impact on students' academic performance. Students learn various behaviours, motivation and skills and build much trust from their peers. According to Mosha (2017) peer groups have both positive and negative influences on adolescent students' academic performance. The study by Lubbers *et al* (2006) revealed peer relationship to be associated with good academic performance. On the other hand, Feldman (2009) describes peer rejection as something that can lead to academic decline. It has also been highlighted by Passar & Smith (2007) that rejected peers are less likely to participate in classroom activities.

Furthermore, school members (22.00 median) have been indicated to play a big role in helping students to perform well in their academic. The relationships students have with their teachers, school administration, School matrons and patrons have positive impact on their academic performance. As revealed by Maxwell *et al*, (2017) school climate which includes norms, values and expectations, is a leading factor in explaining students

learning and achievement.

Moreover, these results indicated a contribution of neighbours (18.00 median) on students' academic performance. According to the ecological system theory, neighbours are among the microsystems. They are people who are living near by the student. Positive relationships with these neighbouring surrounding and people do a lot in shaping students' performance. In the study exploring the effects of neighbourhood on children's mathematics performance Otero *et al.*, (2017) revealed positive effects related to participation in neighbourhood organisation.

X. CONCLUSIONS

While teachers, educational policy makers, and researchers are concentrating on the factors that lead to academic performance of students such as teacher training and competence, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning environment and the like, this study informs on the need to explore more on other factors such as social relationships. This study has shown that students have several social relationships that impact their academic performances.

As shown by Bronfenbrenner ecological system theory, a child first develops in his microsystem such as family, peers, school and neighbours; this development eventually grows into the mesosystem whereby his/her microsystem interacts with others for example the school interaction with family. It is also true that parents/guardians' external activities in one way or another affects the child's growth. This ecosystem as explained earlier encompasses parents work, policies in the government, social changes and economic growth, a child more over encounters the macro system which characterises the values, ideologies and laws all which are socially constructed. The Chronosystem indicates that the child's development is affected overtime by the environment surrounding him/her. In the process of schooling, these social relationships and constructions should be seen as important in the learning of the student.

Bronfenbrenner's theory has been a benchmark to help explaining the variables of this study and has helped in getting ideas to research on the subject under each objective. It can be concluded that all the three objectives got responses in thanks to the theory.

It was recommended that teachers pay attention on the kind of relationships among students because they may have both positive and negative outcomes, design guidance and counselling systems to guide students' social interactions; Schools should establish a mutual relationship between the school members and family

members for the sake of understanding and follow ups of students both academic and behavioural progresses. The school curricula should reflect components that touch students' interactions. Parents and guardians should help their children develop and grow into positive social relationships, provide positive parenting, have positive relationships other social relationships in which the students interact.

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