

**PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS INFLUENCING GIRLS' PERFORMANCE IN KENYA
CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN KIRINYAGA WEST SUB-COUNTY,
KENYA**

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Abstract

The Kenya government is committed towards achieving Education For All (EFA) by 2015 and therefore the ministry of education has its overall goal as to provide equal access to education for both boys and girls and expects them to compete favorably by way of equity and equality. However, in performance, girls lag behind. The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychological dynamics influencing girls' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). This was with an aim of establishing why girls lag behind boys in performance while they both are given equal opportunities. The specific objectives are; to investigate effect of anxiety on academic performance; to investigate the effect of attitude on academic performance; to investigate the effect of motivation on academic performance and to investigate the effect of self esteem on academic performance among girls in Kenya certificate of secondary education. The research was guided by the Existential Therapy Theory. The study employed Descriptive Survey Design. The target populations were girls who sit Kenya certificate of secondary education in Kirinyaga West sub –county. Kirinyaga sub-county has twenty-seven schools; 2 boys boarding, 4 girls boarding, 1 girls' day school and 20 day mixed schools. The sample population was fifteen head teachers, and sixty teachers (fifteen heads of departments–guidance and counseling teachers and thirty class teachers). The instruments of collecting data were questionnaires that were filled by the headteachers, guidance and counseling teacher and the class teachers. The study used quantitative data analysis. The results were presented in tables of frequencies, percentages, line graphs and bar graphs. The study therefore found out that failure of head teachers working hand in hand with guidance & counseling departments and class teachers made them unable to deal with psychological problems that affect girls' performance. The study noted that lack of girls' exposure to many exams and motivational talks affected their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance negatively. The study therefore recommends that head teachers should work hand in hand with guidance & counseling departments and class teachers so as to know the level of girls' anxiety, attitude, motivation and self-esteem; the school management should expose girls to many exams, create favourable environment for girls and organize for motivational talks; the ministry of education through the district education offices should organize several educational forums where girls would compete with boys.