

**SELF-CONCEPT, EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE: A
CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRLS FROM MURANG'A AND
NAIROBI DISTRICTS, KENYA.**

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DECLARATION

This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

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This Research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

To dad, mum, the twins, Rosa and my aunt Beth, for all being my closest friends and fans. To all women on the road to happiness and independence, may we all reach our destination.

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I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Lucy Kibera for her guidance, correction and support in the compiling of this project to completion.

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ABSTRACT

Self-concept affects an individual's outlook to life. Different school factors such as the school environment, teachers, peers and the hidden curriculum affect the development of self-concept in secondary school girls. It was important to find out how these school factors shaped the rural and urban girls' self-concept as how they felt about themselves would determine their educational and occupational aspirations.

The study had three objectives. First, it sought to investigate how the rural and urban school environment impinged on the self-concept of secondary school girls. Second, the study determined how self-concept affected the educational aspirations of secondary school girls. Finally, it established how self-concept affected the occupational choice of secondary school girls.

To satisfy these objectives, the study used the survey research design. Using a partially structured and open-ended questionnaire, data was gathered on school factors and also on the respondents' perceptions about their self-concept, educational and occupational aspirations.

The results showed that different school factors like the natural environment, teachers, peers and the hidden curriculum among others do have an impact on a girls' self-concept. The rural girl came out as appreciating the school more than the urban girl. Also, the majority of the girls wanted to get university education and aspired to enter professional careers on completion of their education. In addition, they seemed to have a high self-concept though the rural girl came out as having a higher self-concept than her urban counterpart.

Consequently, recommendations were made as to how the school would effectively guide a girl to have a positive self-concept. Apart from the principal and teachers steering the girls into ways of achieving positive self-concept, the Ministry of Education should also ensure that schools are being run and managed in a way that will improve a students' self-concept.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

How individuals feel about themselves is central to their being. It will affect every sphere of their lives and everything that we do. Human beings tend to want to fit in among others. Every person wants to be loved and accepted. It is in this search for acceptance that majority of the people act not necessarily on what they believe in but on what others believe. This has been primary in shaping the characters of individuals worldwide. In most cases, individuals tend to become what others want them to be (Cooley, 1902; Matenjiwa, 1985; and Nyangweso, 1985).

Mead (1934) defined the self as the sum total of a persons beliefs and feelings about oneself. Thus self-concept encompasses the evaluation an individual makes of himself or herself in regards to attitudes, feelings and perceptions resulting from the interactions with others in various social environments. Self-concept does not develop in a vacuum (Muasya, 1989). Some of these social environments that are agents in shaping the self include the family, peers, media, religious organizations and the school among others. It is the interaction of these agents with the individual that constitute the socialization process. Through this process, selfhood is acquired.

Although all agents of socialization are important and impact differently in the formation of selfhood, this study will concentrate on the schools' role in self-concept formation. A school going child spends most of his or her time in school and on school related activities. Everything from waking up early to prepare for school to doing homework in the evening takes up most of the day. The child having entered primary school at six years will spend a minimum of eight years here, and a further four years in secondary school. This individual finishes the primary and secondary cycle of education as a young adult of eighteen years. A lot of experiences from their schools will have impacted on these adults' selfhood. Following this argument, it is possible to examine the influence of school factors, such as teachers, peers, formal and hidden curriculum and school

environment with regard to their influence on individuals' self-concept as well as their educational and occupational choices.

A number of studies have indicated that females have lower educational and occupational aspirations when compared to their male counterparts (Matenjiwa, 1985; Nyangweso, 1985; Kibera, 1997; Gaskell 1994; Gelles and Lavine, 1995; Bullock, 1994; and Bossfield, 1984). This could be termed as an implication of the girls having a low self-concept. Females normally chose or prefer to join occupations "*traditionally preserved*" for women such as those of teachers, nurses, secretaries, businesswomen, airhostesses, farmers, house related chores and service oriented jobs (Kibera, 2002; Gaskell, 1994; and Bullock, 1994). Males too, desire these occupations for their female counterparts. In contrast, females manifest high occupational aspirations for their male counterparts than for themselves. Thus females expect their male colleagues to become doctors, engineers, lawyers, pilots and managers (Kibera, 2002). This seems to suggest that girls feel that these high status jobs are not meant for them. This study hopes to find out how the self-concept of secondary school girls influences their occupational and educational ambitions. The researcher also intends to investigate whether girls attending a secondary school in the rural areas have different self-concept, educational and occupational preferences from those in urban schools.

Girls in secondary school were targeted because they are in a crucial stage in intellectual and personal development. The cycle of education in which they are also forms an important turning point for the educational and occupational options. It constitutes a consolidation of the elementary and higher education as well as the world of work or employment.

Statement of the problem

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that self-concept affects an individuals outlook to life. This study aims at finding out how school factors such as the school environment, teachers, peers and the hidden curriculum affect the development of self-concept in rural and urban secondary school girls as well as their educational and occupational aspirations.

The purpose of the study

Everybody is a unique creation and has a specific self-concept. This study aims at examining how school factors such as the school environment, teachers, peers and the hidden curriculum affect self-concept, educational and occupational choices of girls receiving education from rural and urban secondary schools. To achieve this, three main objectives were identified.

The objectives of the study

The objectives that guided this study sought to: -

- investigate how rural and urban school environment impinges on the self-concept of secondary school girls.
- determine how self-concept affects educational aspirations of secondary school girls.
- establish how self-concept affects occupational choice of secondary school girls.

Research questions

On the basis of the study objectives outlined here above, three research questions were formulated. These were: -

- How do rural and urban school environments impinge on the self-concept of secondary schoolgirls?
- How does self-concept affect educational aspiration in secondary schoolgirls?
- How does self-concept affect occupational choice in secondary schoolgirls?

The scope of the study

The study used two provincial secondary schools for girls; one in the urban setting and the other in the rural area. The urban school was selected from Nairobi District; Nairobi Province while the rural school was from Murang'a District in Central Province. Nairobi District was selected as it represented a cosmopolitan urban lifestyle while as Muranga district fully represented a rural countryside way of life. Measures were taken to select matching schools. For example, they were both provincial schools and therefore were expected to have students of comparable academic potential. This is because students selected to provincial schools from primary schools have more or less similar grades at

the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination (K.C.P.E.) done at the end of the primary cycle of education.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study are expected to be useful in a number of ways. First, it is hoped that the results will assist school authorities to identify factors that impinge on the self-concept of girls.

Second, the adults in charge of guiding and preparing girls for future occupational roles like schools administrators, teachers, parents and guardians will appreciate the importance of cultivating and nurturing a positive self concept among the girls.

Third, non-governmental organizations that fund education, growth and development of the girl child will get to know the causes of deficiency in success of the school girls. The use of these results is likely to help them identify strategies that can enhance the development of positive self-concept among girls.

Finally, the findings are also likely to be used by the Ministry of Education in developing policies and curriculum that will encourage positive development of self-concept among secondary school girls.

Definition of significant terms

The definitions of the major words as used in this study have been given hereunder : -

- **Educational aspirations-** level of education preferred.
- **Face to face associations-** of people one speaks to relates to in person.
- **Generalized other-** expectations of conduct general in a social group... "What is expected of someone"
- **Me-** this is the fully social self (corresponding to Cooley's looking self-glass), which responds to and reflects the expectations of others.

- **I-** the free, creative, autonomous aspect of the self that continually modifies the expectations of others to its own ends and is ultimately responsible for social change.
- **Negative self-concept-** feeling bad about yourself, not being proud of whom you are, disliking yourself.
- **Occupational aspirations-** career desired by an individual.
- **Positive self-concept-** feeling good about yourself, being proud of yourself, appreciating and loving yourself.
- **Provincial school-** a school that enrolls students from a particular province.
- **Rural Secondary School-** a secondary school located up-country or in the rural non-cosmopolitan area
- **School factors-** variables associated with the school such as peers, rules and regulations, teachers, formal and hidden curriculum.
- **Secondary school-** a school that offers a formal four-year post-primary education. In Kenya a student is prepared to sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E)
- **Self-concept-** how a person feels about his or herself in relation to the surrounding environment.
- **Self esteem-** how one values oneself
- **Urban Secondary school-** a secondary school in a cosmopolitan town.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter has reviewed literature on various aspects of self-concept and the school factors such as, teachers, peers, hidden curriculum and their consequent impact on the development of the self-concept. Literature on the occupational and educational choices of girls has also been examined.

Definition of self-concept and related terms.

Self-concept is not easy to define because of its obscure and abstract nature. There are a variety of ways to think about the self. Two of the most widely used terms are self-concept and self-esteem (Huitt, 1998). In this study, self-concept and self-esteem are used interchangeably. According to Purkey (1988), self-concept generally refers to “the totality of a complex, organised and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence.” It refers to the general idea we have of ourselves. Self-esteem generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves. It also refers to particular measures about components of self-concept (Huitt, 1998). Self-concept is related to self-esteem in that people who have good self-esteem have a clearly differentiated self-concept; when people know themselves they can maximize their outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do. There is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept is perhaps the basis for all motivated behaviour and the seed of all kinds of behaviour (Franken, 1994: 443).

William James (1893) states that a man’s self includes the sum total of all that he can call his own, including his physical, mental and spiritual presence; his material possessions, his wife, children, ancestors and friends; and his reputation. Cooley (1902) in his book, *“Human nature and Social Order”*, views the self as a product of interaction with other people. In his view, the sense of self is formed by ones actual experiences and also by imagining others’ ideas of oneself. The notion of the self provides us with a sense of being a distinct, bound, identifiable unit (Zanden, 1987: 143).

Self is closely linked with identity. Identity is the answer we supply to the question, "Who am I?" Our identity consists of our sense of placement within the world and the meaning we attach to ourselves within the broader context of human life. For example, students will identify themselves through different school and college items; the school name printed on things like jackets, notebooks, t-shirts, caps and the school bus among others. Therefore, while freshmen are still confused because they have not yet acclimatised to the new school environment sophomores will be more relaxed because they already have the school identity (Zanden, 1987).

Sources of self-concept

Parental behaviour has been seen for some time as one of the most important sources of self-concept. Mead, (1934) and Meadow (1986) say that through social interaction, the young child begins to appreciate that other people (notably parents) have a view of him or her as "good," "bad," "clever," "a real boy," "big for her age" and the like. These views are inferred from their talk and are accepted as evaluative and categorical labels much like names. It is from these labels that the child builds up his self-concept or "a looking glass self" (Cooley, 1902). Self as explained by Cooley has three principle elements: -

- We imagine how we appear to other people; we gain a glimpse of ourselves as we would in a mirror. For example, if one is sick he or she may think of himself or herself as sickly looking.
- We imagine how others judge our appearance. For example, others see a sickly looking person as unattractive.
- We experience some sort of feeling, either pride or mortification. For example, thinking of oneself as sickly looking would bring one a feeling of unhappiness and embarrassment.

The looking glass is the means by which one carries on a self-evaluating conversation with the self. For example, when giving a speech, one might ask oneself, "Do I appear smart or stupid?" or "Am I coming across clearly?" Therefore, a persons' self-concept is more likely to be influenced by what others say or think about him or her. We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and then reflecting on

what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations and the expectation of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others (Brigham, 1986; Mead, 1934 and Cooley, 1902). Thus, an individual may end up behaving in a way that will ensure he or she pleases the others even if this is different from his or her convictions. Our self-appraisal, are reflected appraisals. If we are accepted, approved and liked for what and who we are, we tend to acquire attitudes of self-acceptance and self-respect. If others, be-little, blame and reject us, we are likely to develop unfavourable attitudes towards ourselves (Zanden, 1982: 162). It is possible though, to change the self through self-reflection. Through self-reflection, people view themselves in a new, more powerful way that could lead to possible selves (Franken, 1994).

In our school setting, it is easy for a student to be easily influenced into bad behaviour that he or she knows is wrong, but since everybody else is doing it the student may find himself or herself doing it so as not to be castigated. Eventually, through self-reflection, it will be up to the child to either realize that he or she is on the wrong and change for the better or chose to incorporate this bad activity into him or herself. Whatever path the student will choose adds on to his or her self-concept.

Since it is generally accepted that self-concept is largely a product of social interaction, it is therefore possible to establish the extent to which various people or elements in the school impact on student's self-concept. In this context, the role of teachers, peers and other school variables such as the formal, hidden curriculum and co-curricular activities are studied in an attempt to establish their influence on the self-concept of secondary school girls.

The concept of the school.

Biddle (1979) defines a school as the appearance of organized instructional activity in which the position of the teacher is differentiated from other positions in the system and given the explicit task of socialising the school children. However, for the majority of people, a school is usually a place where the youth acquire knowledge and write examinations, a triumph, which may assure them a good place in society. Sending

children to school and passing examinations is an obsession for the majority of parents (Nyangweso, 1985). Schools in modern societies are major transmitters of culture, thus by the time a student goes through primary and secondary levels of education, he or she will have acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be useful in adult life. The school therefore, has a lot of influence on student's total orientation to life (Kibera, 1993).

The school to a very large extent is an introduction to a large impersonal organisation. Here one learns that he or she is valued on the basis of how well he or she performs academically. Therefore unlike the family, which appreciates one on the basis of love, in school one is rated mainly on his or her academic performance. The relationship between a teacher and students is more instrumental than emotional for each has a job to do; the teacher teaches and the student is expected to learn. Punctuality and other rules of behaviour are taught partly in preparation for the demands of work (Violas, 1978). Participation in the student government, working in the school newspaper and similar activities provide the anticipatory socialisation for a variety of adult occupations. By placing some students in vocational training programs and others in college preparatory classes, schools open or close the doors to many 'occupations (Gelles and Levin, 1995). Conflict sociologists see assigning people different educational and occupational opportunities as making the perpetuation of socioeconomic inequality appear legitimate and fair (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Functionalists see it as a benign, necessary method of fitting individuals into appropriate social niches.

Youngsters spend most of their time in school, approximately 180 days per year. Everything from getting ready for school in the morning to having classes and coming back home takes the better part of the day. Schools are expected to nurture, shape or mould students to ascribed attitudes and skills. Muasya (1989) contends that the school offers new opportunities for self-discovery and for the realization of ones' potential. It offers opportunities for the development of ones self-concept. It is here that a student is constantly reminded by either the teacher or peers of either ones failures or shortcomings

or ones strengths and possibilities. Self-concept influences to a large extent the level of educational performance in students (Muasya, 1989: Nyangweso 1985).

There are various school factors that affect the shaping of the student's self-concept. Factors like the teachers, peers, school environment, school activities especially through clubs and sports among others are examined in this study in an effort to establish how the school environment impinges on the self.

The influence of teachers on self-concept

Teachers in school represent the adult world. Thus, they act as role models to the pupils as children learn by copying their superiors. Teachers can therefore have a big influence on pupils' behaviour and formation of values and attitudes in various aspects of life. The teaching staff of the school representing the community reflects the aspirations shared by parents and the general population (Muasya 1989). Effective teachers have a positive view of others, see themselves as open and friendly, favour democracy in class, see things from other people's point of view and see students as mature individuals who can do things for themselves (Ganfield, 1976).

Teachers should be aware of their student's self-concept so as to act correctly towards it. Unlike the parent, the teacher is a new entity to the pupil's life and can now manipulate children's self-concept and create permanent effect on their psychology; either positive or negative. For example, a teacher with a harsh temper may make a child dislike him or her and eventually dislike the school or subject. Negative remarks like 'stupid', 'foolish', 'lazy' or 'slow' could be taken to heart thus impacting badly on the students' self-concept and academic performance (Muasya 1989). It is not easy to change a negative self-concept built in a child, but a teacher can start by using praise. This should be done wisely so that the child does not think that he or she is being patronized.

A teacher should know that he or she is meeting with individuals whose backgrounds are diverse and complicated. As children meet in school, different relationships develop due to various social backgrounds. Class factors are pronounced as children talk of their "dad's" car or house, "mum's" friends and the like. Interactions can develop into physical aggression if they are guided by whatever students want to do. Teachers must

handle all these situations and build up self-confidence in all the students. A strong relationship between the teacher and pupil would breed acceptability and good performance among the pupils (Nyangweso, 1985). This study would like to find out how the teachers affect self-concept.

The influence of peers on self-concept

In school, a child meets his equals at play and mixes freely, laughs and cries with them in times of hardship among other things. In the process he or she identifies with them and makes friends. Friendship is based on acceptability to the peer group. A child is not expected to obey another child as he or she would obey an adult. Therefore there is a good deal of give and take among peers than among adults (Gelles and Levine, 1995).

A mild remark about their bodies hurts adolescents easily. For example, the shape of body parts like the face, nose, teeth or ears and skin colour. A tall athletic body, which enables the child to do much, would make him or her a hero. Well off and beautiful children may be proud and may even refuse to mingle with 'ugly' or poor children. Children will use these physical attributes to reject or accept members. These 'rejected' children may conceive a negative self-concept.

Adolescents observe their peers and easily see in them what they feel they lack. For example, a child with a friend whose family is more well off than his or hers may feel a negative self concept; if a child also has a friend who can play better in football he may feel bad about himself for not being able to do the same. Parents should thus encourage their children to love themselves as they are. School age children are aware of socio-economic status. For example, they are very alert to who lives where, who is dropped by which make of car, who carries what for lunch, who has rich and sophisticated parents among others. To a rural child, something like a car is a strange object, with mystical powers. Here, the child can get a positive self concept by striving to achieve so as to one day get his or her own car or a negative self concept by feeling less worthy, poor and ashamed of his family's 'failure'. This study would like to find out how a secondary school girls' self-concept is influenced by her peers.

Hidden curriculum and its influence on self-concept

The hidden curriculum can be defined as values, attitudes and ideas that are not made explicit in the content of subjects but constitute hidden messages. They are the unwritten purposes of education. It is the hidden curriculum that molds self-esteem, aids or hinders confident social development, that makes school a time of pleasant memories or turns it into an ordeal.

This curriculum is composed of the implicit messages in the schools social climate, unwritten yet understood by all. It is absorbed into the child's body of knowledge simply by being there day after day. At its best the hidden curriculum fosters intellectual curiosity and emotional growth and helps explore questions on who one is. At its worst it discourages critical thinking, sends negative messages regarding intellectual pursuits and encourages exclusion and the growth of gangs and violence erecting barriers to learning and eats away at adolescent self-esteem. Exciting curiosity can turn into indifference and poor performance in academics and co-curricular activities. For example, a boy who is interested in drama and poetry may be laughed at and a girl interested in physics may be seen as wanting to be a boy.

Simply how a school looks the moment that visitors step inside conveys an explicit message. A quiet, clean, serene school surrounded by beautiful vegetation will give her pupils pride and a sense of serious study unlike a school in the middle of town with bars, noise and air pollution as the immediate environment. Thus the location, layout and architectural design of the school have influence on ones outlook to life and self.

What is honoured and valued at a school also communicates a message to students. A student may refuse to accept an award because other jealous students might treat him or her as an outcast. On the other hand, this could be seen as a morale booster if other students also see a possibility of winning the coveted prize.

In most schools only a few of the students are genuinely interested in sports. For the rest, other channels to follow apart from sport for popularity and status need to be identified.

What is perceived as “cool” in the school really matters. If the ‘cool’ and popular children hate sciences and working hard, it would be important to find out how this would affect the other children and establish if they would stand by their own principles. There are many different aspects of the hidden curriculum that exist in our school system. All schools have various clubs like drama, wildlife, environmental, debate, music and so on. Student would want to be members of the most exciting club where all the popular students are. An acceptance by this clubs will make the student happy and wanted. A rejection can elicit poor self-esteem.

A school’s motto can also consciously or unconsciously affect how a student views him or herself in relation to the school. Examples of mottos are: ‘strive to succeed’, ‘excellence’, ‘to be the best’, ‘truth’, ‘knowledge is power’ among others. These mottos can propel a student to a positive way of thinking and an elevation of self-esteem.

The school uniform is a strong tool of making students have a sense of unity. It cuts across barriers of different socio-economic backgrounds, intelligence quotient, and physical attributes among others. This helps the student to concentrate on educational issues and also brings in a feeling of belonging or identity thus fostering a positive self-concept. On the other hand, if a school has a bad image, wearing its uniform will bring embarrassment and a low self-esteem to the students.

Most schools hold assemblies twice a week where the teaching staff and students meet to pray and discuss on school issues. Here school solidarity may be enhanced or destroyed. For example, the principal may chose to announce the best performing student and also the worst performing. Even best performing students may not be very happy about their performance depending on whether or not the other students will be happy for them or will jeer them. A student who is jeered can chose to perform poorly so as to remain popular with the majority of students. On the other hand, a student who may have performed poorly may be laughed at by the rest and this could produce very low self esteem and this student may even perform worse than before in the next examination.

Textbooks too, may include thinly disguised messages on appropriate male and female behaviour. Matenjiwa (1985) looked at how literature affected the self-perception of schoolgirls. She found out that girls were vulnerable to the stereotyped images in this literature, which on the whole encouraged passivity, traditional role-playing and submission and not their active participation in various activities and aspects of society. This is because most literature propagates that traditional occupations such as teaching, being a housewife or nursing but to name a few are best for women. She stressed that what one read bore a lot of influence on one's character. Negative literature about women made them undermine their self-concept.

Self-concept and educational aspirations.

Gaskell (1994), views education as a collective and individual pathway to prosperity and an important social priority. According to Bullock (1994), education has a potential to challenge stereotypes about male and female roles because it offers alternative ideas and equips young women to pursue a range of possibilities that they can pursue. But because gender impacts on education as on all other social systems, school is more likely to echo and reinforce prevailing attitudes. There is continuing under-representation of women in higher education management. They are far from participating on the same footing as men (UNESCO, 1993). Women deans and professors are a minority group and women vice-chancellors and presidents are still a rarity. Access to education is a telling indicator of women's status in a society. Historically girls have been discriminated when it comes to education and yet illiteracy cannot be abolished without women who are the first teachers of children (UNESCO, 1993; Kibera, 2002; and Gaskell, 1994).

Although girls have benefited from expanded opportunities for education with participation rates rising, the perception of equality is frequently illusory. Girls are still underrepresented even at primary level in many countries and illiteracy figures for females are unacceptably high especially in the rural areas. For example, according to the Republic of Kenya Economic Survey (2001), 47.5% of the primary pupils and 46.1% of the secondary students were girls and only 31.7% of the university students were female. One of the explanations of under representation of girls at all level of education is that

most societies especially the less developed ones undervalue the education of girls. Thus when a family cannot afford to educate all children, it is the girls who miss out. Her education will be interrupted or delayed to help in family work or other economic activities. The role of the woman as the child-bearer is asserted whenever girls are denied education or withdrawn from education for early marriage. Educating girls is seen as a poor investment when it is expected that they will marry and therefore benefit the in-laws more than the biological kin (Kibera, 1993). In most cultures, women are seen as archetypal 'seductress', vulnerable and in need of protection or destined for a nurturing. In Arab states, girls are taught separately from boys by female staff only and restricted to a curriculum that favours home economics over science and mathematics (Rathus, 1994; and UNESCO 1993). Girls are channeled to traditional subject areas and professions and are underrepresented in science and technology and in higher-level research and study. As a result, girls are not prepared for full and equal participation in the workforce and this limits career horizons (Gaskell, 1994; UNECA, 1975; and UNESCO, 1993).

In the 2000/2001 academic year, the total female enrolment in both public and private universities in Kenya was 44%. These females are concentrated in the Art faculties (UNICEF, 1989; Republic of Kenya Economic Survey, 2002). Thus women join fields that are over-subscribed with low status, less challenging and with fewer chances of advancing professionally. This limits their opportunities to influence policies that affect their situation. The under representation of women in the traditional male fields of mathematics, engineering and technology is widely held to be the result of gender stereotyping leading to lack of encouragement of girls wishing to enter these professions. It is important to note that the avoidance of science and technology should be seen as socially driven rather than biological as women adapt to the likely career paths open to them. However, even when girls end up in schools, they manifest lower educational and occupational aspirations (Kibera, 2002).

A bleak picture is thus painted for the girl child when it comes to education. It seems that there are so many deterrents or difficulties that a girl goes through in search of an education. This rough road must have its impact on a girl's self-concept. The consequent

self-concept formed will be a strong determining factor on a girls' educational aspiration. This study therefore, hopes to establish the extent to which self-concept contributes to a girls' educational aspirations and ambition.

Self-concept and occupational choice.

An occupation can be defined as a way of earning a livelihood. This can be in form of salaried employment or self-employment in terms of a business or trade. All the persons who are involved in the human tasks of survival and creation of a better life should be allowed to share the opportunities available to apply scientific knowledge and technological advances, so that development is achieved at a more rapid rate. If some persons are left outside the stream of this knowledge, the pace of development will be slowed down for the whole society. The participation of women is therefore necessary (UNECA, 1975). Sustainable development can only occur when the dynamics of different power and privilege between women and men are addressed (Republic of Kenya Economic Survey, 2002).

Women who have high levels of education (secondary school and above) and preferably also some professional training generally seem to have less difficulty finding employment. There are gender differentials where participation rates for females without university education are slightly lower than those of the male counterpart. However, there is a reverse at the university level, where the majority of females with university education in the surveyed population were reported to be in the labour force. In many countries, there are women magistrates, doctors and professionals but it is the percentage of women teachers, nurses, social workers and secretaries that is significantly increasing (UNECA, 1975; Kibera, 2002; Republic of Kenya Economic Survey, 2002). But the numbers of educated men competing for employment will influence future growth of opportunities in these fields; particularly if national economic growth lags, the men are likely to also seek employment in these areas. On the level of management and administration, these educated women are a minority particularly at decision-making levels.

Kibera (1997) looked at gender and educational prestige in Kenya and found out that girls have lower educational and occupational aspirations when compared to boys. They preferred traditional low paying jobs to professional high status and well paying jobs although they aspired for high ranked jobs for their potential spouses. This can be explained as acceptance by females to the status quo where it is the man who should be or is more successful than the woman in many ways. According to the Republic of Kenya Economic Survey (2002), women only constituted 29.1% of the total of the 1.4 million regularly wage earning employees. The majority of these women were employed as teachers (27.1%) with agriculture and forestry (farming) at 15.5%. Other females were engaged in the community, social and personal services. The industries, which are predominantly dominated by the males such as mining and quarrying, electricity, water, building and construction had very few females. The under representation of women in the labour force is global but it is more pronounced in Africa (Bullock, 1994). This is aggravated by the fact that those women who work earn 60% of what the men earn (Gaskell, 1994 and Rathus et al, 1994). This is in spite of the fact that women perform 67% of the worlds' working hours (Mackenzie, 1993:34).

Having understood the predicament that women go through when it comes to work and careers, it is possible to see how this situation might affect the self-concept of the girl. This study aims to find out whether self-concept influences or directs her occupational choice.

The rural setting vis-à-vis urban school setting and self-concept.

Three quarters of women all over the world live in rural areas, working in agricultural related activities (Bullock, 1994). Most women in most rural areas have a tough time. This is because of early marriages, bearing many children and poor health. In addition, infant and maternal mortality is high. Moreover, school enrolments are low and this translates into high illiteracy levels. Rural women also earn low wages in spite of working for many hours. Furthermore, their pace of progress is slowed down by customary traditional practices and isolation due to poor road network and other forms of communication systems such as telephones. All these factors impact on the quality of their lives and make change more difficult. Boys and girls do not arrive at school on

equal footing; gender affects both their access to schooling and their experience at school. It also shapes girls' expectations of what school can offer them, and of what they can achieve. The process starts long before they get to school; in many societies the birth of a girl is tolerated rather than celebrated. In many countries in Africa a girls' future is more often seen in terms of marriage than a job. Though it is common for girls to think in terms of a career, most of them realize that some form of compromise with marriage is necessary. It is clear that the rural girls' lifestyle is more gruesome compared to that of the urban girls. This study thus wants to compare how these two environments do affect the girls' self-concept and esteem.

In summary, this chapter has reviewed literature on self-concept. It has also looked into various school factors (such as the teachers, peers and hidden curriculum) and their impact on a pupil's self-concept. Relevant literature has been thematically arranged to effectively explain and expound on the three objectives of the study that were earlier provided. Thus, the researcher has found out that the self or self-concept is all that a person feels or believes of him or herself in relation to the social environment. This concept is not static and may change or evolve with time. A school has various factors that help to define and design an individual's self-concept. Ideally, all these factors should work in harmony if a healthy self-concept is to be developed and sustained.

It has been established from the numerous readings that women are largely marginalized in many areas and that society is inclined by norms to treat a woman as the weaker sex (Matenjiwa, 1985; Kibera, 1997; Kibera 2002; Gaskell 1994; Gelles and Lavine, 1995; Bullock, 1994; Rathus 1994; Mackenzie, 1993 and UNESCO, 1993). This has led to poor school performance, high drop out rates from school and to some extent involuntary choosing of traditionally accepted careers. This situation seems to encourage the status quo in which women lag behind in almost all developmental issues. Conditions such as those described hereabove are likely to lead to the development of low self-concept among girls. It is therefore important to find out how these circumstances of inequality impinge on the self-concept of girls and their educational and occupational aspirations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter has dealt with various aspects of the research methodology used in this study. It contains the research design, the sample, sampling procedure, research instruments, data gathering procedure, data processing and data analysis technique. Each of these aspects of the research methodology is briefly discussed here below.

Research Design

This study used the Survey Research Design. This design was ideal because it facilitated collection of data from a large number of respondents through a self-administered questionnaire. It also allowed statistical analysis of large databases.

The sample and sampling procedure.

The sample for this study was selected from a population of two girl provincial secondary schools. One was located in the Nairobi District, an urban area, while the other was in Muranga district in a rural setting. The two schools were identified from other numerous schools in the two districts by a non-probability technique called purposive sampling. The schools have similar characteristics. They are both provincial schools with four streams each. They also admit students who obtained B- and above at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E). The major difference between them is that one is located in the urban area while the other one has a rural setting. These two schools sufficed because a representative sample of approximately a hundred pupils in total participated in the study. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select the respondents to participate in the study.

The class registers acted as the sampling frame. Here, the researcher chose every fourth student from the registers of form four students. The starting point or student was selected randomly. This sampling procedure provided a representative sample of 50

pupils from each school making a total of a maximum of 100 students. Students in Form Four class were targeted by the study because they are mature enough to know the occupational choices open to them and are in a better position to make their future educational plans on completion of the secondary level of education.

Research Instruments

A partially structured and open-ended questionnaire was used to collect data on the variables identified for the study. Since self-concept is abstract, affective questions were used to help bring out an individual's self-concept. These questions aimed at eliciting emotions on how the girl felt about various entities like her school, principal and teachers, fellow students, sports and clubs. The respondents were also guided into expressing the feelings they held about themselves and others. The respondent was also requested to indicate her educational and occupational aspirations. She further indicated the educational level and occupation that she preferred for her future spouse. Depending on the answer given, the researcher was able to analyse and approximate her self-concept. For example, a girl who did not want to go to university was seen as having a low self-concept and the converse was interpreted true for the one who wanted to pursue university education.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher conducted a pilot study by administering the questionnaire to students from similar schools for the purposes of identifying the ambiguous question items. This exercise helped the researcher to identify the vague and irrelevant questionnaire items. While the vague ones were rectified, the irrelevant ones were omitted.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data gathered was quantified for ease of manipulation and analysis. The data was then edited, coded, classified, tabulated and presented in frequencies and percentages..

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter has presented an analysis of data collected from secondary school girls on their socio-economic background, self-concept, educational and occupational choices. Information on the secondary schools attended by girls has also been analysed.

The socio-economic background of the students' parents was based on the parents' level of education and occupation. This information is presented in tables 4.1 and 4.2

Table 4.1 – The parents' level of education

Parents level of education	Urban		Rural	
	f	%	f	%
Tertiary education	42	84	26	52
Primary and Secondary education	8	16	24	48
Total	50	100	50	100

The parents with post secondary training and above (tertiary) were seen as highly educated while parents with secondary school education and below were seen as lowly educated. From the results in table 4.1 it is clear that the parents of the urban girls are more educated than the parents of the rural girl.

Table 4.2 – The parents' type of occupation

Type of occupation for parents	Urban		Rural	
	f	%	f	%
High prestige occupation	37	74	21	42
Moderate prestige occupation	12	24	20	40
Low prestige occupation	1	2	9	18
Total	50	100	50	100

The occupations accorded as highly prestigious were those of doctors, managers, engineers, bankers, senior civil servants, directors, IT consultants, accountants, local and international business people, lecturers, pilots, architects, lawyers and politicians. The moderately prestigious occupations were categorized as those of clerks, corporals, tour guides, teachers (especially in primary schools in the rural areas), technicians,

electricians, cashiers and single parent who were either secretaries or business people. The low prestige occupations included those held by small-scale farmers, guards, drivers, tailors and cooks. From the results in Tables 4.2 it is evident that the parents in the urban areas held more prestigious jobs with 74% compared to 42% of parents in the rural area; urban parents occupied fewer jobs that were accorded moderate prestige at 24% compared to 40 % of parents in the rural area and 2% of the urban parents had low status jobs compared to 8% of the rural parents with similar occupations.

Apart from the girls' background it was important to find out who they (the girls) thought had positively influenced their self-concept. This analysis is presented in table 4.3

Table 4.3 – Sources of positive influence for the girl

Sources of positive influence	Greatest influence				Moderate influence				Least influence				Totals			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Parents	38	78	40	87	6	12	4	9	5	10	2	4	49	100	46	100
Siblings	1	4	3	9	12	55	22	69	9	41	7	22	22	100	32	100
Church Leader	2	13	1	10	6	40	2	20	7	47	7	70	15	100	10	100
Politician	3	38	-	-	3	38	2	100	2	24	-	-	8	100	2	100
Music idol	-	-	-	-	1	100	1	33	-	-	2	67	1	100	3	100
Movie Star	-	-	-	-	3	75	1	33	1	25	2	67	4	100	3	100
Best friend	1	10	1	6	1	10	6	35	8	80	10	59	10	100	17	100
Television	2	50	-	-	-	-	2	29	2	50	5	71	4	100	7	100
Teacher	3	9	2	10	17	52	7	33	13	39	12	57	33	100	21	100

The analysis in Table 4.3 clearly shows that the greatest source of positive influence on the self-concept of both rural and urban secondary school girls are the parents. The second greatest influence is the teachers for the rural girls and the siblings for the urban girls. The urban girls choose the teachers as the third greatest influence while the rural girls chose their siblings. The results seem to suggest that the three common entities to

have influenced the girls' self-concept were parents, teachers and siblings. It is important to note that the best friend is not among the top personalities influencing the self-concept of the girls. Parents being the greatest positive influence among urban girl may be attributed to the fact that they are well educated with prestigious jobs and therefore their daughters may be trying to follow suit. For the rural girls on the other hand, parents may be seen as the greatest positive influence because they propel or encourage their daughters to study and work hard so as to build a better life for themselves and climb the social ladder.

Having had an insight into the girls' background it was also important to understand how the girl viewed herself. It is in this section that the level of a respondents' self-concept could be measured. The girls were requested to choose statements that were associated with notions of either high or low self-concept. From the answers given, the researcher was able to categorize or rate the girls' self-concept or self-esteem as either high or low. The results of their responses are contained in table 4.4 and 4.5

Table 4.4 - Statements that best describe the rural girl.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I like myself more now than I did in the past	35	73	6	13	5	10	2	4	-	-	48	100
I lean on others for self-esteem	3	6	4	8	4	8	15	32	22	46	48	100
I would like to run an organization or be a leader	29	59	15	31	3	6	2	4	-	-	49	100
I consider myself a failure when I do not perform well in school	4	8	5	10	1	2	9	18	31	62	50	100
I am proud of myself	37	76	6	12	1	2	-	-	5	10	49	100
I am ambitious	37	77	4	8	5	11	2	4	-	-	48	100
I give up easily when frustrated	2	4	7	15	1	2	15	32	22	47	47	100
I am social	21	43	19	39	7	14	1	2	1	2	49	100
I strive to be better than others	40	82	7	14	-	-	-	-	2	4	49	100

Table 4.5 - Statements that best describe the urban girl.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I like myself more now than I did in the past	18	40	13	29	6	13	7	16	1	2	45	100
I lean on others for self-esteem	3	6	4	9	7	15	18	38	15	32	47	100
I would like to run an organization or be a leader	29	62	9	19	4	9	3	6	2	4	47	100
I consider myself a failure when I do not perform well in school	11	23	6	13	6	13	9	19	15	32	47	100
I am proud of myself	21	46	15	33	6	13	2	4	2	4	46	100
I am ambitious	28	61	14	31	1	2	3	6	-	-	46	100
I give up easily when frustrated	4	9	6	13	8	18	18	40	9	20	45	100
I am social	18	40	17	38	4	9	5	11	1	2	45	100
I strive to be better than others	15	32	18	38	9	19	5	11	-	-	47	100

The analysis in tables 4.4 and 4.5 show the beliefs that the rural and urban girls have about themselves. From these data, it is possible to conclude that the rural girl has a more positive self-concept and is more focused than the urban girl. For example, 86% of the rural girls strongly agree and agree that they like themselves more now than they did in the past compared to only 69% of the urban girls. In addition, 78% of the rural girls disagree and strongly disagree that they lean on others for self-esteem compared to 70% of the urban girls. Again, 90% of the rural girls strongly agree and agree that they would like to run organisations themselves compared to 81% of the urban girls. Some 80% of the rural girls also disagree and strongly disagree that they feel like failures when they do not perform well in school compared to 51% of the urban girls. It is important to note that 36% of the urban girls strongly agree and agree that they feel like failures should they do poorly in school in comparison to 18% of the rural girls. Furthermore, 88% of the rural girls agree and strongly agree that they are proud of themselves compared to 79% of the urban girls. In addition, 79% of the rural girls disagree and strongly disagree that they give up easily when frustrated compared to 60% of the urban girls. Again, 82% of the rural girls strongly agree and agree that they are social compared to 78% of the urban

girls. Some 96% of the rural girls strongly agree and agree that they strive to be better than others compared to 70% of the urban girls. However, the urban girls appear to be more ambitious with 92% strongly agreeing and agreeing compared to 85% of the rural girls. But on the whole it is evident that the rural girl has a stronger and more positive self-concept in comparison to her urban counterpart.

Further insight about the self-concept of the girls was obtained when they were requested to point out what they thought would be their greatest success in life. The pertinent information on this issue is presented in table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 - The girls' views about success

Statements on success	Great Success				Greater Success				Greatest success				Totals			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To have a good job	3	10	2	9	13	45	15	65	13	45	6	26	29	100	23	100
To have a happy family	14	74	5	25	4	21	7	35	1	5	8	40	19	100	20	100
Marriage	2	100	8	89	-	-	1	11	-	-	-	-	2	100	9	100
Property and wealth	3	50	8	80	3	50	1	10	-	-	1	10	6	100	10	100
To be the most beautiful woman	3	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	100	-	-
To be a good wife	1	25	4	40	3	75	3	30	-	-	3	30	4	100	10	100
To be highly educated	3	13	5	19	6	25	6	22	15	62	16	59	24	100	27	100
Married into a rich family	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The information in table 4.6 show that both the rural and urban girl has more or less similar ambitions in life. The rural girl viewed a good job, a high level of education and a happy family as important in that order. The urban girl on the other hand, preferred a high level of education, a good job and then a happy family. This shows a high level of focus in life and self-concept in both urban and rural girls. Additional information on self-concept was obtained when the girls were asked to identify characteristics of individuals

who feel good about themselves and also characteristics of those who do not feel good about themselves. The findings are summarized in tables 4.7 and 4.8.

Table 4.7 - Characteristics of people who feel good about themselves.

Traits of one who feels good about oneself	Rural		Urban		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
They are comfortable with themselves, accept themselves as they are and are proud of what they do.	21	36	38	64	59	100
They are respectful of others, show concern towards others and are ready to share.	19	51	18	49	37	100
They are active and work towards achieving their goals by giving their best potential.	23	64	13	36	36	100
They are social and confident.	31	46	37	54	68	100
They are principled and are not easily influenced by peer pressure.	17	53	15	47	32	100
They are ambitious and hardworking.	20	57	15	43	35	100
They are cheerful and enjoy or love what they do.	12	39	19	61	31	100
They practice cleanliness and neatness.	2	33	4	67	6	100
They are resilient and do not lose hope or give up easily.	19	59	13	41	32	100
They are willing to be corrected.	6	40	9	60	15	100
They are disciplined and will perform well in academics.	18	69	8	31	26	100

Table 4.8 - Characteristics of people who do not feel good about themselves

Traits of one who does not feel good about oneself	Rural		Urban		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
They are very self-conscious, timid and shy.	20	34	39	66	59	100
They do not speak much, are withdrawn and do not know how to express themselves fully. They do not cultivate the element of being unique or standing out from the crowd.	21	44	27	56	48	100
They do not perform well in academics.	7	70	3	30	10	100
They are unable to make decisions on their own and can rely on what others want or say and are thus easily influenced into wrongdoing.	13	43	17	57	30	100
They will please others in order to be accepted or to gain friendship and will depend on these people for motivation.	14	39	22	61	36	100
They are never satisfied, are gloomy and like complaining instead of trying to solve the problem themselves.	27	49	28	51	55	100
They have no dreams and ambitions and thus do not work towards a specific goal. This leads to a lot of time wastage.	22	58	16	42	38	100
They take correction negatively and see the person advising or correcting them as not liking them.	11	38	18	62	29	100
They are lazy and give up easily when frustrated or when the results they want do not come in quickly.	18	67	9	33	27	100
Untidy	-	-	3	100	3	100

The results in tables 4.7 and 4.8 clearly indicate that an individual who is social and confident and also comfortable with oneself is perceived as having a positive self-concept while one who is timid and shy and is never satisfied or always complaining has a negative self-concept.

After dealing with matters pertaining to the girls' background and her beliefs on self-concept, attention shifted to analysis of data related to the first objective of this study. The objective sought to investigate how rural and urban school environment impinges on the girls' self-concept. The results on school environment are contained in tables 4.9 and 4.10

Table 4.9 - Influences of school factors/phenomena on a rural girl

Influential School phenomena	Very great		Moderate		Not sure		A little		Not at all		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Principal	34	69	10	20	-	-	4	9	1	2	49	100
Class teacher	18	36	14	28	5	10	6	12	7	14	50	100
Peer group	10	20	13	27	3	6	14	29	9	18	49	100
Guidance and Counseling sessions	20	40	11	22	2	4	10	20	7	14	50	100
Co-curricular activities like sports and clubs	12	25	17	35	4	8	6	13	9	19	48	100
Class prefect	4	8	10	21	5	11	13	27	16	33	48	100
School motto	17	34	15	30	5	10	8	16	5	10	50	100
School rules	13	27	23	49	4	8	4	8	4	8	48	100

Table 4.10 - Influences of school factors/phenomena on an urban girl

Influential School phenomena	Very great		Moderate		Not sure		A little		Not at all		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Principal	2	4	12	24	7	14	11	23	17	35	49	100
Class teacher	7	15	17	35	6	13	14	29	4	8	48	100
Peer group	15	31	20	41	3	6	8	16	3	6	49	100
Guidance and Counseling sessions	16	34	16	34	3	6	8	17	4	9	47	100
Co-curricular activities like sports and clubs	25	50	17	34	1	2	5	10	2	4	50	100
Class prefect	7	14	10	20	3	6	18	37	11	23	49	100
School motto	15	32	11	23	4	9	9	19	8	17	47	100
School rules	9	19	25	51	3	6	8	16	4	8	49	100

From the results in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 it is evident that rural and urban secondary school girls are affected quite differently by various school phenomena. For example, majority of the rural girls chose the principal as the one who had the greatest influence on them (69%) compared to (4%) the urban girls. There seems to be a problem in the urban school as the principal is seen as very unpopular. This could bring negativity in the girls' school life. The peer group had a greater effect on the urban girls (31%) compared to the rural girls (20%). The rural girls also appreciate their teachers more with 36% compared to the urban girls at 15%. It is important to note that co-curricular activities influence the urban girl more at 50% compared to 25% for the rural girl. The above information can be interpreted to mean that the rural girl has a higher self-concept than the urban girl since she relates herself to the principal who is a symbol of authority and success. The rural girl also emerges as disciplined and principled as she is not easily influenced by peer pressure. The influence of the school was further gauged when girls were requested to give a description of their schools. The results are summarized in Tables 4.11 and 4.12

Table 4.11 – The rural girls' description of her school

Description of your school	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
A provider of a wealth of knowledge	40	83	7	16	1	1	-	-	-	-	48	100
A boring place	5	10	6	12	1	2	15	31	22	45	49	100
A punishment	5	10	8	16	1	2	12	25	23	47	49	100
A bridge to success	43	88	4	8	1	2	-	-	1	2	49	100
Not necessary nor important	3	6	-	-	2	4	2	4	42	86	49	100
A preparation for teamwork, discipline and the adult world	38	78	9	18	1	2	-	-	1	2	49	100

Table 4.12 – The urban girls’ description of her school

Description of your school	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
A provider of a wealth of knowledge	28	58	16	34	3	6	1	2	-	-	48	100
A boring place	1	2	8	16	9	18	20	41	11	23	49	100
A punishment	2	4	5	11	8	17	22	47	10	21	47	100
A bridge to success	32	67	14	29	-	-	1	2	1	2	48	100
Not necessary nor important	1	2	-	-	1	2	9	19	37	77	48	100
A preparation for teamwork, discipline and the adult world	32	67	13	27	2	4	1	2	-	-	48	100

The analysis in tables 4.11 and 4.12 show that both the rural and urban secondary school girls regard school highly. For example, 83% of the rural girls strongly agree and 16% agree that the school is a provider of knowledge compared to 58% of the urban girls who strongly agree and 34% agree. Some 45% of the rural girls strongly disagree and 31% disagree that the school is a boring place compared to 23% strongly disagree and 41% disagree from the urban girls. In addition, 47% of the rural girls strongly disagree and 25% disagree that the school is a punishment compared to 21% of the urban girls who strongly disagree and 47% who disagree. Both the rural and the urban girls strongly agree and agree with 96% that the school is a bridge to success. However, 90% of the rural girls strongly disagree and disagree that the school is not necessary nor important compared to 96% of the urban girls. Some 96% of the rural girls strongly agree and agree that the school is a preparation for teamwork, discipline and the adult world compared to 94% of the urban girls. Though the rural girl has higher percentages in most areas showing that she loves the school a bit more than the urban girl; it is possible to also see that the urban girl also appreciates the school institution. This shows focus in life and positive self-esteem between both groups of girls. The study also revealed that more rural girls are proud of their school with 96% against the urban girls’ 76% as shown in table 4.13.

Table 4.13 – Students who take pride of their school

I am proud to tell others of my school	Rural School		Urban School	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	48	96	38	76
No	-	-	3	6
Not sure	2	4	9	18
Total	50	100	50	100

In most schools the responsibility of the development and sustenance of a good self-concept generally falls under the guidance and counseling department. Both the rural and urban school girls who participated in the study said that their schools had clubs and active guidance and counseling. The guidance and counseling office was located in the administration block near the staff-room and principal's office in both schools. This study was interested in finding out how many girls knew about the career clubs and guidance and counseling department in their school and also how many of them belonged to these clubs. This helped the researcher to examine the extent to which school clubs, guidance and counseling influenced the development of a student's self-concept. Table 4.14 shows the students awareness of the existence of the guidance and counseling department in their school.

Table 4.14 - Students who know about the guidance and counseling programme

Type of school	Know of guidance and counseling		Do not know of guidance and counseling		Totals	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Rural	42	84	8	16	50	100
Urban	47	94	3	6	50	100

The results in Table 4.14 show that majority of the students are aware of the guidance and counseling department in their school. It is evident that the urban secondary school girls are more aware and active in guidance and counseling. One is left to wonder about the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling sessions given that urban girls who overwhelmingly acknowledged its existence manifested a lower self-concept in

comparison to the rural girls who appeared to know little of its existence. The role of school clubs in the development of self-concept is captured in tables 4.15 and 4.16.

Table 4.15 -Students who know of school clubs

Type of school	Know of clubs		Do not know of clubs		Totals	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Rural	35	70	15	30	50	100
Urban	44	88	6	12	50	100

Table 4.16 -Students who are members of the school clubs

Type of school	Members of clubs		Non-members of clubs		Totals	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Rural	31	62	19	38	50	100
Urban	41	82	9	18	50	100

The analysis in tables' 4.15 and 4.16 show that majority of the students are aware and are members of career clubs in the school. It is evident that the urban secondary school girls are more aware and active in these career clubs with 82%. It was noted however that both schools have similar clubs. Some examples of the clubs in which the respondents were members are: debate, law, geography, history, kiswahili, science, first-aid, mathematics, red-cross, wildlife, young farmers, journalism, ranger, youth manifesto for the twentieth century, interact, junior achievement, guidance and counseling, presidential award scheme, good- neighbours club, Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), home-science and art clubs. There are also various sports clubs like lawn tennis, table tennis, badminton, chess, basketball, scrabble and hockey.

Next is information on the aspects/things liked or not liked by rural and urban secondary school girls in their specific schools presented in Tables' 4.17 and 4.18.

Table 4.17 – The things the girls like in school

Things liked in the school	Rural		Urban		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
The natural and beautiful environment.	27	64	15	36	42	100
The facilities offered.	38	53	34	47	72	100
The competent teachers.	36	57	27	43	63	100
Freedom to carry as much food shopping thus supplementing the school diet.	3	75	1	25	4	100
Good and co-operative non-teaching staff.	7	70	3	30	10	100
The co-curricular activities like games, career clubs, entertainment, field trips and symposiums.	20	43	27	57	47	100
The school uniform.	2	29	5	71	7	100
The spirit of hard work and competitiveness among the students.	18	37	30	63	48	100
The guidance and counseling session .	6	67	3	33	9	100
The freedom of religion.	4	44	5	56	9	100
The school being famous and recognized as a good learning institutions.	16	84	3	16	19	100
Conveniently located near the town offering easy access.	1	33	2	67	3	100
The school roads and paths are tarmac ked or have stone slab.	1	100	-	-	1	100
The principal.	12	100	-	-	12	100
The provision of half term and open days where a student can relax at home or receive visitors.	2	29	5	71	7	100
Provision on a wealth of knowledge and information, thus learning new things everyday.	4	44	5	56	9	100
Food.	4	22	14	78	18	100
Discipline	11	85	2	15	13	100
Being treated equally	5	100	-	-	5	100
Provision of bursary	3	100	-	-	3	100

The results from Table 4.17 show that majority of the points were similar in both schools with the exception of a few differences. Some of the popular suggestions were the school environment (both schools are set up in very beautiful environments and are full of big trees that provide shade and a cool atmosphere and flowers which have blossomed in different colours), school facilities (both schools are well equipped with adequate and useful educational material and resources. The girls seemed to appreciate the books in the library, laboratory equipments, electricity and water, dormitories, computer labs and sport equipment. The urban school even has a swimming pool, which the girls love), sports and clubs, competent teachers and the competitiveness between students. The urban girls seem to have a better diet than the rural girls. There also different elements that the rural

girls seem to appreciate more than the urban girls like being in a prestigious school, having tarmacked roads, the principal, discipline, equal treatment and bursaries. This reveals that the rural school girl views the school as a reward for good educational performance as it offers her a more luxurious environment than her home. It is possible therefore for the rural girl to work hard in school so as to receive more *rewards* and succeed in life . The aspects that the school girls did not like are contained in table 4.18

Table 4.18 – The things the girls dislike in school

Things disliked in the school	Rural		Urban		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
The lack of democracy where they are totally under authority and can rarely voice their sentiments.	5	16	26	84	31	100
Expensive school fees	1	25	3	75	4	100
The principal and her deputy.	3	14	23	88	26	100
The food. It is described as tasteless and boring.	24	67	12	33	36	100
Waking up early for morning prep. The girls are usually up by 5.30am.	4	80	1	20	5	100
The phone booth, which is regularly out of service..	2	67	1	33	3	100
Congestion in the classes and in the dormitories.	10	53	9	47	19	100
Noise pollution because of the traffic outside the school.	1	50	1	50	2	100
Favouritism because of different socio-economic backgrounds where the girls from richer families are treated better.	6	25	18	75	24	100
Time wastage. Where meetings or assemblies that take too long take up class time.	6	26	17	74	23	100
Indiscipline	4	31	9	69	13	100
Prefects	3	33	6	67	9	100
Rules	15	44	19	56	34	100
Matron	1	17	5	83	6	100
Teachers	17	59	12	41	29	100
Punishment	28	100	-	-	28	100
Duties	6	100	-	-	6	100

Again, the results from table 4.18 show that majority of the points were similar in both schools with the exception of a few differences. The rural girls seem to detest their diet very much. It also looks like their punishments are very tough and they are given heavy chores or duties to perform in the schools. Some examples of punishment in the rural school was slashing grass and bushes or digging pits. The rural girls also complained vehemently on signing punishment slips which are kept as record for ones conduct. This strict line of punishment could attribute to the high discipline in the rural school. Both

schools complained of lack of democracy where they felt that they could not voice their suggestions without victimization or intimidation. Therefore even the school rules are seen as unpopular. The element of indiscipline and favouritism was more prominent in the urban school where the girls from rich family seem to be more popular among the teachers and staff. This was not a problem in the rural school where majority of the girls come from humble families. The indiscipline mentioned was mainly stealing and noisemaking in class and was more prominent in the urban school.

Finally, the students were requested to give suggestions on what the schools could do to help them develop a positive self-concept. The results of this matter is contained in table 4.19

Table 4.19 - How the school can help students to feel good about themselves

What the school can do to help students feel good about themselves	Rural		Urban		Totals	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Encourage the student in believing in herself through confidence boosting.	26	57	20	43	46	100
Recognize academic improvement and even award prizes.	4	33	8	67	12	100
Advise the students with educational or personal problems.	13	50	13	50	26	100
Cultivate democracy for students to voice their views.	4	50	4	50	8	100
Offer more bursaries for needy students. This was a problem in the rural school.	1	100	-	-	1	100
Eradicate the rift between students because of different social and economic class. This was a problem in the urban school.	-	-	3	100	3	100
Invite successful people who have made it in their fields to come as mentors to give career and guidance talks to the students.	-	-	1	100	1	100
Work on exploiting talents of the students through active monitoring of participation in co-curricular activities. When a talented student excels in her field, her self-esteem will be boosted.	8	44	10	56	18	100

The results from table 4.19 show that the most popular suggestion among the girls was that of being guided into believing in themselves through confidence building. Students in both schools also suggested an increase of prize giving days in recognition of good performance and commendable improvement.

After reporting data on the first objective, attention focused on the analysis of information on objective two which sought to determine how self-concept affects educational aspirations of rural and urban secondary school girls. The girls' academic goals were compared to the level of education she wished for herself and her future husband. The results are summarized in table 4.20 and 4.21

Table 4.20 – The girls' educational aspiration for her and her future husband

Quality or level of aspiration	Educational aspirations for the girls	Rural		Urban		Choice educational aspirations for their husbands future	Rural		Urban	
		f	%	f	%		f	%	f	%
Low aspiration	Form four is enough	-	-	-	-	Form four is enough	-	-	-	-
	Diploma	1	2	-	-	Diploma	-	-	-	-
High aspiration	Undergraduate	2	4	1	2	Undergraduate	1	2	1	2
Very high aspiration	Masters	27	54	28	56	Masters	12	26	16	33
	Doctorate	20	40	21	42	Doctorate	33	72	31	65
Total		50	100	50	100		46	100	48	100

Table 4.21 - Comparison between girls' educational choice and that that she opts for her future husband

Level of education	Choose same level of education %	Choose to be more highly spouse educated than %	Choose spouse to be more highly educated %	Total %
Rural girl	59	2	39	100
Urban girl	76	2	22	100

The results shown in tables' 4.20 and 4.21 show an impressive high ambition in education. Majority of the girls in both rural and urban schools have educational ambitions for university education. A few (12%) of the girls who did not indicate the educational aspirations for their future partners did not have interest in getting married. The analysis in table 4.21 shows that the majority of the girls hoped that their future husbands would possess similar academic qualifications as them. However, a good number expected their future spouses to be more educated than them. It is only 4% of the girls aspired to be more educated than their future spouses. This is partly in contrast to Kibera (1997) and Bullock (1994) who found out that women have low educational

aspiration but also in agreement with their other finding that women wished their future spouses to be more educated than them. The findings seem to suggest that girls have a lower self-concept compared to their male counterparts. This may be because girls are socialized to believe that men should always be more educated and successful. When students were further asked to indicate their preferred time for marriage they provided information summarized in table 4.22.

Table 4.22 - Choice for preferred time for marriage

Preferred time for marriage	Rural School		Urban School	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
After college Diploma	-	-	1	2
After Undergraduate studies	7	14	9	18
After Masters	31	62	32	64
After Doctorate	8	16	6	12
Do not want marriage	4	8	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100

The analysis in table 4.22 shows that majority of the girls wished to get married after university education especially after the Masters level of education. It seems that girls have realized the importance of high educational qualifications and their profound relationship to the current job market. Invariably, high educational qualifications are likely to keep a girl economically independent even in marriage.

Finally, attention is now turned to the analysis of data based on the third objective, which investigated the occupational choices of girls from the rural and urban secondary schools. Table 4.23 has presented the occupational choices of girls and those of their future husbands.

Table 4.23- Occupational choices of the girls and their future husbands

Careers	Rural girls choice		Rural girls' choice for husband		Urban girls choice		Urban girls' choice for husbands	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Doctor	15	31	13	28	8	18	15	31
Environmentalist	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Manager	2	4	1	2	2	4	6	13
Engineer	7	14	18	38	4	9	5	10
Lawyer	12	25	6	14	5	11	4	8
Graphic Designer	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	2
Accountant	1	2	3	6	4	9	1	2
Business Management	5	10	1	2	3	6	-	-
Film production	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Journalist	1	2	-	-	5	11	-	-
Aviation	-	-	1	2	3	6	4	8
Architect	1	2	-	-	1	2	4	8
Geologist	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Insurance	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Information technology	2	4	-	-	3	6	-	-
Judge	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	-
Nurse	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stockbroker	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Diplomat	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Counselor	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Pastor	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Banker	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	4
Politician	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Any job that he likes that deals with people	-	-	1	2	-	-	4	8
Beautician	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professor	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Actor	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Totals	49	100	47	100	47	100	49	100

The data in table 4.23 show that 31% of the girls schooling in the rural area would like to be doctors while 28% of these girls chose the same occupation for their spouses. Only 14% of the rural girls wished to be engineers while 38% of them chose it for their future spouses. For the urban girls, 18% want to be doctors but 31% of these girls want their spouses to be doctors. These results suggest that girls have high occupational aspirations, however, the majority of the girls chose more prestigious jobs for their future husbands than they chose for themselves. In the rural school, 4% of the girls wished to be nurses, a traditional accepted job for women while one hoped to be a beautician. She expected her

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study meant to find out how various school factors like the school environment, peers, teachers and hidden curriculum affected or influenced the rural or urban secondary school girls' self-concept, educational and occupational choices. It showed a comparison of the two girls and the rural girl seemed to have a higher self-concept than the urban girl. The study also revealed that the school is a strong contributor in the formation of self-concept.

Conclusion

From the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn in relation to the set objectives:

- The school environment is crucial in shaping a secondary school girls' life. The rural girl seems to have adjusted particularly well to school life. This could be because the life and environment in school is more comfortable than that at home. She also comes from a largely traditional setting which still upholds strict discipline and morals among the youth especially on obeying authority, rules and respecting elders. This works to her advantage since she gets to perform very well academically and her self-concept is high.
- The urban secondary school girl battles with issues of peer pressure. Here, she may want to act like the rest so as to be accepted. This may have been heightened by the explosion of media especially television and video which influence the youth to enact what they see. Thus the school is seen as a boring place or punishment and many of these girls are indisciplined in school. Focus is lost from teaching and learning as time is spent on punishments and talks. These urban girls have a lower self-concept than their rural counterparts.
- Both the rural and urban girls have high educational aspirations. The majority expects and aspires to obtain a minimum of an undergraduate degree.

- Both the rural and urban girls also have high occupational aspirations. The majority hopes to enter into professional careers with good pay and prestige.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusion discussed here above, the following recommendations are made:

- The school environment is a powerful tool in shaping a secondary schoolgirl's perception in life; it can make or break. It is thus very important that the school authorities make sure that the school serves her purpose in educating and nurturing the girl for her future life to be successful. Everyone has a role to play to make the school environment cordial. The principal should not be high handed and aloof but should instead in wisdom come down to the level of the student, talk to them and get to know what ails them and then make policies from this stance to improve the school life. The students on the other hand should be ready to learn and be guided without being headstrong. There should be firm discipline. This would apply especially to the urban school.
- The principal and teachers guide a girl into achieving her goals. It is one thing for a girl to want to achieve much and it is another, for her to get to know about how to go about doing it.
- The Ministry of Education should inspect schools often to make sure that they are being run as expected by the principals according to the rules and regulations pre-set. Principals and teachers should go for in-servicing courses to get to refresh themselves on how to bring out the best in their students.

Suggested area for further research

Since the study investigated the self-concept of girls from only girl secondary schools, a more comprehensive study needs to be undertaken to include co-educational schools.

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APPENDIX I

A Questionnaire on school and development of self-concept of secondary school girls

Dear student,

This study is interested in finding out how the school helps to prepare you for further education and careers. It will therefore, be sincerely appreciated if you could answer as honestly as possible the questions that follow. Please note that this is not an examination. There are no wrong or right answers. The answers will be treated with utmost confidence, for this reason; do not write your name on the questionnaire.

1. Name of your school. _____
2. Give your age in years _____
3. How many years of fulltime schooling did your father receive? Circle one only.
(A) No Schooling (B) Primary (C) Secondary (D) Post secondary training
(E) University (F) Masters (G) Doctorate
4. How many years of fulltime schooling did your mother receive? Circle one only.
(A) No Schooling (B) Primary (C) Secondary (D) Post secondary training
(E) University (F) Masters (G) Doctorate
5. What is your father's occupation? _____
6. What is your mother's occupation? _____
7. Where do your parents live? Circle only one.
(A) Rural area (B) Urban area.
8. Using the numbers 1-3, kindly arrange in order of importance what or who has positively influenced you the most?
 - Parents ____
 - Siblings ____
 - Church leader ____
 - Politician ____
 - Music idol ____
 - Movie star ____
 - Best friend ____
 - Television ____
 - Teachers ____

9. Which career/job would you like to join when you complete your education?

10. How high would you like to study? Circle only one.
 (A) Form 4 is enough (B) Diploma (C) University Undergraduate
 (D) Masters (E) Doctoral level

11. When would you like to get married? Circle only one.
 (A) After Form 4 (B) 2 years after form 4 (C) After college Diploma
 (D) After Undergraduate Studies (E) After Masters (F) After Doctorate

12. What type of occupation would you choose for your potential husband?

13. What level of education do you aspire for your future husband. Circle only one.
 (A) Form 4 is enough (B) Diploma (C) University Undergraduate
 (D) Masters (E) Doctoral level

14. Which of these statements best describes you? Kindly indicate by circling your answer using the scale described here below.

- STRONGLY AGREE (5)
 AGREE (4)
 NOT SURE (3)
 DISAGREE (2)
 STRONGLY DISAGREE (1).

I like myself more now than I did in the past	5	4	3	2	1
I lean on others for self-esteem	5	4	3	2	1
I would like to run an organisation or be a leader	5	4	3	2	1
I consider myself a failure when I do not perform well in school	5	4	3	2	1
I am proud of myself	5	4	3	2	1
I am ambitious	5	4	3	2	1
I give up easily when frustrated	5	4	3	2	1
I am social	5	4	3	2	1
I strive to be better than others	5	4	3	2	1

15. What would you like your greatest success in life to be? Rank by the use of numerals. For example 1= greatest success 2= great success etc.

- Good job _____
- To have a happy family _____
- Marriage _____
- Property and wealth _____
- To be the most beautiful woman _____
- To be a good wife _____
- To be highly educated _____
- To be married in to a rich family _____

16. Does your school have career related clubs? Circle only one.
 (A) Yes (B) No (C) Not sure

17. If 'yes', which clubs are you a member?

18. Does your school have a career guidance programme? Circle only one.
 (A) Yes (B) No (C) Not sure

19. To what extent have the following people/activities/programmes influenced your life? Kindly tick your answer in the relevant box.

People/activities/programmes	Very great	Moderate	Not sure	A little	Not at all
Principal					
Class teacher					
Peer group					
Guidance and counseling sessions					
Co-curricular Activities like sports and clubs					
Class prefect					
School motto					
School rules					

Others (specify) _____

20. Which of these phrases best describes your school. Kindly indicate by circling your answer using the scale described here below.

- STRONGLY AGREE (5)
- AGREE (4)
- NOT SURE (3)
- DISAGREE (2)
- STRONGLY DISAGREE (1).

Provider of a wealth of knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
A boring place	5	4	3	2	1
A punishment	5	4	3	2	1
A bridge to success	5	4	3	2	1
Not necessary nor important	5	4	3	2	1
A preparation for teamwork, discipline and the adult world	5	4	3	2	1

21. Are you proud to tell others of your school? Circle only one.
 (A) Yes (B) No (C) Not sure

22. How would you rate your school performance? Circle only one.
(A) Top Student (B) Above Average (C) Average Student (D) Poor student.

23. Write down 5 characteristics associated with people who feel good about themselves.

24. Write 5 characteristics of people who do not feel good about themselves.

25. How can the school help you to feel good about yourself?

26. Write down 5 things that you like about your school.

27. Write down 5 things that you dislike about your school.
