



Influence of Spirituality on Self-Esteem among Students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County Kenya. It addresses the following objectives: to assess the level of spirituality among the participants, to assess the level of self-esteem among the participants, and finally to establish the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya. A purposive sample of 30 participants was employed. The participants were aged between 18-20 years old. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale and Hardt et al. spirituality scale were used for data collection. Data was analyzed inferentially. The findings showed that majority of the students (80%) had a high level of spirituality. In addition, most of the students had an average level (76%) of self-esteem. The study establishes a statistically significant influence of spirituality on self-esteem, $F(1, 661.215) = .046, p = .001$ of students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Keywords: Spirituality, Self -Esteem, Adolescents.

1. Introduction

The influence of spirituality on self-esteem has been a topic of interest in psychological research. Numerous studies have explored the influence of spirituality on an individual's sense of self-worth and well-being. Self-perception has become an integral part of education due to its effects on students' behavior and academic performance. These self-related psychological perceptions include self – concept, self –esteem, and self – efficacy (Tus, 2020). In this study however, focus would be put into self-esteem. Self-esteem can be defined in a variety of ways, including as an attitude, a negative or positive response, a behavioral response, a discrepancy between the ideal-self and the perceived self, a person's response to themselves, and a personality. There are three components to self-esteem: Self-esteem as a fundamental human need that is essential for human survival and normal human development, self-esteem that comes from within a person based on their beliefs and awareness and self-esteem relating to the way a person thinks, acts, feels and behaves (Hameed, 2015).

Spirituality is a concern for or sensitivity to things of the spirit or soul, especially as opposed to materialistic concerns" (APA, n.d.). The word spirituality originates from the Latin word *spiritualis*, meaning "person of the spirit". Spirituality isn't just related to religion. In fact, it goes beyond religion. According to a survey conducted by Oman and Thoreson (2007), one third of people in the United States describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. Other definitions include a relationship with the sacred (Beck & Walters, 1977), "an individual's experience of and relationship with a fundamental, nonmaterial aspect of the universe" (Tolan, 2002).

Adolescence is a critical stage in life which affects all people. It is the time when adolescents find their identity as they negotiate through life and lay the foundation for their academic life and their future. (Kibuthu & Muasa, 2023). Teenagers often grapple with issues of identity, self-worth, and belonging. Low self-esteem can manifest in various forms, such as poor academic performance, risky behaviors, and mental health concerns. Religiosity and spirituality have been identified as potential contributors to self-esteem, with a growing body of evidence suggesting that various components, such as self-esteem, are associated with improved physical and mental wellbeing in general, and depression in particular. Recent studies have demonstrated that a high level of self-esteem can be associated with a positive spiritual experience and an overall sense of well-being (Gábová, et.al 2021).

Until recently, little research has been conducted on the relationship between self-esteem and spirituality. Instead, research has focused on correlating self-esteem with religiosity in general, but the findings have not been conclusive. This may be due to the fact that self-esteem is a multidimensional concept (Hooker, 2014) and different dimensions of religiosity may influence self-esteem in different ways (Francis, 2001). These dimensions could include external behavior, such as church attendance, but also more internal aspects, such as religiosity and spirituality struggles, attachment, and God representations (Tung et al., 2018).

Prior research has focused on studying religiosity and spirituality in the context of religious countries. Studies conducted in religious countries have shown that religious affiliation is associated with increased self-esteem (Smith & Crosby, 2017). In a recent global study, it was found that statistically significant positive associations between each area of spiritual health, life satisfaction, mental health, and self-reported health status (Brooks et al., 2018). In Iran, a study was carried out by Karimi (2019) on the impact of spiritual care on self-esteem among cancer patients. This study involved two groups and used a before and after design. A sample of 64 patients were carefully selected and randomly allocated to either the experimental or control groups. Data collection included the two-part questionnaire, which included demographic characteristics and Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI).

The spiritual care program consisted of six sessions with four domains: relationship with God, self, others, and environment. Data analysis included Chi-square testing, Fisher's exact testing, independent t-testing, and a paired t-test. Prior to the intervention, there was no significant difference in total self-esteem average score and its domains ($p > 0.05$) between the two groups. However, post-intervention, the intervention group had significantly higher overall self-esteem average scores and domain scores ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, the spiritual care program in this study was found to be effective in improving self-esteem for cancer patients. This study focused on spirituality and self-esteem among cancer patients however, the current study focuses on spirituality and self-esteem among adolescent girls in Kenya.

In India, a study was conducted by Hameed (2015), self-esteem and spirituality among college students with internal and external locus of control. A total sample of 120 students aged from 17 to 23 was taken from different colleges in Kollam District of Kerala. The study found that spirituality and self-esteem of students with external locus of control was positively correlated, which implied that spirituality ($M = 13.6875$, $SD = 6.9351$) increases or decreases with increase or decrease of self-esteem ($M = 63.9375$, $SD = 12.4818$). The study of Hameed (2015) focused primarily on the relationship between self-esteem and spirituality among college students, whereas this current study concentrated on the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among selected girls in secondary school in Kenya. Similarly, a study carried out by Cunha et al. (2021) in Brazil in the university of Sao Paulo and they investigated religiosity, spirituality, and self-esteem in adolescents with cleft lip and palate: a correlational study a sample size of 100 students divided as in two groups. The groups were divided into unilateral cleft, with 50 participants called G1 and bilateral cleft, 50 participants named G2. They found that participants in group 1 had higher spirituality as compared to group 2 participants ($p = 0.03$). In general, self-esteem was satisfactory between two groups; nevertheless, there was no significant difference among groups ($p = 0.34$). The study concluded that there was no significant relationship between religiosity and spirituality with self-esteem identified for group 1 and group 2. The research of Cunha et al. (2021) was done among the university students in Brazil whereas the current study concentrated among selected girls in secondary school in Kenya.

In the study Doman (2019) in South Africa and Uganda, on association of spirituality and wellbeing This research examined data from two Sub-Saharan African countries, South Africa and Uganda, which differ significantly in terms of a variety of well-being determinants, including mortality rates, access to health care, educational attainment, and personal development. The survey data was collected using the parameters of The Spiritual Engagement and Believing Scale and the Personal Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff. The data included four racial groups: Black South African, Color South African, White South African, and Black Uganda. The association between spirituality and well-being was statistically significant across all samples, accounting for 32% of variance in the Black Uganda sample and only 4% in the White South Africa sample. This confirms the importance of spirituality for well-being, especially among sub-Saharan African samples.

In Kenya, a study by King (2020) on the experiences of hope, resilience, and spirituality among Kenyan children and adolescents at a group home/school in Kenya. There were seventy-five participants (10-19 years old) who completed the quantitative measures (CD-RISC/A, Kids' Hope scale, Adult Hope scale, 1-Item Spirituality) and 14 participants completed semi-structured interviews. From the qualitative data, 7 themes were extracted: adversity, meaning making of the past, community, role models, trust in something bigger than themselves, future plans, and religious coping.

A series of correlations were conducted, and significant correlations were found between the children's social resilience scale and individual resilience scale ($p = .001$). The total Children's hope scale and the total score ($p = .005$), CD-RISC & Agency subscale ($p = .003$) of the Adult Hope scale. The findings of the study indicate that the belief in a higher being helped them cope with challenges and increase and develop more self-esteem. However, there is a lack of research on the direct relationship between spirituality and self-esteem in Kenya and other parts of Africa. This is a research gap that needs to be bridged.

1.1 Objectives of the study

1. To assess the levels of spirituality among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.
2. To examine the levels of self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.
3. To establish the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

2. Research Methodology

This study made use of quantitative method, and it utilized a survey design to investigate the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among adolescent boarding students at a girl's secondary school in Kajiado County, Kenya. A purposive sample of 30 participants was employed. The participants were aged between 18-20 years old. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale and Hardt et al. spirituality scale was used for data collection. The study further made use of demographic questionnaires which comprised age and gender. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21. The findings are presented in summary

tables. Descriptive statistical score was used to analyze research objective 1 and 2 respectively. The Regression analysis was used to analyze research objective 3. Data collection process as well as ethical considerations were adhered to respectively.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study that includes levels of spirituality among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya, levels of self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya, and influence of spirituality on self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Levels of spirituality among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The first objective of this study was to assess the levels of spirituality among students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya. The spirituality scales comprised 20 statements, on a 5-point Likert scale. The lowest score a participant could attain was 1, while the highest score a participant could get was 100. Scores were added up and are grouped into low, moderate and high. Scores ranging from 1-39 = low level of spirituality, 40-69 = moderate level of spirituality, while a score of 70 and above = high level of spirituality. Descriptive statistical score was conducted and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Levels of Spirituality among Selected Students of Mount Carmel

Levels of spirituality	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	STD
Low	1	3.3%	80.7000	13.67391
Moderate	5	16.6%		
High	24	80%		
Total	30	100%		

As seen in Table 1, the study demonstrated a high level of spirituality among 80% of the participants. The mean score of 80.70 affirmed an overall high level of spirituality among the study participants.

Levels of self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The second objective of this study was to examine the levels of self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya. Ten statements were used to gauge the levels of self-esteem. Each of the statements was measured on a 4-point Likert scale. Items: 1,3,4 and 7 are scored; Give "Strongly Agree" 1 point, "Agree" 2 points, "Disagree" 3 points, and "Strongly Disagree" 4 points. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. The highest score any participant could attain was 40, and the lowest was 1. The levels of self-esteem were then scored as follows; 1-15-low self-esteem, 16-25- average self-esteem, and 26-40 - high self-esteem. Descriptive statistical score was conducted in order to realize this objective, and the findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Levels of Self-Esteem among Selected Students of Mount Carmel

Levels of self-esteem	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low	4	13.3%	20.3000	4.77890
Average	23	76.6%		
High	3	10.1%		
Total	30	100%		

Table 2 revealed that the majority of participants (76.6%) scored at an average level of self-esteem with the mean score of 20.30. This reflects a normal distribution.

Influence of spirituality on self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The third objective of this study sought to establish the influence of spirituality on self-esteem among students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya. Regression analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Influence of Spirituality on self Esteem

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.085	1	1.085	.046	.001 ^b
	Residual	661.215	28	23.615		
	Total	662.300	29			

-
- a. Dependent Variable:
b. Predictors: (Constant),

According to findings in Table 3, F- value (1, 661.215) = .046, and P value = .001. The findings pointed out that the regression model was significant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable. Therefore, spirituality moderately influenced self-esteem among students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya.

4. Discussions

Findings of this study indicated that the majority of the students at Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya demonstrated a high level of spirituality. The cultivation of a strong spiritual atmosphere in the family on the one hand, and the spiritual formation received in the boarding system on the other hand, may have contributed to solid foundation on their high spirituality. Fosarelli (2015) emphasizes the importance of spirituality in parenting for health and lifelong thriving, suggesting that a nurturing spiritual environment may contribute to the development of positive self-esteem among adolescents. This aligns with the notion that spirituality can play a significant role in shaping the self-perception and overall well-being of adolescent girls.

This study however contradicts the study done by Malinakova et.al (2019) on association of adolescent's spirituality \religiosity with family characteristics which found out that among girls who were participants, the percentage of non-spiritual was 51.9%. The average spirituality score in the whole sample was 22.0. (SD = 7.61), a mean MSPSS score was 5.9 ± 1.30 and a mean fractional rank (ridit) score of FAS was 0.5 ± 0.29 . This contradiction could be because Africans are considered more spiritual (Greene, 2010) and this study was done in Kenya. The adolescent spirituality is important as it promotes healthy development, enhances coping abilities, and leads to positive outcomes in mental health, psychological well-being, and academic learning (Kim & Esquivel, 2011).

Regarding self-esteem, the majority of participants scored at an average level of self-esteem. According to Baldwin and Hoffmann (2002), self-esteem levels typically fall in early adolescence and rise in later adolescence. This could account for the average level of self-esteem among the participants. It is also noted that adolescents start to become unduly reliant on their peers as a result of starting to struggle with self-confidence and may feel inferior to their peers as a result of bullying from others (D'Amico, 2022). Although this could have led to low self-esteem, other factors such as the students receiving emotional bonds and support from the family members, healthy socialization with friends in the boarding system, moral principles learned in the boarding, and education empowerment in school could boost self-esteem among students of Mount Carmel girls' boarding secondary school in Kajiado County Kenya. This finding relatively aligns with Erenie et al's (2015) findings and with Afen (2022) stated that the most significant factor influencing the development of teenage students is their sense of self-worth. People who are confident in themselves are strong and successful. Students' ability to accept, respect, and believe in themselves is largely dependent on their self-esteem, and this has a positive effect on their life activities.

It is not surprising therefore to find out that spirituality influences self-esteem among selected students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County, Kenya. Research by Russell and Alderman (2022) suggests that religiosity/spirituality is generally related to higher levels of self-esteem, which in turn positively relates to happiness. This finding underscores the potential positive influence of spirituality on the self-esteem of adolescent girls. Additionally, Desrosiers and Miller (2007) highlight the possibility that a low level of spirituality may be associated with a low level of self-esteem among adolescent girls, indicating a potential protective role of spirituality in teenage girls.

Harrington et al. (2021) shed light on the social influences and psychiatric morbidity among adolescent girls in Kenya, indicating the importance of considering broader social and environmental factors that may interact with spirituality to impact self-esteem. Villani (2019) found that spirituality and religiosity can serve as positive predictors of subjective well-being, indicating that individuals who exhibit a stronger connection to their spirituality tend to report higher levels of well-being. These suggest that spirituality contributes to a sense of fulfillment and life satisfaction. Furthermore, the investigation by Abu-Raiya (2023) delved into the relationship between religiousness and self-esteem. The study revealed that religiousness is positively linked to self-esteem, indicating that religious beliefs and practices may boost an individual's self-esteem.

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The study, on the Influence of spirituality on self-esteem among students of Mount Carmel Girls' Boarding Secondary School in Kajiado County Kenya, showed that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and self-esteem, hence spirituality influences self-esteem. The influence of spirituality on self-esteem among adolescent Kenyan girls is a topic of significant importance, as it pertains to the psychological well-being and development of this demographic. Enhancing spirituality among adolescents can enhance their self-esteem and consequently positive academic performance.

5.2 Recommendation

It is essential to develop strategies to increase self-esteem among students in order to facilitate human revolution. Based on the findings presented from the study, it is recommended that administrators, educators, and policy makers should implement programs that recognize the potential positive impact

of spiritual practices on students' self-esteem such as spiritual education, meditation or mindfulness practices, parents and caregiver be involved in spiritual development among adolescents and school counselors, mental health experts, and community organizations should provide counseling services that address spiritual well-being as well as self-esteem.

In addition, collaboration be fostered between schools and religious/community leaders to create a holistic approach to adolescent well-being. This can involve joint initiatives, workshops, or seminars. Finally, further research should be conducted by researchers to explore the contextual factors that may influence the relationship between spirituality and self-esteem among Kenyan adolescent girls. These recommendations therefore, aim to leverage these findings to create a supportive environment that fosters spirituality and, in turn, enhances self-esteem, contributing to positive academic performance and overall well-being.

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