

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY, GENDER,
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING METHODS AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN KISWAHILI LANGUAGEGE SKILLS IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Instruction of Egerton University

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this university or any other for the award of a degree

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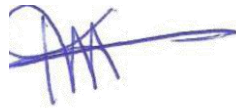
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ABSTRACT

Kiswahili language plays an important role in communication among people and promotes cohesiveness in Kenya and the Eastern African region where it is spoken. It is an official language alongside English in Kenya. It is also a compulsory subject at both primary and secondary school levels. Despite this, secondary school students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language has continually been low especially in Nakuru County. This could be due to learner characteristics such as; attitude, motivation to learn, their gender or their perceptions of teaching methods among other factors. This study investigated the relationship between secondary school students' self-efficacy, gender, their perceptions of teaching methods, and academic achievement in Kiswahili language. The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population was 158,619 students of all public secondary schools in Nakuru County. The accessible population was all the 43,190 form three students in Nakuru County. Stratified proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 394 students who participated in the study. Data was collected using Students' Questionnaire (SQ), Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT) and an Observation Schedule (OS). The reliability of SQ and KLSAT were estimated using the Cronbach's Alpha method and the Kuder-Richardson (KR21) formula. SQ and KLSAT were deemed reliable since their reliability coefficients were .812 and .756 respectively. Simple and multiple linear regression were used to test the study hypotheses at .05 level of significance. A statistically significant relationship was observed between students' self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The relationship between gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language was statistically insignificant. A statistically insignificant relationship between students' perceptions of teaching methods and Kiswahili language skills achievement. The findings further showed a statistically significant relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods all combined and Kiswahili language skills academic achievement. This statistically significant relationship implies that teachers of Kiswahili should consider a more holistic approach to teaching/learning process rather than focusing on content delivery. The findings will inform educators and policymakers that they should consider these psychological and social factors when designing and implementing Kiswahili instructional programs. Additionally, these results show the need to enhance students' self-efficacy, being aware of their perceptions of teaching methods may contribute to improved academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills and overall academic achievement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
BECF	Basic Education Curriculum Framework
CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
CIEM	Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management
EAC	East African Community
FEDCOS	Faculty of Education and Community Studies
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GoK	Government of Kenya
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
KCBC	Kenya Competency Based Curriculum
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEC	Kenya Education Commission
KIA	Kenya Institute of Administration
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KLAT	Kiswahili Language Achievement Test
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NCEO	Nakuru County Education Office
NCEOP	National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy
NICHHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
OS	Observation Schedule
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
SQ	Students' Questionnaire
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNKC	Ugandan National Kiswahili Council
USA	United States of America
WDR	World Development Report
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Language is used to meet various social, political, economic, and religious needs of an individual or a society. It is essential for all forms of communication among people for it facilitates effective interactions, which in turn guarantees societal cohesiveness (Olugbuyi & Olaleye, 2005). Language plays a significant role in the history of any nation (Adawiyah & Gumarti, 2022). A study by Chepkemoi and Wanyonyi (2017) postulates that, language is an important cultural tool as it is the primary vehicle through which people share and exchange values, aspirations, and ideas. Language cannot be separated from society because it unifies people (Foyewa et al., 2016). Every society has a language that distinguishes it from another. English is synonymous with Europe, United States of America, New Zealand and Australia where overwhelming majority speak the language (Adawiyah & Gumartifa, 2022). Apart from the unifying and identity purposes, language bridges and breaks cultural barriers, hence the need for comprehensive language policies to govern communication nationally and internationally (Akindele & Adegbite, 1999).

Kiswahili is used as a language of communication in the society and in institutions of learning. It is also being taught in many local and international universities in the world (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1996; Okombo & Muna, 2017). A computer software has also been developed to enable users search information in Kiswahili, thus giving the language an international outlook. It is among the ten most spoken languages in the world with more than 200 million speakers, (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2021 & The World Economic Forum 2022). In its 41st Session in Paris UNESCO requested member states to declare 7th July to be World Kiswahili Language Day, a request that was granted.

According to the United Nations (2021), Kiswahili speakers are spread over more than 14 countries namely; Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Comoros, and as far as Oman and Yemen in the Middle East. South Africa is proposing the inclusion of Kiswahili in the school curriculum (BusinessTech., 2021, May 14). Basic Education minister Angie Motshekga of South Africa, posited that, the introduction of Kiswahili in the National Curriculum Statement would go a long way towards contributing to decolonization. Lang'at (2020) reported that South African schools are incorporating Kiswahili into their curricula. This would foster greater regional integration and promoting multilingualism among students.

This is because Kiswahili as a language was never used as tool of colonization, furthermore, Africans would identify more with a language that gives them a sense of ownership (Kamau, 2020). Competency in Kiswahili language would benefit the African people immensely, as language serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a powerful tool for fostering national development and cultural integrations well as social cohesion.

Kiswahili language is meant to help in achieving United Nations 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa. Some of the SDGs include economic empowerment, gender equality, good health for all and quality education among others (United Nation, 2015). Likewise, African Union 2063 agenda encapsulate not only Africa's economic growth but also promotion of peace in the continent and gender equality, youth empowerment through education and investment opportunities in areas such as agri-business (African Union [AU], 2019). This can be achieved through Kiswahili language which has an advantage over other African indigenous languages due to its ethnicity and linguistic non-attachment. Agenda 2063 can boost Africa's economic growth and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) development that can lead to rapid transformation of the continent (AU, 2019). East African Community Secretariat (2017) directed the member states to formulate national Kiswahili language policies. The language can enhance social interaction between different cultural groups in the region (Sawe & Kandagor, 2020; Thanasoulas (2001) had earlier made these observations by postulating that language is the single most important cultural element that binds a society because all other elements depend on it and culture must be integrated in language instruction. Societal integration and development are tied to language, a role Kiswahili language plays effectively (Obi, 2013).

Mukuthuria (2006) contends that the place of Kiswahili in Africa cannot be understated since it plays a major role in social and economic development of the continent. Kiswahili is used in Africa for wider communication, improving literacy, galvanizing unity and commerce among many other roles (Leshoele, 2024). Kiswahili language has the potential to promote unity, economic development, and cultural identity across the continent, particularly in the context of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). The AU and Southern African Development Community (SADC) have identified Kiswahili as one of the official languages because of its unifying role (Obi, 2013; Onyango, 2020 & Shimanyula, 2022). This perceived importance of the language shows the deliberate efforts made to promote Kiswahili as an African language.

Kiswahili was recommended to be adopted as an official language in the East African Community (East African Community [EAC], 2017). This dream became a reality in

November 2024, during the 24th Ordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State held in Arusha, Tanzania. Kiswahili language was officially recognized alongside French in addition to English language (Kinyanjui, 2024). This was a great milestone as it reflected the EAC's commitment to the region's integration and socio-economic development using a common language.

Kiswahili language is a lingua franca in East and Central Africa. It is the main business language in East and Central Africa and both a national and official language in Kenya and Tanzania. In Congo, Kiswahili is one of the national languages among the over 213 indigenous languages spoken in that country (Lewis et al. 2013). It is also the most commonly used language within families in urban areas, in business, local administration, education and media in the Congo alongside four other indigenous languages (Speciale, 2013). In 2020, the then president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, unveiled Kiswahili version of the National Assembly Standing orders (Agonya, 2021). Thus, the importance of Kiswahili language cannot be understated both locally and internationally.

Despite the evident importance of Kiswahili language, the language was never emphasized in the Kenyan school curriculum and for a long time it remained an optional subject (Nabea, 2009). Many educational commissions such as Phelps-Stoke (1924), Beecher (1949), Binns (1952), Protar-Thtasoit (1952) and Drogheda (1952) continued to prohibit the learning of Kiswahili. The government of the day argued that Kiswahili impaired learning of vernacular and English (G.o.K, 1952). Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) opines that, the colonialists dropped Kiswahili from the curriculum because they viewed it as a language of mobilization and that it would unite Kenyans against their rule. This still underscores the importance of the language as a unifier. Over the years recommendations made on the language policy, stipulated that vernacular languages to be used as medium of instruction and Kiswahili be dropped completely unless where it was a vernacular (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1996).

There is need for realistic language policies to mitigate on the challenge of East African multilingualism (Bukanya, 2019). According to Eberhard, et al. (2020), Muaka (2011) and Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000), Kenya is a multilingual nation with over 42 languages. Omollo-Wanjiku's (2014) study on the effects of language policy on the learning of Kiswahili in Kapseret Division, Uasin Gishu County, underscored the importance of implementing language policies in schools in order to improve students' proficiency and competence in Kiswahili language cannot be underscored. Majority of the Kenyan population speak at least three languages; Kiswahili, English and an indigenous language. This implies that there should be an explicit language policy which specifically aims at promoting language competency in both written and spoken in order to have cohesive society.

Government of Kenya [GoK] (1964), formed the Kenya Education Commission commonly referred to as the Ominde Commission after its chair, Prof. Simeon H. Ominde recommended that the language for instruction remains English. However, Kiswahili was to be taught as a subject in schools but not to be examined. Other recommendations of Ominde Commission included; setting a department of Kiswahili at University of Nairobi, Kiswahili courses be started during the holidays for primary school teachers and in teacher training colleges. These recommendations were implemented, thus giving Kiswahili a notable mileage.

The Republic of Kenya [R.o.K] (1972) report otherwise known as the Wamalwa Commission recommended that Kiswahili courses should be started at Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) to give training to government officials. This was implemented in an effort to boost Kiswahili language further. RoK (1976) set up a commission known as National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy (NCEOP) chaired by Gachathi. The committee recommended that Kiswahili be a compulsory subject and the language be taught in primary and secondary schools and be examined at both levels. However, this recommendation never saw the light of day as it was never implemented. These divergent language policies over the years have inhibited the development of teaching/learning resources and personnel thus contributing to the continued poor academic achievement in the Kiswahili language.

Republic of Kenya (1981) established a commission, The Presidential Working Party on the Establishment of the Second University otherwise known as the Mackay commission. It recommended the change of education system from seven years of primary, four of secondary (ordinary level) two at advanced level and three at university (7-4-2-3) to eight years of primary, four secondary and four university (8-4-4). The working party further recommended that Kiswahili be among the compulsory subjects and to be examined at both levels, that is; primary and secondary. This has continued to date whereby Kiswahili is being examined at both levels.

The introduction of a new education system from 8-4-4 to Competency Based Education (CBE) comprising of Pre-primary (2 years), Primary (6 years), Secondary (6 years) and university education (3 years) has continued to complicate the language policy in Kenya. During the first three years, learners' study various subjects including Literacy, Kiswahili Language Activities/Kenya Sign Language for deaf learners, English Language Activities and Indigenous Language Activities among others. However, the overall academic achievement in Kiswahili language has remained wanting over the years and has been below average (Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), (2022). Students have continued to exhibit low academic achievement year in year out since the onset of the 8-4-4 curriculum in 1984 as

indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Candidate Overall Performance in Kiswahili KCSE Examinations for the Years 2018-2022

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Score	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2018	1		40	16.98	4.82
	2		80	27.22	10.88
	3		80	22.20	11.95
	Overall	659,465	200	66.40	24.76
2019	1		40	19.88	5.43
	2		80	36.50	12.64
	3		80	21.08	12.64
	Overall	694,982	200	88.46	28.03
2020	1		40	20.19	5.28
	2		80	34.99	12.81
	3		80	25.88	16.00
	Overall	743,395	200	81.05	31.28
2021	1		40	19.44	6.28
	2		80	31.46	12.93
	3		80	31.19	19.48
	Overall	822,267	200	82.09	35.34
2022	1		40	19.70	5.69
	2		80	35.73	12.45
	3		80	31.21	17.42
	Overall	876,916	200	86.64	32.15

Source: KNEC (2020, 2023)

Table 1 paints a very grim picture of students' performance for the last 5 years. The worst performance was in 2018 with a mean score of 66.40 and SD=24.76. Though there was a slight improvement in 2019 with a mean score of 88.46 and SD=28.03, this was still below the expected average of 100 out of 200 in the three papers. In 2022 there was another improvement from the previous year of mean score 86.64 and SD=32.15. Specifically, this study focused on paper 1 and 2 which involve composition writing, reading comprehension,

socio- linguistics, summary writing and grammar. The performance is very wanting, with average scores ranging between 16.98 to 20.19 in paper 1 and SD=4.82-5.28. It can be observed that only in 2020 was there a slight improvement of an average score of 20.19 out of possible score of 40. Performance in Paper 2 has been below average score, with the mean score for the 5 years oscillating between 27.22 and 36.50 out of the expected maximum score of 80. This calls for a need to investigate the continued poor academic achievement in Kiswahili language of students, which inhibits communication not only as learners but as members of the society (Lee, 2019).

Effective communication requires an individual to master the language skills (Aliyeya 2024). Language skills are categorized into four: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interrelated and essential for personal, academic, and professional success. Listening and speaking skills are domiciled in two papers; Paper 1 and Paper 2. The two papers are also poorly performed as indicated in Table 1. In secondary schools, assessment of Kiswahili language, speech work is not examined because all examinations are wholly written (Nyongesa, 2020). This leaves a gap in learners’ acquisition of listening and speaking skills an important component of language that helps in promoting communicative competence contends (Nyongesa, 2020). This is because any aspect in the curriculum that is not examined it is usually ignored by learners. In the new CBE education system, the communicative competence is required to be acquired, yet it is not being tested, leaving the same gap. This could be one of the reasons of the continued poor academic achievement in Kiswahili language. Summary of this poor academic achievement is captured in Figure 1.

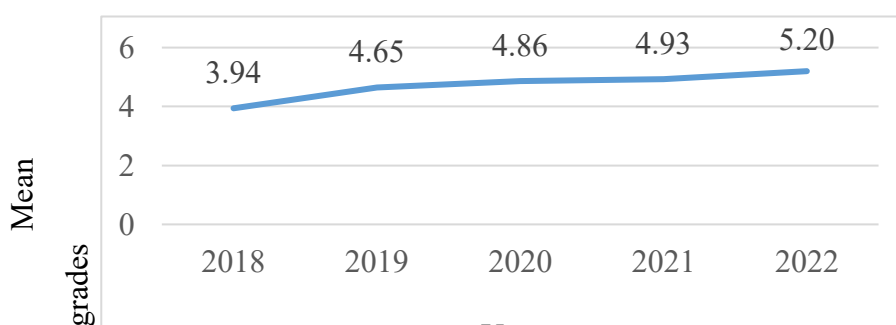


Figure 1: Summary of students’ performance in KCSE Kiswahili examinations for the years 2018-2022

Figure 1 shows that students’ performance in Kiswahili language has an upward trend, however the mean grade ranged between 3.94 and 5.20 out of 12. This is way below the average mark of 6. The best academic achievement (M = 5.20) was realised in 2022 while the worst achievement was posted in 2018. These data indicate that achievement in Kiswahili language

was unsatisfactory given that it is marked out of 12. This paints a very bleak picture of the status of Kiswahili language skills proficiency among secondary school students (Chepkemoi & Wanyonyi, 2017). The five-year mean score of 4.71 (equivalent of D+) is a scenario that requires investigation, an inquiry this study undertook. The data in Table 1 supports these observations that deliberate efforts should be made to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills in order to write the language examinations proficiently. It is not in doubt, therefore, that there is need to investigate the cause of this continued poor academic achievement over the years. According to KNEC (2023) report, despite the slight improvements posted between 2020 and 2022, as indicated in Table 1 the students' academic achievement is still unsatisfactory as it is below 100/200 for the three papers.

Comparing Kiswahili with other languages such as English, German and Arabic as posted by KNEC (2023) report, the scenario is almost similar especially in English as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Students' Performance in KCSE Kiswahili, English and German Examinations for the Years 2018-2022

<i>Year</i>	<i>Kiswahili</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>
2018	3.98	4.37	7.24
2019	5.31	4.92	7.11
2020	4.84	4.36	7.17
2021	4.93	4.43	7.35
2022	5.20	4.55	6.71

Source: KNEC (2023)

Table 2 compares three languages namely; Kiswahili, English and German. From the table, Kiswahili and English students' academic achievement is way below the expected mean of 6. Means for Kiswahili have been ranging between 3.98 and 5.20 for five years. English has a higher mean though still below the average ranging between 4.36 and 4.92. German seems to be way above the average mean of 6 where the students' achievement has been ranging between 6.71 to 7.35 for the same period of time between 2018 and 2022 (KNEC, 2023). This performance is commendable considering German is a foreign language. However, the good scenario may be due to the number of students learning the language bearing in mind that Kiswahili and English are core subjects while German is optional. Kirugua et al. (2013)

investigated the Enrolment and Retention of Students in German Language Classes: Influencing School Based Factors in Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties and established that, the performance in German at KCSE level has been impressive over the last six years 62.61%. These results may be due to qualification and experience of teachers, availability of resources and learner motivation (Kirugua et al., 2013). Low academic achievement in English and Kiswahili language over the same period is attributed to ineffective learning activities that can enhance communicative competencies, unfriendly language policies and inadequate resources (Kimamo & Gathara, 2024; Ntabo & Obiero, 2024; Omuna & Adero, 2020).

Nakuru is among the counties that have continued to obtain low academic achievement in Kiswahili (NCO, 2024). Nakuru County has a total of eleven (11) Sub-Counties and all reflect the national poor academic achievement in Kiswahili language as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Nakuru County KCSE Kiswahili Examinations Results 2018-2022

Sub County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Kuresoi South	4.13	3.87	3.49	4.09	4.42
Kuresoi North	4.23	3.97	3.50	3.32	3.61
Naivasha	4.67	4.48	4.33	4.14	4.72
Gilgil	4.05	4.70	4.15	4.02	4.32
Rongai	5.21	4.72	4.81	4.90	4.88
Njoro	5.62	5.71	4.79	4.45	4.94
Subukia	4.86	3.75	3.41	3.89	3.82
Nakuru West	5.15	4.56	4.01	4.34	4.98
Molo	6.18	5.06	4.91	5.31	5.56
Nakuru North	4.88	6.23	4.91	4.54	4.60
Nakuru East	4.76	3.94	5.23	3.56	4.77
Mean	4.89	4.64	4.32	4.22	4.32

Source: (Nakuru County Education Office, 2023)

Table 3 shows that the highest mean grade (M = 4.89) was posted in 2018, this was followed by a steady decline in years 2018(M = 4.89), 2019 (M = 4.32) and 2020 (M = 4.22) A slight increase in the mean grade was recorded in 2019 (M = 4.64.). Generally, Kiswahili language achievement in Nakuru County has been continuously low reflecting the national outlook. Nakuru has not done well compared to the neighbouring counties. For instance, in

2019, the county posted a mean grade of 4.64 while its neighbours like Nyandurua, Laikipia, Kajiado, Baringo and Kericho had mean scores of 5.55, 4.66, 4.69, 4.81, and 4.97 respectively. It was this unsatisfactory academic achievement that called for this inquiry in the study location.

Empirical studies show that students' academic achievement is affected by many factors, these include; social, cultural, economic, administrative aspects and students' related factors such as attitude and discipline (Agonya et al., 2019; Arishaba & Balimuttajjo, 2024). Njoroge and Ndirangu (2018) observed that there was a positive relationship between availability of instructional materials, the teachers' workload, attitudes and students' academic achievement. Murunga (2019) noted that teachers related factors such as qualification and experience, motivation and commitment were significant predictors of students' achievement while Juma and Kyallo (2022) associated performance with ineffective implementation of the curriculum. Ngatia (2019) and Orodho et al. (2018) noted that teaching methods, school and home environments, institutional leadership and students' discipline were significantly related to students' academic achievement. Another learners' characteristic cited as correlate of students' achievement is attitude (Mumia, 2018). Zysberg and Schwabsky (2021) and Sika and Ochieng (2023) attributed academic achievement to low students' book ratio, school climate, academic self-efficacy and availability of other related teaching-learning resources.

Students' characteristics refer to their unique personal attributes like age, gender, self-efficacy, motivation, attitudes, perceptions among others (Mutheu et al., 2019). In the context of this study students' characteristics refer to their self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments. It is thus concerned with confidence in one's ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Researches carried out in the domains of languages, science and Mathematics have demonstrated that students' judgments of their own academic capabilities or self-efficacy beliefs relate positively with their academic behaviour and achievement. For instance, a study carried out by Tenaw (2013) on relationship between self-efficacy, academic achievement and gender in analytical chemistry of college students, revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and achievement. Bakar et al. (2016) established that there is a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement. They posit that self-efficacy serves as a good predictor of students' academic achievement in all academic fields.

Studies by Bates and Khasawneh (2007), Cascio et al. (2013), Goulao (2014) and

Zysberg and Schwabsky (2021) all revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement in various academic fields. Moturi (2012), Moturi (2012) and Ochieng (2015) revealed that students with high self-efficacy performed better in Mathematics and English than those with lower self-efficacy among secondary school students in Nyakach and Nyamira sub-counties respectively. This observation is also highlighted by Stajkovic (2006), who posits that students with high self-efficacy often display greater academic achievement compared to those with lower levels of efficacy. All these findings are in agreement with Bandura (2006) who observes that students who possess a high degree of self-efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks, to persist longer at them, and to exert more effort in order to achieve the expected outcome. Research has indicated that self-efficacy is a correlate of achievement (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995). According to Madhuri and Saini (2019), self-efficacy denotes self-confidence and effectiveness in accomplishing a task. Individuals hold the self-perceptions about their capabilities and this differs across all domains of learning (Stajkovic, 2006).

Researchers over the years have tried to establish causes or factors that are related to poor academic achievement, not just in languages but also in all areas of study. Such studies include one that was carried out by Bong (2001) on the relationship between gender and academic achievement of middle and high school students. The study revealed that gender was statistically significantly related to academic achievement. Bong and Skaalvik (2003), Lee and Stankov (2013) in their studies concluded that non-cognitive characteristics such as gender influenced students' academic achievement. Ogwen et al. (2014) found that the influence of female students' characteristics in performance in agriculture had slightly higher mean scores (48.30%) compared to their male counterparts (47.65%). Kang'ahi et al. (2012) reported that girls continued to outperform boys in Kiswahili language. Additionally, Owuor and Chemisto (2015) postulate that, girls achieved better results in art based subjects and languages than boys. Peterson (2000) noted that girls' writings in English language were more detailed, precise and descriptive than boys. Mutua and Oyoo (2020) observed that, there was a statistically significant gender difference in Kiswahili language academic achievement in favour of girls. These observations are supported by KNEC (2022) report, which shows that girls continued to perform better than boys in languages did.

Bett (2016) investigated public secondary school students on the effects of bimodal teaching approach on learner achievement, motivation and gender in written English language composition and found that there was no statistically significant difference between boys mean score ($M = 3.64$) and that of the girls ($M = 3.28$). Similarly, Fakeye (2010) did a survey on

students' personal variables as correlates of academic achievement in English as a second language in Nigeria and found no statistically significant relationship between gender and achievement in English language. This implies that both boys and girls performed comparably in the language. These studies reveal gender and academic achievement differences in various academic fields but none has established if there is a relationship between them. The current study therefore intended to find out if there is relationship between male and female students in Kiswahili language skills academic achievement.

Students' perceptions of teaching methods used by their teachers is a non-cognitive aspect that relates to learners' ability to master Kiswahili language content. According to Rao and Narayan (1998) perception is the process through which individuals select, organize and interpret sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information, or the surrounding environment. Ampadu's (2012) study on students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching practices and how it impacts on their learning experiences, revealed that teaching was effective when a blend of both teacher centred and learner centred methods were used. This is because each method has its strengths that enhance mastery of content and consequently academic achievement. Momanyi (2012) and Mbiti (2013) revealed that the teaching method a teacher chooses plays a key role in learners understanding of concepts and acquiring the skills prescribed in the curriculum.

The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2002) recommends that teachers should use various teaching methods and resources in the implementation of the Kiswahili syllabus. This enhances the learners' ability to acquire the relevant language skills and consequently achieve the stated objectives. Armstrong (2012) observes that traditional approaches suppress students' responsibility in participative learning and only become receptors of knowledge. This in turn leads to learners attaining minimum grades in examinations. Learners should always be at the centre of the teaching/learning process if teachers will achieve the learning objectives (MoE, 2007). Students perceive their teachers as custodians of knowledge since they instructed, guided and directed them on what to do all the time, therefore they had a direct impact on their learning experiences (Ahmed & Aziz, 2009). Abobo (2017) studied the influence of Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) on the performance in Kiswahili language skills in Nakuru County and found out that 70% of students perceived that CAI method helped them improve their writing skills than traditional methods of textbooks and chalk. This agrees with studies by Arthur et al. (2003) and Atandi et al. (2019) who established out that, students react positively or negatively to teachers' choice of teaching/learning approaches. These reactions will lead students into forming diverse perceptions on methods used in the teaching/learning process and

consequently impact their academic achievement in Kiswahili language.

These studies show that there is a link between students' characteristics and their academic achievement. Despite these diverse studies, none examined the relationship between secondary school students' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language, thus the need to do this study and establish if indeed there is any relationship. The KIE (2002) syllabus outlines several objectives of teaching Kiswahili in Kenyan secondary schools. These include; giving learners the ability to listen attentively, speak fluently, read and write in Kiswahili. Learners should also be able to use Kiswahili language to communicate effectively in their daily lives. The syllabus continues to highlight Kiswahili language as one of the three compulsory subjects alongside English and Mathematics which are taught and examined by the KNEC at both primary and secondary schools (KIE, 2002).

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the factors contributing to low academic achievement among students in Nakuru County. Abobo (2017), Njoroge and Ndirangu (2018) and Turuthi (2018) studies revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between students' characteristics, media used during instruction and their academic achievement. Based on the theoretical explanations, there is need to investigate further if factors such as students' self-efficacy, gender or their perceptions of teaching methods could be possible causes of the continued poor academic achievement in Kiswahili language in national examinations in Nakuru County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Kiswahili is an important language of communication internationally, regionally and locally. In Kenya, it is the national and official language alongside English as stated in the Kenyan Constitution (2010) Article 7 (RoK, 2010). However, secondary school students have portrayed low Kiswahili language skills mastery in written forms as evidenced by the low academic achievement in KCSE over the years. Nakuru County is among the counties that have consistently posted low academic achievement in the subject, for example, in 2020 it posted a mean of 34.3% compared to the national mean of 47.0 %. The unsatisfactory achievement in Kiswahili is of concern to education stakeholders in the county, as it denies students admission to training in courses or employment opportunities that require good grades in the subject. The poor achievement could be due to student characteristics given that they have been cited as correlates of achievement. Low levels of self-efficacy may make students to feel that they are not capable of learning and achieving expected outcomes. Gender and learners' perceptions of teaching methods have also been associated with students' academic achievement. This study

investigated the relationship between secondary school students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and their achievement in Kiswahili language skills in Nakuru county, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at determining whether students' levels of self-efficacy have a relationship with academic achievement in Kiswahili language. The study also examined if gender had any relationship with Kiswahili language academic achievement. Students' perceptions on teaching methods were established in relation to academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine whether there is a relationship between students' levels of self-efficacy and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine whether there is a relationship between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.
- iii. To establish whether there is a relationship between students' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.
- iv. To find out whether there is a relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, and perceptions on teaching methods all combined and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested during the study:

Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between students' levels self-efficacy and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Ho2: There is no statistically significant relationship between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Ho3: There is no statistically significant relationship between students' perceptions of

teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

H₀₄: There is no statistically significant relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods all combined and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may be important in informing the Government of Kenya on how students' self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods relate to academic achievement in Kiswahili language. This would enable the government and other stakeholders in education to consider the recommendations that would be made, based on the findings this study in decision making on how to improve student achievement in the subject.

Teachers of Kiswahili on the other hand would benefit from the findings of the study in understanding how students feel about teaching methods they employ and consequently how these perceptions relate to their academic achievement in Kiswahili language. Teachers would endeavour to improve, change or blend carefully their teaching methods as the findings showed that they influence students' academic achievement.

Results from this study would help curriculum developers to tailor programs to individual students' characteristics such as; self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods. In addition, results from this study would help students of Kiswahili language in understanding self-efficacy concept and its implications on their academic achievement. This implies that, the knowledge would help them exploit their capacities and to exert more effort in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Nakuru County in the Republic of Kenya and involved students from public secondary schools only. It investigated the relationship between public secondary school students' characteristics namely; self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and their academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The accessible population was the form three students from Nakuru East, Gilgil, Naivasha, and Nakuru North sub counties. Collection of data was done using students' questionnaire and Kiswahili language skills achievement test.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

A number of assumptions were made when conducting the study. The study assumed

that the responses given by the participants were objective and a true representation of the state of affairs in schools. It was also assumed that the form three students were best placed to provide the required data since they had gone through Form One and Two levels of learning and were therefore conversant with the Kiswahili syllabus having covered a substantial portion of it.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were encountered during the study:

- i. Respondents normally paint an exaggerated picture of themselves to people they have a personal relationship with such as teachers. This may especially be so if they think the information, they give would influence the person's view about them. This could have happened when students were responding to items in the questionnaire. Attempts were made to mitigate this by asking the respondents not to indicate their names, neither their admission numbers but random numbers were assigned to the questionnaire which were corresponding with the Kiswahili language skills achievement test.
- ii. The study focused on public secondary schools in Nakuru County and may be generalized to other counties with caution because of differences in socio-economic settings. For instance, Kiswahili is more frequently spoken in urban schools as compared to those in rural areas where mother tongues are freely used.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

The following are the definitions of the key terms:

Achievement: According to Allen and Delahunty (2002), achievement means to accomplish something especially by special effort, superior ability or great courage. In this study, it refers to scores a student obtained in Kiswahili language skills achievement test.

Gender: Kayaoglu, (2012) and Cakici (2011) define gender as the social, cultural and psychological construct that refer to the males and females. It is something acquired or constructed through relationship with others, individual's adherence to certain cultural norms and prescriptions. In this research, gender was used in reference to the social and psychological constructs in relation to males or females among students in public secondary schools.

Language skills: According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) language skills emerge as a natural result of acquisition through comprehensible input, rather than through direct instruction or drill. They are systems of symbols that permit people to communicate and interact Skills enable an individual to select the most appropriate behaviour or action when given a task to perform. These symbols include vocal and written forms. Language skills therefore refer to the ability of the learner to acquire and use listening, speaking and writing in Kiswahili language skills in both vocal and written contexts.

Perception: According to Robbins and Judge (2019) perception is the process of recognizing, organizing and interpreting sensory information based on knowledge and past experiences, and is informed by signals generated from the environment through sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. In this study, it refers to how the form three students regard, understand and interpret the various teaching methods used in the teaching/learning process of Kiswahili language class.

Public school: It is an institution of learning supported by the government funds (Mutheu, et al., 2019).

Relationship: It is the mutual association between two or more variables (Kiptum, 2016). Here it was operationalized to mean the strength and direction of association, as expressed by the regression coefficients between the selected students' characteristics and their achievement in Kiswahili language achievement skills.

Self-efficacy: This is individuals' conviction that he or she can execute the behaviour needed to produce the desired outcome (Bandura, 1994). In this research it referred to the student's conviction that she/he is able to acquire the necessary Kiswahili language skills and consequently be able to communicate effectively both in written and spoken

form.

Teaching methods: Killen (2011) defines teaching method as the style of presenting content in the classroom, encompassing principles of instruction, pedagogy and management strategies such as class participation, demonstrations, and recitation. These are various ways the teachers of Kiswahili employ to deliver content and facilitate learners to acquire Kiswahili language skills. These enable them to communicate in both spoken and written form and thereafter achieve highly in their examinations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on various themes that are related to the study. These include; importance of Kiswahili language, teaching of the subject in secondary schools and achievement. The chapter proceeds by discussing students' characteristics that relate with academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills, among secondary school students. These characteristics include; self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of methods used in the teaching of Kiswahili language and achievement in the subject. The theoretical framework and the conceptual framework that form the basis of the study are also included in the chapter.

2.2 Importance of Kiswahili Language

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015) defines language as a system of sounds and words used by humans to express their ideas thoughts and feelings using movements, symbols and sounds. Wardhaugh (2002) refers to language as the knowledge of rules and principles of saying and doing things with sounds, words and/or sentences. Arora (2012) alludes that, language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communication by means of a system of voluntarily produced sounds and symbols that are perceived through the auditory organs and made through the speech organs. Crystal (2024) further asserts that language is an arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which human beings interact and communicate in terms of their common experience. It is considered as the expression of ideas by means of speech sounds or symbols which are combined into words and then sentences since every language represents thinking (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.). It is estimated that there are between 6000 to 7000 languages globally, with English, Chinese Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish being the most widely spoken ones (Sudarmo, 2021).

Language is a skill and therefore it requires that one learns its rules, words, understands them, practices and masters them fluently and skilfully (Krashen, 1982). In order to acquire these skills, one must be exposed to authentic communicative situations (Krashen, 1982). Krashen and Terrell (1983), support this fact by stating that language learning comes about through using target language in real life situations. Schultz (1996) established that students felt that it was important to master grammar, while their teachers believed that it was better to practice language in simulated real life situations that involve listening and speaking (communication) than to study grammar explicitly. Language is for communication and according to Wessel (2007) language is the expression of ideas by means of which speech

sounds are combined into words and then sentences since every language represents thinking. Wessels (2007) continues to allude that any skill is learnt through practice and experience. Principles of speaking should be emphasized, because a language can only be learnt by maximum usage of auditory and oral capabilities (Akindele, 2015).

Teachers of language need to acknowledge the fact that, language is learnt through modelling, meaning it is a form of behaviour that is learnt through imitation, observation and participation (Funk, 2012). Language is vocal, it is observed speech and since it is fundamental while learning language; reading and writing follow the former activity, (Arora, 2012). Arora continues to postulate that many languages in the world exist only in speech. They have neither any written symbols nor a script; but it is difficult to come across any language that exists in script and not in speech. Language and its symbols are primarily meant for speaking, a skill that must be acquired or learnt. Thompson and Wyatt (1956) had earlier emphasized this point by saying that, the power of expression in a language is a matter of skill rather than of knowledge, it is a power that grows by exercise not by knowing merely meanings and rules. A learner cannot be taught a language by simply memorizing words and rules but primarily it is learnt in real life situations.

The importance of language to human beings cannot be understated since it facilitates expression of thoughts and engagement in the activities that commonly take place in the society (Aseti, 2019). Evans (2020) acknowledges this by contending that language has the potential of bringing people together and is an important cultural tool as it is the main vehicle through which people share and exchange values, aspirations and ideas. Language cannot be separated from society because it unifies people (Foyewa et al., 2016).

Language is not merely a tool for communication but it is also the framework within which a people's culture is embedded (Nauyoma, 2020). Myronova et al. (2022) assert that language is a super structural semiotic tool in which the cultural identities and values of a people are coded and encoded. The traditions of a people are encapsulated in the living museum that is language argues (Nauyoma, 2020). Every society has a language that distinguishes it from another. Apart from the unifying and identity purposes, language bridges cultural gaps and breaks cultural barriers. In the African context and Kenya in particular, the language for identity is Kiswahili. Kiswahili is an African language of Bantu origin which is spoken by various ethnic groups that inhabit large stretches of the Indian Ocean coast (Ouma, 2015). The area stretches from Northern Kenya to Northern Mozambique and has over 200 million speakers. Kiswahili originated in East Africa, it is thus an African language that serves as a 'lingua franca' of the region (Hiza & Paschal, 2023). In Africa, the language is spoken by

various communities inhabiting the Great Lakes Region which includes Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo (Muthwii & Kioko, 2003).

Kiswahili is a national language of eastern African nations namely Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Kiswahili was introduced in Rwanda in 1979 after an agreement was signed between the Governments of Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania (Niyotugira, et al., 2023). Ntawiyanga (2009) asserts that acquiring Kiswahili as a second language for Rwandese students would sharpen their intellectual skills and increase their benefits from Kiswahili speaking countries. Mlaga (2017) and Ntawigira (2009) reiterated the need to strengthen Kiswahili in the educational system of Rwanda in order to create the ability in learners to communicate effectively and access the world marketplaces easily. Mlaga (2017) continues to recommend the teaching of Kiswahili in all secondary school in Rwanda. This would enhance Rwanda's integration in the EAC.

Kanana (2013) in a study that examined the role of African languages as tools for national development that focused on Kiswahili, established that there is a very close relationship between language and national development. Evidence from literature also reveals that where there are linguistic barriers, development takes place at a very slow rate. The first president of Kenya underscored this fact by declaring Kiswahili a national language in 1974. In many African countries, the colonial languages have continued to be given priority at the expense of indigenous languages (Masezerano & Zang, 2023). This hinders national development because the populace is not able to interact effectively in matters relating to education, trade and commerce, which are foundations of national development.

However, literature continues to indicate that Kiswahili like other international languages such as English, Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish and French, has made tremendous strides in all spheres (Smith, 2023). It is used to meet various social, political, economic and religious needs of individuals and societies. It can be considered as wealth of the society like other languages since it is the most spoken African language with over 200 million speakers (Lisanza, 2021). People use Kiswahili to interact and inform each other about the events that take place in the material and spiritual life of the society (Yashnar & Ogli, 2020). Mugane (2015) highlights the importance of Kiswahili as a language that has transcended its origins to become a unifying medium across diverse African cultures. Kiswahili's adaptability has allowed it to flourish as a lingua franca in eastern and central Africa, playing a role similar to that of English globally concludes (Mugane, 2015). Timammy and Ngala-Oduor (2016) in their paper on the treatment of Kiswahili in Kenya's education system observes that, despite

Kiswahili's official status alongside English, it often receives unequal treatment within educational and governmental institutions. They therefore recommend the need for more concerted national efforts to promote Kiswahili as a co-official language and national identity marker both locally and internationally.

Kiswahili language is also utilized in both electronic and print media in many countries worldwide (Aseti, 2019). These include organizations such as British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Deutsche Welle (Germany), Voice of America, All India Radio, Radio Pakistan (Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan: NHK World-Japan and Moscow radio (Onindo, et al., 2023) These media houses use the language as a means of expressing or exchanging ideas, advertising and educating their audiences. Chibuwe and Salawe (2020) asserts that local mass media rely heavily on viability of African languages. This is evidenced by the numerous indigenous language radio and television stations that have emerged in the recent years that broadcast in Kiswahili (Kibigo, 2022). Kibigo further recommends that Kiswahili be used as a pedagogical tool in the training of journalists. This observation was made in a study on prospects and possibilities of Kiswahili language use as a pedagogical tool in journalism training in Kenya. An overwhelming number of respondents (94.4%) preferred Kiswahili being incorporated in journalism training (Kibigo, 2022). Despite the perceived important role of the Kiswahili language, learners' competency in its skills remains a challenge, a situation that this study explored.

The place of Kiswahili in African continent cannot be understated since it plays a major role in social and economic development nationally and internationally (Sebazungu & Ikurumutse, 2023). The African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) have recognized Kiswahili as one of the official languages because of its unifying character (Dahir, 2018; Kamau, 2009; Lembuka, 2024). The language is used in the continent for wider communication, improving literacy, galvanizing unity and commerce among other uses (Mukuthuria, 2006). Further, Munia (2018) and Onyango (2020) continue to emphasize the role of Kiswahili language as the key means of communication in various sectors in Africa. These sectors include trade, religion, education, scholarly work and communication. Kiswahili has been proposed to be introduced in Namibian school curriculum as one of the foreign languages to be taught (Nauyoma, 2020). In Kenya, Kiswahili plays a significant role of unifying the country's over 42 tribes as both the national and official language (Atandi, et al., 2019). The pivotal role that Kiswahili language plays in the works discussed underscored the need for in depth investigation on learners continued low academic achievement in the subject.

2.3 Teaching Kiswahili Language

Kiswahili language is taught in many international universities (Mbaabu, 2012). In the USA, Swahili language is taught in more than 100 institutions. Universities teaching Kiswahili in the USA include; St. Lawrence University, Yale, Harvard, Stanford, Princeton and University of Edinburg just to mention a few. At Ohio State University, students who study International Studies can take Kiswahili as part of their course requirement (Ohio State University, n.d). Furthermore, at Ohio State University, Kiswahili is recognized by the College of Arts and Sciences for students graduating with Arts in International Studies. Other countries that teach Kiswahili language include Great Britain, Germany, Canada, Poland Mexico, China, Japan, India and Australia among others (Mbaabu, 2012). Internationally, Kiswahili is seen as an important language for research, interaction, job market and volunteers' workers for those who aspire to come to Africa.

Dahir (2018) reports that Kiswahili continues to enjoy prominence in Africa. In South Africa, it was recommended to be one of the optional languages to be entrenched in the curriculum as a subject of study in the schools by the year 2020 alongside other international languages such as French, Mandarin and German. This makes Kiswahili the first African language to be offered outside South Africa as a language of study (Dahir, 2018; Khumalo, 2018; Lang'at, 2020). The Minister of Education in South Africa Mrs. Motshekga reiterated that, this would promote unity and social cohesion with other African nations. This is because Kiswahili is Africa's most spoken indigenous language attests Munene (2018).

Kiswahili is spoken by more than 98.3 Million people in Africa followed by Hausa at a distant second with 63 million (Dahir, 2018). It is also Africa's most internationally recognized language as reported by Oberholzer (2019) when he witnessed Prince Charles speaking fluent Kiswahili to a Tanzanian youth in a conference. In Malawi there are proposals to include Kiswahili in the school curriculum to be as taught as one of the foreign African languages. It will be the first African indigenous language to be entrenched in South Africa and Malawi curriculum (Khumalo, 2018; Lang'at, 2020).

Tanzania was the first Sub-Saharan African country to consider abandoning English language as a medium of instruction and fully adopt Kiswahili (Mohammed, 2015). Kiswahili is reported to be the main language in Tanzania with over 60% of her population speaking it at home, market place and even in offices. In Uganda, the Ugandan National Kiswahili Council (UNKC) was established with the objective of guiding the introduction of Kiswahili as the second national/official language. In 2005 Kiswahili was proposed to be Uganda's second official language (Shiundu , 2019). The subject is now taught in primary and secondary schools,

colleges and universities.

In Kenya, Kiswahili is not only a national and an official language but it is also a compulsory subject at both primary and secondary levels of education. RoK (1981) commission otherwise referred to as The Presidential Working Party on the Establishment of the Second University, recommended the change of the education system from seven years of primary, four of secondary (ordinary level) two advanced level and three university (7-4-2-3) to eight years of primary, four secondary and four university (8-4-4). The working party further recommended that Kiswahili, English and Mathematics be compulsory subjects in the school curriculum. In addition, RoK (1981) also recommended that Kiswahili to be examined at both primary and secondary. This was a great achievement bearing in mind that all the other commissions were not bringing in the aspect of evaluation of Kiswahili at the national level. This has continued to date, whereby Kiswahili is being examined at both primary and secondary levels at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Schools Education (KCSE) levels. Moreover, the 8-4-4 system of education has changed to the Competence Based Education (CBE) and Kiswahili is entrenched in the curriculum as one of the core subjects alongside English, Community Service Learning and Physical Education. This is an indicator of the value attached to the language. Despite this perceived importance of the language, students' academic achievement has remained low over the years.

Curriculum Based Education (CBE) aims at filling the gap of low academic achievement. CBE is characterized by 2-6-6-3 system; covering 2 years of pre-primary (PP1 & PP2), 6 years of middle school and 6 years of secondary education covering grades 7 to 9 (junior school) and grades 10-12 (senior school) then 3 years of university education (Akala, 2021; Kaviti, 2018; Kosgei & Chepchumba, 2020). From PP1 to Grade 9, the subjects covered are English, Kiswahili or Kenya Sign Language, Home Science, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mathematics, Religious Education, Creative Arts, Physical and Health Education, Social Studies. The learners are all expected to have gained adequate competencies from middle school as they progress to senior school. Consequently, learners should have identified their pathways which they should pursue to university. The pathways include; Arts and Sports Science, Social Sciences and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The concept of competence has been discussed by various researchers. Ford (2014) narrows it down to “an intensive focus on what learners can do as opposed to what they are taught. According to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the aim of CBE is to equip learners with attitudes, skills, and values that will enable them in problem solving associated with the

technological demands and advancements in the 21st century (KICD, 2017, 2019). Kosgei and Chepchumba (2020) in their study on teachers' competency as a cornerstone on the implementation of competency-based curriculum in Kenya. They emphasize that the effectiveness of the CBE largely depends on the teachers. They continue to posit that teachers must be equipped with skills that enable them to understand and apply the principles of the curriculum.

Tilya and Mafumika (2018) assert that when there is a shift in curriculum there are always changes in the teaching/learning process. The content of the curriculum should be selected and arranged well for effective learning to take place. In the 8-4-4 system of education which has since shifted to CBE as alluded earlier, Kiswahili is taught as a compulsory and examinable subject in primary and secondary schools. However, in CBE literacy in Kiswahili will be taught at both lower and upper levels as a learning area. This implies that the learners will be able to read, write and use language proficiently at the end of each level. They are expected to be able to understand the relationship between sounds and written words (Nyongesa, 2020). According to UNESCO (2024), literacy helps learners to make meaning of letters and sounds thus making sense of written codes throughout their lives. Literacy is part of larger set of skills which include digital skills, media literacy, job-seeking skills and life-skills forms of written language and to communicate in varied contexts (UNESCO, 2024).

In CBE, learners are expected to demonstrate communicative competence and relevant skills as outlined in the Competency Based Education and Training Framework (CBET), (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2019). It is envisaged that teachers will employ learner centred approaches in order to achieve this objective (Kaviti, 2018). Learners should be made participants in their learning by using the appropriate learning methods suitable to the curriculum (Odundo & Gunga, 2013). The acquisition of Kiswahili language skills is likely to be hampered if the learning process is not using the correct teaching methods suitable to the students. KICD (2017, 2019) defines competency as the ability to apply appropriate knowledge and skills to successfully perform a function. Learners are required to attain specific competencies and skills at each stage of the learning process. Thus, assessment is done continuously as opposed to 8-4-4 that evaluated learners at the end of each level. In the previous 8-4-4 curriculum, primary and secondary school learners undertook one summative examination at the end of each level. CBE assessment adopts a more formative approach with diagnostic measures to enhance and improve the acquisition of skills and competencies, making it a competency-based rather than an exam-performance-based education system (KNEC, 2021).

Curriculum Based Education has introduced a new school-based assessment at the end of Grade 4, which contributes to 20% of the overall score of the learner's primary education assessment. Another assessment is done at Grade 6, and this marks the end of primary school education. At both grades 4 and 6, Kiswahili is compulsory, and it is also assessed at these levels emphasizing its importance. CBE uses formative assessments rather than the summative examination approach of the previous system eliminating the rote learning experienced earlier (Ohanga, et al., 2021). CBE aims at equipping learners with attitudes, skills, and values that will enable them to solve everyday problems (KICD, 2017, 2019). Kiswahili is perceived as a tool that will achieve the afore mentioned enabling social cohesion, acquisition of cultural values and bringing in economic and political integration (Nation Africa, 2022; Salonik, 2023).

2.3.1 Kiswahili Language Skills

The KIE (2002) syllabus recommends that the teachers should enhance learners' ability to communicate in Kiswahili by emphasizing on language skills and grammar. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) language skills are the communicative abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing that emerge as a natural result of language acquisition through comprehensible input, rather than through direct instruction or drill. Language has four macro skills which are either receptive or productive. Reading and listening belong to receptive skills (Krashen, 1985). By reading or listening, language learners receive ideas, thoughts and opinions. On the other side, writing and speaking are productive skills since through them learners produce ideas, concepts and meaning from context. Krashen (1999) reinforces that language learning is more meaningful when it focuses on communication and input rather than explicit instruction. Mastery of Kiswahili language skills requires that one must be in possession of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. It is therefore imperative that facilitating learners' acquisition of these skills be given prominence when teaching the language.

Kenya Institute of Education (2002) syllabus outlines the general objectives of teaching Kiswahili at secondary school level in Kenya as: to recognize, investigate and evaluate the different genres of language and literature in Kiswahili. Other objectives include; to learn and evaluate different concepts of the cultures using Kiswahili, comprehend the language and come up with solutions of some of the issues affecting the society such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality, environmental issues and technological development among others. Learners should be able to appreciate and use Kiswahili as a national and international language (KIE, 2002). These objectives of teaching Kiswahili imply that, the instruction aims at not only imparting

knowledge and skills but also to help in the development of positive attitudes towards the subject. Lopes (1997) as cited by Kretzer and Kaschula (2022) postulates that most parents and teachers prefer the pedagogical advantage offered by the language of instruction, which in Kenyan context is English. This has been one of the hindrances in achieving the stated objectives. However, the Kiswahili language skills learning outcomes stipulated in the syllabus can only be achieved by improving the quality of teaching the subject in secondary schools in Kenya. According to Ly (2024), teachers must create a learner-centred environment conducive for effective achievement of teaching/learning outcomes. Today's classroom is moving away from traditional class that is teacher-centred to a more interactive, learner-centred approach driven by 21st century needs in terms of skills and content (Akala, 2021).

2.3.2 Listening and Speaking Skills

The main aim of teaching listening skills is to enable learners to cope with the natural listening situations that they are likely to encounter in real life (Ur, 2014). Arora (2014) and Cheung (2010) posit that listening is the basis of language because learning a language largely depends on imitation and practice. Cheung (2010) continues to assert that listening skill should be the first and foremost to be acquired in language learning. This is because it leads to acquiring other skills, namely; speaking, reading and writing. The more the teacher converses in the language, which is being taught, the faster the learners will learn. Selection and collection of teaching materials such as radio, tape recorders, CDs, DVDs and videos should be done carefully and used optimally to enhance the listening sessions in the classroom (Walker, 2014).

Instructional materials are among the most essential resources for facilitating effective classroom practices. The study of Naisujaki et al. (2017) on perceptions of teachers on availability of instructional materials and physical facilities in secondary schools of Arusha District concluded that, successful teaching will only be realized if instructional materials are available to the teacher. Kurita (2012) asserts that teachers need to listen in order to know what their learners need and that they should give learners time to listen, jot down and give them time to think for their schemata to be activated (Richards & Rodgers, 1983). Pre-listening activities activate schemata by helping learners to understand unfamiliar words and structures. They also help prediction skills when they scan an article, hear a story or see a picture.

Cheung (2010) and Madani and Kheirzadeh (2022) identify several pre-listening activities which include; pre-reading questions, pre-reading vocabularies, labelling pictures, classifying objects by completing tables. They also mention predicting what would happen after learners have been given some background information from a text or a story. The more

the learners listen to a language the more they grasp it faster. Second language learners must listen in order to get accustomed to the sounds and rhythm of the language (Vandergrift, 2004; Wessels, 2007). Therefore, Kiswahili language teachers should help learners become efficient listeners by making listening activities an integral part of the learning programme. They should plan and structure listening activities carefully in order to help learners to learn more easily even other subjects not only the language being learnt (Claessen, 1984).

Listening is an important language skill in terms of second language acquisition (Vandergrift, 2007). Adelman (2012) and Cheung, (2010) assert that more emphasis should be put into listening because it is a prerequisite for acquisition of other language skills. Listening lays a foundation for speaking and other skills such as reading and writing (Bruner, 1983). Asemota (2015) posits that listening is a foundational skill in language learning, learners acquire pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. Therefore, effective listening requires not only hearing but also interpreting and responding to spoken messages appropriately asserts (Asemota, 2015). In spite of this, many learners regard listening as the most difficult because in most cases teachers tend to focus more on speaking and writing skills, neglecting the systematic teaching of listening. (KNEC, 2014; Kurita, 2012). Kinginger (2009) asserts that the teacher can choose various listening designs to enhance listening skills in learners. These designs include informal listening tasks where learners listen to short texts and answer related questions, the use of authentic audio materials, classroom practices that integrate listening exercises, and strategies that actively engage learners in the listening process (Asemota, 2015).

The other design is the use of tasks whereby the teacher gives guidelines of what is expected from the learners, the purpose and responses expected without waiting till the end of the task to respond (Asemota, 2015; Nunan, 2021). This form of engagement encourages learners to remain focused throughout the teaching/learning process. Teachers should engage learners with tasks that are interesting to maintain their attention and motivation to learn in the language classroom (Richards & Rogers, 2001; Richards, 2023). These activities may include; story-telling, songs, watching film, question and answer sessions and note taking. Other activities may include; giving definitions of concepts, true/false statements, and paraphrasing, identifying mistakes, skimming and scanning texts and summarizing (Lewis, 2017). Listening skill is the most vital in the language acquisition process and teachers must make deliberate efforts to teach it (Caspersz., & Stasinska, 2015; Walker, 2014). The authors continue to assert that teachers should feel free to use a variety of approaches and methods that suit the needs of their learners.

Speaking is the most important means of expressing a language (Arora, 2012). The

more a person can speak in a language, the better they are able to express their ideas clearly. Speaking will in turn depend on the listening skill. Learners should be given ample opportunities to speak in the language being learnt with emphasis on pronunciation and intonation. Richards and Rodgers (2001) post that pronunciation is the way a word is spoken or the way someone utters words. Learners of a language aspire to perfect it as soon as they start learning. For this to happen teachers must make deliberate efforts to engage learners in drills which involve repetition of structural patterns through oral practice (Richards, 2023). Alharbi (2015) recommends that teachers should increase interactive activities both in the classroom and outside to give learners more practical experiences of learning a language. People cannot converse in a certain language without pronouncing the sounds of that language (Richards, 2023). Therefore, pronunciation is a vital pillar of speaking. Proper pronunciation eases communication and makes it successful. This helps to fix subject matter in the mind of learners and form correct speech habits.

Speaking skill comprises of three situations, namely; interactive, partially interactive and non-interactive (Arora, 2014; Bailey, 2018). Each type of speaking situation demands different skills. Therefore, teachers should engage learners in classroom activities to help them practice build confidence and competence across all the three types of speaking. Many students experience anxiety when speaking because they believe that every situation demands flawless grammar and pronunciation. Teachers can help build their confidence by engaging them in activities such as turn-taking during reading comprehension, role plays, drama, class discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. Students often fear speaking because they think every situation requires perfect fluency in grammar and pronunciation (Tuan & Mai, 2015). This prepares students for real life communication such as job interviews, public debates or market place conversations and not just academic activities or doing well in examinations.

Teachers must ensure learners are aware of various organs of speech such as lips, teeth, alveolar, tongue, hard palate, vocal cords and larynx (Mohammed, 2019). According to Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), when one speaks, air comes out through the lungs and is interfered with at various places for the production of sounds. These speech organs are called articulators and points of articulation. Sounds can be produced only by the process of inhaling and exhaling. Sounds in Kiswahili language, are classified into two main groups vowels and Consonants. Vowels are speech sounds produced when air passes through the vocal tract with relatively little or no obstruction while consonants are produced with some degree of constriction or closure at one or more points along the vocal tract (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015). The language teacher therefore, must make learners aware of these facts for successful

skill acquisition. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), learners learn better when they enjoy using the target language through actions like singing, saying rhymes, reciting poems etc. They learn to pronounce words correctly and grow accustomed to the intonation and rhythms of the target language while they enjoy themselves.

However, Kretzer (2019) and Kretzer and Kaschula (2022) reported that language teaching in most African schools is too formal denying learners to use it in real life situations. This practice arises from the reality that in many African countries, language policies prioritize foreign languages as the official medium of instruction, consequently marginalizing indigenous languages. For instance, Kenyan language policy stipulates that the official language for instruction is English, This situation disadvantages many children who begin school with limited or no exposure to this dominant language, hindering their comprehension and overall academic performance. Such policies can hinder students' ability to apply language skills in everyday contexts, as they are taught in languages they may not use outside the classroom (Ogechi, 2012). This could be the reason for the continued poor Kiswahili language skills acquisition and consequently low academic achievement. Listening and speaking skills play a primary role in the social and academic life of a person. One who listens and speaks effectively is able to receive and respond to information appropriately (Adelmann, 2012). These two skills also contribute significantly to the development of reading and writing skills. In addition, one who has mastered these skills is likely to create a favourable impression of oneself. The Kiswahili language teacher, therefore, should make every effort to help the learner acquire and continually refine the two skills to enable them interact with others effectively and confidently.

The learner should be given ample practice and exposure to good models, especially native speakers of the target language for this enhances their proficiency (Gudu, 2015). This is in tandem with social cognitive theory that identifies social modelling as an element of learning. Gathumbi and Matembe (2005) and Johnson (2006) opine that pronunciation drills, role-plays, debates, listening comprehension exercises, presentation of oral reports and drama can all be used to help the learner develop fluency and confidence. In the Kiswahili language syllabus KIE (2002), oral literature, narratives, oral poetry, songs, proverbs, tongue-twisters and riddles are recommended for use in the teaching of the listening and speaking skills to give the learners a wider field within which to express themselves. In the process, the learners study the genres in a more relaxed and interesting atmosphere (Gudu, 2015; Johnson, 2006).

Poetry is among the elements of listening and speaking skills taught during Kiswahili language lessons (KIE, 2002). Poems provides opportunities for learners to achieve oral skills through recitation of poems and promote writing skills through written exercises based on

poetry. Development of the learner's cognitive skills through the interpretation and analysis of poems provide opportunities for learners to acquire the creative use of Kiswahili. The other rationale for teaching Kiswahili poetry is that it provides students with the opportunity to explore linguistic and conceptual aspects of the written text without necessarily concentrating on the mechanics of the language (Chemwei, 2005). Further, poetry enables students develop a sense of awareness of the self in the mainstream culture through dramatic interpretations of poems. Language learning depends on listening and speaking skills both on the side of the learner as well as the teacher (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

2.3.3 Reading Skills

Reading can be defined as the ability to decode a familiar environment in line with an appropriate method and purpose, based on effective communication between the author and the reader, with the cooperation of cognitive behaviours and psychomotor skills (Gedik & Akyol, 2022). It is thus the process of making sense in the mind of a learner by exposing the text and symbols to cognitive processes (Woolfolk, 2019). The ultimate purpose of reading is to extract and construct meaning from all forms of texts (Snow, 2002). Reading is the ability to decode and understand written texts, encompassing a range of cognitive processes that include word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). Reading is core to academic progress, because it underpins content learning areas in all subjects. Kaya (2015) explores the impact of specific reading skills on the reading comprehension abilities of Turkish students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and established that reading skills significantly help students in reading comprehension and academic success.

Indicators of good reading skills include speed, accuracy, and comprehension. There are two types of reading skills that every reader should acquire; intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading is the ability to read a text slowly and carefully in order to understand all the details and nuances (Kucukoglu, 2012). Extensive reading allows one to go through a variety of reading materials such as; creative writings, newspapers, magazines, journals and electronic materials. KIE (2002) outlines intensive and extensive reading as objectives to be achieved by learners by the end of a course. These are useful skills where a lot of information is required to be read in a short time. For learners to be competent in intensive and extensive reading, they must also acquire reading skills such as skimming, scanning and speed reading (Gedik & Akyol, 2022). According to Grabe and Stoller, (2022) skimming is a competence which enables readers to quickly read through text and pick out the main ideas. This is useful

when there is need to get an overview of a text or when looking for specific information. Scanning is the ability to quickly read through a text and find specific information. This skill is particularly valuable when the objective is to locate specific details within a text and is equally important for achieving a deeper understanding of the overall content. (Grabe & Stoller, 2022).

Various abilities are required for one to be considered as a fluent reader. These include accuracy, speed, and prosody (Day, 2016) Accuracy refers to quick reading without making addition, subtraction and inversion mistakes in reading sounds, syllables, and words. Reading speed involves automating the word recognition process and reading at the appropriate speed for the level while automation occurs when the reader sounds the words in a text accurately and quickly, without much effort (Gedik & Akyol, 2022). Prosody has been defined as the ability to read through appropriate intonation and stress according to the sense of the text after achieving word recognition, perception, interpretation and reading speed. The other competencies that affect fluent reading are word recognition and vocabulary knowledge. The inadequacy of these skills negatively affects the reading skills of the students. According to Haq et al. (2019), inadequacies in these areas could cause students to fall behind in terms of achievement in both reading and other fields.

One of the aims of teaching language is to facilitate learners' mastery of reading skills. The KIE (2002) syllabus outlines several objectives that should be achieved in the teaching/learning process of secondary school students. These include; the learner being able to pronounce Kiswahili words correctly, emphasis intonation and stress in words and being able to read silently, fluently and loudly. The learner should be able to answer comprehension questions accurately and correctly, use library skills well, read and analyse literary work of different categories such as plays, novels and poetry. For these objectives to be achieved a variety of techniques are used by teachers to enhance learners' mastery of reading skills.

Some of the techniques used are word repetition method, meaning analysis, word map, vocabulary notebook, repeated reading and paired reading (Marzano, 2013). Word repetition is a technique used to eliminate reading mistakes by making students repeat reading the words which they initially read incorrectly. This technique is effective for learners with reading difficulties for it enhances their word recognition skills and vocabulary knowledge. Humaira Fatimattuzahro (2015) delved on other techniques such as meaning analysis. This is a technique developed for enhancing vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, while word map is for improving learners' vocabulary knowledge using maps which show how words to be taught relate to other words in a particular order (Humaira & Fatimattuzahro, 2015). It helps

students build connections between new vocabulary and their existing knowledge to improve comprehension. The vocabulary notebook provides a student with an opportunity to write new words with its different meanings and uses in a notebook that increases retention of learnt content. Repeated reading technique allows poor readers to reading the text repeatedly until they gain fluency, while the paired reading is a technique in which a teacher, a member of the family or a peer who reads well becomes a pair to the poor reader (Marzano, 2013).

Strategies such as think-aloud have also been used to boost learners reading skills since they could assist them to see the reading processes and strategies of an effective reader (Afflerbach, 2000). The think-aloud strategy involves readers verbalizing their thoughts while reading, providing insight into their comprehension processes. Reading fluency and comprehension strategies are enhanced by such strategies as think-aloud (Afflerbach, 2000; Wawire et al., 2023). They argue that text reading fluency mediates the relationship between decoding skills and reading comprehension in both English and Kiswahili. Think-aloud provides readers with a window to the thought and comprehension processes of a knowledgeable reader.

The use of visuals is another strategy that enhances reading skills. They assist in reading comprehension help develop understanding of the content. Minishi et al. (2023) investigated effects of animations on students' achievement in Kiswahili reading comprehension and ascertained that visual aids, such as animations and instructional media impacted positively on students' Kiswahili reading comprehension. They posited that students exposed to animations during Kiswahili lessons achieved higher comprehension scores compared to those taught using traditional methods. Ngussa (2017) likewise explored the influence of instructional media on pupils' mastery of reading and writing in Kiswahili in Kinondoni District, Tanzania and concluded that the use of visual materials, such as pictures and charts, enhances students' ability to read and write accurately in Kiswahili.

Reading is a lifelong skill that is used both at school and after school life (Kucukoglu, 2012). It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost. Kiswahili language teachers should effectively facilitate their students' acquisition of this skill given its central role in mastery of a language. Literature indicates that in order to help students become proficient readers, teachers need to make use of a range of methodologies of reading such as collaborative learning and use of a visual aids in reading comprehension, as they help develop understanding of content (Putri et al., 2019).

2.3.4 Writing Skills

Writing may be defined as any conventional system of marks or signs that represent the utterances of a language (Lu et al., 2019). Writing skills refers to one's ability to communicate effectively and succinctly using words and symbols (Chicho, 2022). A good writer is someone who can communicate their point of view to the audience without being wordy and in a way that the reader can understand. Good writing skills ensure that readers understand the key points being communicated. Strong writing skills enable individuals to communicate their ideas and opinions clearly and concisely, making it easier for readers to understand and absorb the intended message (Chicho, 2022). It also helps in relaying messages to others without having to schedule a meeting or phone call. The other advantage of writing is that it is something others can refer back to, as opposed to verbal communication, which has to be repeated and requires the sender and receiver to be available at the same time (Tai et al., 2020). In the digital world, written communication avenue for obtaining information and interacting with others through text messages and e-mails Hyland (2016) emphasizes that digital written communication such as emails and text messages has become the primary format used for individuals to access information and interact. This underscores the increasing importance of developing writing skills for effective communication in modern contexts.

Effective writing as a skill is grounded in the cognitive domain. Writing, unlike the other two skills, listening and speaking that can be acquired naturally, must be taught (Msanjila, 2005). It involves learning, comprehension, application and synthesis of new knowledge. Writing well entails more than adhering to writing conventions. It also encompasses creative inspiration, problem-solving, reflection and revision that results in a completed manuscript. Writing skills do not just include the physical act of writing. Skills like research, planning and outlining, editing, revising, spelling and grammar and organization are critical components of the writing process. It also requires competencies in grammar, rich vocabulary, abilities in spelling and constructing accurate and clear sentences.

Students considered writing to be laborious and even a dreaded exercise of placing thoughts on paper while adhering to rules of writing, such as spelling, citation format and grammar (Thangavel, 2023). Therefore, for effective writing teachers should encourage their students to focus on key aspects of writing such as appropriate use of punctuation marks and vocabulary, sentence structures, organization of paragraphs which are coherent connecting ideas to the main idea (Graham & Perin, 2007). Eftanti (2016) opines that writing with coherence is an essential skill that helps to communicate effectively, an outcome expected in

any language classroom practice.

Developing students' communicative competence in terms of writing skills requires several instruments and strategies, such as using models of authentic texts, journaling, collaborative writing and portfolio among others (Hyland, 2019; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Teachers should therefore, provide students with opportunities to reflect and practice the language in all competence areas. From a sociolinguistic perspective, they should learn to consider the knowledge and background of their intended audience. In terms of discourse, texts must be coherent and aligned with an appropriate genre that fits the students' communicative goals (Hyland, 2019).

Possession of good writing skills is necessary since it ensures that readers understand the key points of what the writer is trying to get across (Defazio et al., 2010). Majority of students do not possess the skills necessary to effectively communicate in writing that will enable them to become successful as learners and upon graduation. This may be the reason for the continued low academic achievement in Kiswahili language over the years in the national examinations. It is therefore paramount that students understand the importance of good writing skills and also be able to communicate well through writing. Further, students should be able to critically assess the writing of others, at all levels of education as well as in professional programs. This implies that teaching writing skills is not only meant for passing examinations but also for life application. The significance of writing skills cannot be overstated, as they are crucial in achieving academic excellence but also success in professional life.

KIE (2002) Kiswahili syllabus outlines several objectives for teaching Kiswahili in secondary schools. These include; a learner should be able to: write in good handwriting, correct spellings, punctuate and construct grammatically correct sentences as well as being creative. Consequently, it is imperative that Kiswahili language teachers adopt instructional methodologies which enhance students' acquisition of requisite writing skills.

2.4 Students' Achievement in Kiswahili Language in Secondary Schools

One of the most commonly used methods of finding out whether the objectives of a subject's syllabus has been achieved is through assessment. Baird et al. (2017) define assessment as the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting, and using information to increase students' learning and development. According to Fisher and Brandy (2019), instructors use it at the classroom level to evaluate their teaching and students' learning, and use the assessment results to improve learning and instruction. At

the national level, assessment is utilized to evaluate whether the objectives of a curriculum have been realized or not (Akiri, 2014). Under the 8-4-4 education system, secondary school students sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) at the end of the four-year cycle. This examination is used to measure students' competencies in various subject areas and for certification. The grade obtained in national examination is one of the measures of learners' achievement and is used to select students who are to join institutions of higher learning or formal employment (G.o.K, 2005).

Achievement refers to something done successfully with effort, skill, or courage, or accomplished through hard work, ability, or heroism (Fatmawati et al., 2020). In the context of education, it is gauged by performance on standardized tests or examinations that measure knowledge or competencies in a specific subject area. Therefore, the term is used as an indicator of education quality within an education system.

Achievement in Kiswahili language at secondary school level is measured using three examinable papers prepared by KNEC. Kiswahili paper 1(102/1) tests learners' abilities to write compositions both creative and functional writing, Kiswahili paper 2 (102/2) is concerned with grammar, comprehension, summary writing skills and socio-linguistics. Kiswahili paper 3 (102/3) which tests students' competencies in literature (Agonya, 2019). The three papers are marked out of 200 and then expressed in grades using a 12 points scale, E is 1 point while A is 12 points. It is important to note that the national KNEC examination of Kiswahili language emphasizes the writing skills and grammar and no aspects of listening and speaking skills are examined.

Students' achievement in languages has implications on a country's ability to effectively participate in the ever-changing socio-economic environment and its competitiveness globally (Salinas, 2021). This is because languages play a significant role in improving literacy and trade and galvanizing unity. Despite the importance of languages, students' achievement in Kiswahili has been unsatisfactory. A study conducted in Rwanda by Sebazungu and Ikuramutse (2023) showed that students did not speak Kiswahili fluently due to shyness, lack of motivation, limited vocabulary and lack of confidence in speaking the language. Masenga (2019) noted that Uganda had failed to promote Kiswahili as a lingua franca because of the ineffective implementation of the language policy. The partial implementation of the Kiswahili learning policy has led to the production of mediocre speakers of the language.

Report from KNEC (2022) shows under achievement in the Kiswahili language over the last 9 years. The mean grades for the nine years ranged between 3.94 and 5.75. These mean grades were low throughout the nine years given that they were out of 12 points. Analysis of

students' achievement by the examining body indicate that students tend to perform poorly in questions that have high order cognitive abilities such as analysis, application and synthesis skills like writing (composition) (KNEC, 2024). KNEC (2023) report reveals that the dismal performance in Kiswahili language at national examinations stems from low achievement in composition writing paper (paper I) and Paper 2 (comprehension, grammar and socio-linguistics).

Students' unsatisfactory achievement that has been observed in Nakuru County in Kiswahili language has generally been low compared to neighbouring counties as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Students' Achievement in KCSE Kiswahili in Nakuru and neighbouring Counties for the years 2018-2022

Year	Mean Grade				
	Nakuru	Narok	Kericho	Laikipia	Baringo
2018	4.89	4.94	4.64	4.90	4.77
2019	4.64	4.13	4.67	4.71	4.45
2020	4.32	4.35	4.32	3.98	4.66
2021	4.22	4.67	4.72	4.50	3.76
2022	4.32	4.44	4.38	4.36	4.00
Total	4.48	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.33

Source: (Nakuru County Education Office, 2023)

Table 4 clearly indicates the low achievement in KCSE national examination Kiswahili language in the neighbouring counties, reflecting the national outlook observed earlier. However, Baringo County seems to be trailing with a mean of 4.33 followed by Nakuru, Narok and Laikipia with means scores of 4.48, 4.50 and 4.50 respectively. Kericho County is doing slightly better than the other counties with a mean of 4.60, though the performance is also below the expected average of 6.00.

The dismal performance in Kiswahili language observed in Nakuru County and the other counties surrounding it could be due to various factors. Juma and Atoni (2022) contend that various factors within schools, at students' homes and the society in general affect academic achievement. Ayoti et al. (2023) reported that ineffective utilization of available instructional resources and the inability of teachers to improvise alternative materials

negatively influenced students' performance in Kiswahili. Interference from mother tongue or dominance of local languages and the use of Sheng affect the mastery of Kiswahili language skills leading to low academic achievement (Lwangale & Simiyu, 2019; Oloo, 2023). Oloo (2023) reports that institutional factors such as class size, teaching methods, and language policies played a role in students' academic achievement. The afore mentioned studies investigated on institutional related factors but none explored on relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender or their perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills., however none delved into students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement.

2.5 Determinants of Kiswahili Language Academic Achievement

Literature indicates that students' academic achievement depends on many factors (Bhati et al., 2022; Chemutai et al., 2019). The empirical evidence shows that factors such as; self-efficacy, gender and environmental factors may impact on students' academic achievement. Providing students with a supportive, conducive and comfortable learning environment enhances performance because it enables them to concentrate on learning (Usaini et al. (2015). Learners' socio-economic background also influences academic performance. Students from families that support education and have the finances to fund it tend to perform better. Akey (2006) established that students and teachers' attitudes towards a particular subject related positively to performance, their socio-economic backgrounds, individual differences and cultural factors were positively related to academic achievement.

Students taught by experienced teachers performed better because such instructors are knowledgeable, better at choosing teaching methods that suit learners with diverse abilities, have requisite pedagogical skills and deliver content well (Imonje & Wandera, 2019). They examined the impact of teaching experience on pupils' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) English subject. They established that students taught by teachers with 15–19 years of experience achieved higher mean scores (53.2%) compared to those taught by less experienced teachers. They continued to assert that; teachers' workload and attitudes contributed extensively to their students' academic achievement. Other studies by Akey (2006) and Maina (2017) concluded that instructional materials and especially student-book ratio influenced learners' academic achievement.

Njoroge and Ndirangu (2018) examined the influence of selected factors on the performance of Kiswahili language at KCSE in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Kenya. The findings established that there is a relationship between Kiswahili instructional

materials, teachers' and students' attitudes towards the language and performance in the subject was positive and statistically significant. It means that effective teaching and learning in schools require facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and even washrooms. Maina (2017) argues that facilities are essential since they not only make learners comfortable but also motivates them to learn thus, increasing their participation, concentration and performance.

Aseti (2019) probed the influence of selected factors on students' academic performance in Kiswahili composition writing in public secondary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County. The researcher established that, there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' qualifications, experience and performance. Similarly, Namulondo and Wabuna (2023) assessed the relationship between teacher qualifications and student academic performance in public secondary schools in Uganda and revealed that teacher experience, high qualification s significantly impacted student academic achievement.

Mumia (2018) in an exploration in Bungoma North Sub-County discovered that teachers' attitudes towards Kiswahili poetry was negative. Students frequently used "Sheng" and the students' achievement in the subject was poor. The results of the study further indicated that teachers' attitudes and use of "Sheng" had a statistically significant influence on students' academic achievement in poetry. Mutua (2015) indicated that performance in Kiswahili in Moyale Sub-County was unsatisfactory, a situation that was attributed to inadequate resources, and no or unclear language policy that led to students using their preferred languages. The observations of Mutua (2015) suggest that lack a language policy can be a major hindrance to students' mastery of a language.

Kiptum (2016) and Kilwake (2023) noted that principals' institutional leadership is a significant predictor of students' academic achievement. They argued that principals' academic leadership practices have great influence in student performance because they develop intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and appropriate modelling. They further argue that principals supervise and monitor the work of teachers. This helps teachers to improve their competencies. They ensure that the environment in the school is conducive to learning, that effective teaching is taking place and students are provided with the necessary learning resources

Motivation has also been associated with academic achievement (Kwarikunda, et al., 2020). Motivation affects performance because it does not only influence the desire to do something but also impacts on the behaviour of the learner. Tokan and Imakulata (2019) noted that learners who were motivated attended classes regularly and prepared well for lessons. They

continued to assert that motivated learners were more active, persistent in solving tasks, asked questions and requested for support when they did not understand what was being taught. Motivated learners were also more willing to do additional work, were ambitious, enthusiastic about learning and curious. On the contrary, students who lacked motivation put less effort in their work, were inattentive not persistent, did not attend classes regularly, and were generally undisciplined.

Studies by Abobo (2017), Mima (2013) and Turuthi (2018) established that computer aided and multimedia instructions helped to improve performance on Kiswahili reading comprehension, grammar and essay writing. Osore et al. (2023) study on application of audio visual resources in teaching and learning pronunciation in Kiswahili language among secondary school students in Kiambu County, indicated that application of audio visual resources in teaching pronunciation in Kiswahili impacted the performance in Kiswahili examination among students. Sika and Ochieng (2023) examined the challenges of availability of Kiswahili teaching and learning resources and strategies for enhancing academic performance in Kiswahili in Alego Usonga Sub-County. The findings from this study indicated that most secondary schools had a low student-book ratio of 1:3, and all other resources scored poorly, with a mean score of 2.92. This was argued to contribute to low academic achievement in Kiswahili language in KCSE. All these studies investigated the aspect of teaching/learning resources in Kiswahili language instruction and academic achievement but none studied on students' characteristics which the current study ventured into.

Atandi et al. (2019) examined the influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Kiswahili in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub County. The findings revealed that teachers used a blend of lecture, group work and question and answer, demonstration, guided learning and role- play methods to teach Kiswahili. The study concluded that, selection of appropriate teaching methods influenced students' academic achievement in Kiswahili since they boost learners' confidence, aid knowledge retention, and make students develop positive attitude towards the teacher and the subject. The results of these empirical studies indicate that there are many factors ranging from school, home environment and teacher characteristics influence students' achievement. Studies by various researchers Kang and Keinonen (2018), Korir (2022), Kricheli-Katz and Regev (2021) and Verma and Bhandari (2022) have shown that students' personal characteristics such as attitudes, self-motivation, self-concept, study behaviour and time management among many others however, no research has been done to establish if self-efficacy, gender, perceptions n teaching methods affect their academic achievement.

2.6 Students' Characteristics and Kiswahili Language Achievement

A characteristic can be considered as a feature or quality belonging typically to a person, place, or thing and serving to identify them (Suryani et al., 2020). It is a special quality or trait that makes a person, thing, or group different from others. With regard to learners, their characteristics are so diverse that they range from personal traits like gender, language, age, and cultural background among others. Learner characteristics is a concept that revolves around how their learning experience is influenced by their personal, social, cognitive, and academic attributes. (Ogwenko et al., 2014). These traits play a pivotal role in both how and what students learn and their academic performance. Evidence in literature show that students' characteristics are related to their academic performance (Masengo, 2019).

Iddrisu et al. (2023) investigated students' characteristics and academic performance in mathematics in Ghana. The findings affirmed that student motives, thoughts and perspectives, expectations, and 'preparedness,' are highly significant situational factors that explain the variation in overall students' academic achievement. The results underpin key situational factors that can be used by teachers to adapt pedagogical practices enhance academic achievement. Iddrisu et al. (2023) opines that student's willingness to learn mathematics, perceptions on mathematics, readiness for the use of mathematics learning materials and their attentiveness during lessons, all affected students' academic performance in the subject.

Ogwenko et al. (2014) examined the influence of students' characteristics on academic performance in secondary school agriculture in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Kenya. The findings indicated that students' age, career choice, gender, study times and class attendance positively influenced students' performance in the subject. However, tests for statistical significance concluded that students' characteristics considered did not have a statistically significant influence on students' academic performance in agriculture. Other student traits such as attitude, gender and perceptions on teaching methods have also been cited as predictors of academic achievement (Iddrisu et al., 2023; Korir, 2022). These findings are evidence that students' characteristics influence their academic achievement.

2.6.1 Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievement

Self-efficacy has been defined as beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997). The level of an individual's perceived self-efficacy affects their choice of activities and behavioural settings, how much effort they expend, and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Perhaps this could explain why self-efficacy is

significantly related to students' learning behaviour and academic achievement.

Academic self-efficacy represents the conviction that one can learn and perform given academic tasks at designated levels (Schunk, 1991). Bandura (1997), Pajares and Urdan (2006) assert that students with a strong sense of academic self-efficacy willingly undertake challenging tasks and attain higher academic achievement. On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy prefer to complete uncomplicated academic tasks to which they apply minimal effort and limited persistence. Tilfarlioglu and Clfti (2011) found out that there is a strong relationship between academic success and learners' self-efficacy beliefs. They continued to assert that self-efficacy correlated positively to learners' listening proficiency. These observations are in tandem with other studies in other subjects such as Mathematics, science and language writing where self-efficacy has a strong correlation with performance (Dennissen et al., 2007; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Bhati et al. (2022) empirical results show that high academic self-efficacy allows students to set ambitious goals, adopt effective strategies, and persist in the face of challenges. They continue to assert that students with higher self-efficacy tend to achieve better academic outcomes across different fields of study. Murunga (2019) researched on factors influencing students' academic performance in Kiswahili composition writing. Although the study did not investigate self-efficacy as a factor related to students' academic achievement it reported a positive strong relationship ($r = .523$, $p \leq .05$) between students' academic achievement in Kiswahili composition writing and students' general characteristics which may include self-efficacy.

Bandura (1990) had earlier developed the Children's Perceived Self-Efficacy (CPSE) scale to measure the different domains of self-efficacy. The CPSE can be used to measure seven domains of self-efficacy, namely: mastery experience, vicarious learning, self-regulated learning goal setting, social persuasion and emotional and psychological states (Bandura, 1990; Pastorelli et al., 2001). The domains affect students' academic work and consequently their academic achievement.

Bandura (2011) asserts that self-efficacy beliefs influence how well people motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulties through the goals they set for themselves. Self-regulation as an indicator of self-efficacy is the ability of an individual to work independently and manage oneself (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006). This is crucial for learners who want to succeed in their academics. Boekaerts and Cascallar (2006) alludes that teachers play a crucial role in helping their learners to transform their mental abilities into skills and competencies required. Self-efficacy skills taught at an early age can prepare students for future success. Schunk and Meece (2005) emphasized that self-efficacy influences individual tasks,

choices, effort, persistence and achievement. Students form and adjust their self-efficacy beliefs by carefully interpreting verbal messages communicated by others especially their peers and teachers (Bandura, 1986; Usher & Pajares 2006).

Human action is influenced by personal qualities, past experience and social constructs such as gender, all of which help determine one's self-efficacy (Schunk, 1991). Gender differences in academic self-efficacy, has been investigated extensively in recent decades, however findings have been inconsistent (Pajares, 2003). Huang (2011) observed that females displayed higher language and arts self-efficacy than males while the males exhibited higher self-efficacy in Mathematics', Social Sciences and Computer Studies. Female students reported greater self-efficacy and enjoyed learning French language more than male students (Mills et al., 2007). These observations underscored the need of investigating self-efficacy in relation to Kiswahili language academic achievement. Klomegah (2007) concludes that self-efficacy and academic achievement are highly correlated.

Students' academic achievement is greatly enhanced by teachers' sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Students' participation in classroom activities and achievement of learning outcomes lies within teachers who demonstrate confidence and mastery control in their subject area (Lei, et al., 2024). The study emphasizes that teachers confident in their teaching abilities are more likely to implement effective instructional methods, thereby boosting students' self-efficacy. Students from second and fifth grades who had instructors who exhibited a greater sense of teacher efficacy excelled beyond their fellow students in math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Moore & Esselman, 1992).

Anderson et al. (1988) did a study of third graders which showed that a teacher's sense of efficacy was related to a student's own sense of efficacy in regards to learning but not necessarily contribute to their achievement. The studies continue to posit that varying levels of self-efficacy have been linked to different levels of students' motivation which in turn is linked to greater academic achievement. Buchanan and Selmo (2008), concurs by stating that, higher self-efficacy has been linked to higher achievement.

Usher and Pajares (2006) found out that students who believe they can succeed academically tend to show more resilience when they encounter difficulties. Pajares (2002) had earlier observed that presence of positive self-efficacy could have an impact on a student as a member of society. Bandura (2011) and Bandura (2008) agree with these findings by stating that people motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulties through setting of goals based on their self-efficacy. Language students should have self-assurance that they can manage difficult tasks and this determines whether they make good or poor use of their

capabilities (Bandura, 2008). In language learning, activities such as role playing, debates, reciting poems or drama which require speaking in front of peers can be demoralizing for students lacking self-confidence. However, learners who believe in their ability to handle these challenges are more likely to participate in the learning activities resulting in better academic outcomes.

Verma and Bhandari (2022) noted that self-efficacy improves not only achievement but emotional health and well-being, and serves as a predictor of motivation and learning. They continue to argue that students lack the ability to succeed because they do not believe in their abilities. Yilmaz (2010) therefore, emphasizes the importance of fostering strong self-efficacy beliefs in learners in order to enhance their ability in language acquisition. Students must believe in their abilities to exhibit behaviour that leads to success in performing given tasks. Cheng (2020) also demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance. The study showed that people may perform given tasks poorly not because they lack the ability to succeed, but due to lack of belief in their capabilities. Language teachers should ensure that their students are emotionally stable in order to accomplish given tasks however challenging.

Hayat et al. (2020) investigated medical science university students in Iran. The results of structural equation modelling revealed that students' self-efficacy had an impact on their learning-related emotions and metacognitive learning strategies, and these, in turn, affected their academic performance. Students with strong beliefs in self, tended to perform better in assessments. These results were attributed to the fact that belief in self-driven individuals to excel through increased commitment, endeavour and perseverance.

These discussions show that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of academic achievement. Pham et al. (2021) are of the view that in order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to overcome the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life. Strong belief in self is essential because individuals with high level of self-efficacy assign higher goals to themselves and exercise more effort and willingness to have them accomplished. The low achievement in Kiswahili experienced in Nakuru could have been due to students' low self-efficacy levels. An examination of existing published works shows dearth in literature that links achievement in Kiswahili language and self-efficacy among secondary students in Nakuru County. Filling this gap was among the motivators of this inquiry.

2.6.2 Self-Efficacy as a Concept

The concept of self-efficacy can be defined as the conviction that a person can execute the behaviour needed to produce individual's desired outcome (Bandura, 1997). According to Madhuri and Saini (2019) self-efficacy is a belief that one has the capacity to succeed in certain circumstances or accomplish a goal or an objective. Self-efficacy has a significant role to play on how a person approaches tasks, objectives and challenges. Bandura and Schunk (1984), had earlier postulated that self-efficacy is the belief of people's own judgment of their capabilities to organize and exercise correct course of action. They argued that efficacious students are confident about what they can achieve. They set themselves challenges and are committed to accomplishing them and they even work harder than their colleagues. Betz and Hackett (1986) argue that self-efficacy impacted on individuals' beliefs in their abilities strongly influencing their career choices, persistence, and performance.

Pajares and Urdan (2006) argue that self-efficacy beliefs are the judgments students hold about their capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to master academic tasks. Students' self-efficacy powerfully affects their academic performance positively. In language, learning learners must believe in themselves that they are capable of performing certain tasks as assigned by the teacher. Pastorelli, et al. (2001) argues that self-efficacy beliefs are the product of a complex process of self-persuasion that relies on the cognitive processing of diverse sources. They identified three main sources of self-efficacy namely; the child's family, peers and school. KICD (2017) also identifies the school and family as sources of self-efficacy. It continues to recommend that teachers should endeavour to improve learners' self-efficacy for it determines how the people feel, think, behave and motivate themselves.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory outlines six elements of developing a strong sense of efficacy. These include; mastery of experiences, vicarious learning, goal setting, social persuasion, self-regulation and lastly, emotional and psychological states (Bandura, 1997). Akhtar (2008) highlights that, these sources interact to shape how individuals approach challenges, persist in learning and ultimately influence their achievement and motivation.

Mastery experiences involve people experiencing success (Kleppang et al., 2023). An important element of mastery involves overcoming or managing failures. Learners can only demonstrate mastery of language skills such as letter and word recognition through practice and experience and this could consequently depend on their levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006). According to Bandura (1977) mastery experiences are influential in in the development self-efficacy. They are potential sources for creating and strengthening self-efficacy.

Vicarious learning or social modelling involves imitating others who are successful (Bandura, 1997). This is when children observe others fail or succeed on similar tasks (Miller, 2002). Therefore, it is imperative that young learners are exposed to positive role models from a young age until maturity. Miller (2009) and Saeid (2012), suggest that children should be provided with opportunities to observe their peers and classmates perform tasks successfully. This scenario lays foundation for children to develop high self-efficacy because they have seen others succeed. Modelling focuses on learning by observing others on how they perform certain tasks and imitating them. This process, allows people to learn without direct experience (Vinney, 2020). For instance, in language learning, teachers are often the best models. In teaching/learning process of language skills, students of Kiswahili will imitate their teachers or peers in speaking, reading and even writing (Momanyi, 2012).

Social persuasion is another indicator of self-efficacy. It is exhibited when people are persuaded by others that they can succeed (Bandura, 1996). This entails giving them experiences that expand their abilities and confidence. Kauser and Aimal (2022) investigated self-efficacy and social persuasion influence on English reading skills among intermediate-level students in Pakistan. The findings indicated that both factors significantly impacted students' perceived reading proficiency, with social persuasion playing a crucial role in enhancing their confidence and abilities. This is an indication that language teachers should persuade their learners to learn language despite challenges experienced.

Goal setting according to Bandura (1997) is the individuals' beliefs that they are capable and committed to achieve targets that are set at any given time. This will depend on how persistent they are in achieving them. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to set learning goals, seek feedback and help from their teachers. A learner who is goal oriented works towards their achievement; this will also depend on the levels of self-efficacy. The higher the levels of self-efficacy the higher such students tend to keep setting goals and consequently become more motivated to learn and excel in their academic achievements (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Zimmerman (2002) defines self-regulation as people's ability to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in order to achieve set goals, whether long term or short term. People whose self-efficacy levels are high are also highly regulated. They set challenging goals because they know they are capable of achieving them. Self-regulation helps students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning processes, which in turn improves their academic achievement (Panadero, 2017). Teng and Zhang (2022) reported that, learners who are self-regulated were more motivated to learn and communicate in second language in both written

and spoken form. These observations underscore the important role of self-regulation in promoting more effective language learning.

The last element is one's ability to gauge one's physical and emotional state in pursuit of set goals. Self-efficacy encompasses the judgments of what people can do with their ability, and not simply their level of ability (Bandura, 1986). In all academic fields students' ability is key in selection of subjects of choice in line with future career, however, according to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, ability needs to be in line with the students' physical and emotional state. Chin et al. (2017) and Pekrun (2006) argue that emotions such as enjoyment and hope have positive correlation with students' academic achievement. Students in different academic settings and environments experience a variety of emotions (Pekrun, 2006). In secondary schools, students bring in different physical and emotional states into the classroom and this affects their language learning. In reference to these facts, it is imperative that these non-cognitive aspects are studied to establish if there is a relationship between them and Kiswahili language academic achievement.

Studies by Bandura (1996), Pajares (1996) and Pajares and Schunk, (2001) assert that self-efficacy has the potential of determining four major processes namely; cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. Students with a strong sense of academic self-efficacy willingly undertake challenging tasks; expend greater effort to achieve a goal. Such learners demonstrate lower anxiety levels, are flexible and can accurately self-evaluate their academic performance. Therefore, they attain higher intellectual achievement (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Creative and critical thinking that leads to effective decision-making and problem solving is based on a strong sense of self-efficacy (Zhao, et al., 2024). Therefore, there is need to endeavour to understand the relationship between self-efficacy and language academic achievement of students and identifying ways of enhancing it. Mills (2014) observed that there is strong correlation between self-efficacy and language learning in all domains. He further observed that cognitive development is critical in language learning and in the development of ones' self-efficacy.

Nilima (2015) alludes that self-confidence is the most significant factor in language learning. It provides learners with the motivation and energy to learn. Bandura (2006) asserts that self-confidence, low anxiety and positive self-image are powerful ingredients for high school students in learning second language. At the heart of all learning is a person's belief in their ability to accomplish the task (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Successful language learners appear to have higher self-esteem than those who are unsuccessful (Shankar, 2003). Yule (2012) opines that teenagers are typically more self-conscious than younger children and

therefore much less motivated to learn second language. Learning institutions should therefore provide an efficient, inspirational and enjoyable environment to the learner in order to be motivated to learn and acquire second language (Chen, 2023). Kiswahili to many learners is a second language, thus the need to identify factors which may motivate them to learn and acquire the required skills for effective communication.

The family is the first source of self-efficacy information for children as well as the first language school (Evans & Rosenbaum, 2007). Parents who are responsive to their children's communication create the opportunity for efficacious actions and offer a variety of mastery experiences so that children readily acquire linguistic, social, and cognitive competencies, (Pastorell, et.al., 2001). (Breeze & Halbach, 2023) found that the family environment indeed affected the foreign language learning of children. Children, parents and teachers must work together for successful language learning. They argued that a child's first exposure to language occurs in the home. This helps to lay a foundation for further language learning. The Family Literacy Theory states that, the family is essential in helping the child's development of language skills and in alleviating emerging challenges faced in language acquisition (Breeze & Halbach, 2023).

The school environment as a main source of self-efficacy should be made more conducive for students to improve on their levels of self-efficacy (Pastorelli et al., 2001). It is at school where children spend most of their lives daily and, in most countries, a minimum of 180 school days a year is mandated (Pastorelli et al., 2001). Rahmi and Diem (2014) made an inquiry on junior high school students' perceptions on classroom environment and their English language achievement and concluded that there was a positive correlation between classroom learning environment and students' English language achievement. Children's self-images are strongly affected by the way teachers evaluate their performances in school. Jerusalem and Klein-Hessling (2009) claim that school is a suitable arena for health promotion and for strengthening adolescents' self-efficacy. They argue that it is important for students' academic self-efficacy that task demands are individualized and that feedback is given on their performance. They further that recommend there is need for integration of self-efficacy development strategies into school curricula and psychosocial support programs to foster both academic and emotional resilience among learners. Pastorelli et al. (2001) observed that teachers serve as important contributors to the information of a child's intellectual efficacy. It is therefore critical that teachers understand the lifelong effect they can have on their students' self-efficacy. They should therefore help their students to develop positive self-efficacy skills that can translate into future success.

Genc et al. (2016) suggest that, it is vital that teachers understand the power of self-efficacy on students by fostering the skills that lead to greater self-efficacy which may help them achieve higher academic grades. Teachers can assist their students in cultivating a strong work ethic and internal drive for success in their academic achievement. Genc et al. (2016) concluded that teachers should enhance and help their students develop correct beliefs about themselves in language learning in order to master it. The study continues to observe that students' beliefs about themselves in language learning are influenced by their self-efficacy. This could be the reason Kiswahili language students have been achieving very below average over the years as reported by KNEC (2022).

Self-efficacy is one of the seven core competencies to be achieved by every learner in basic education (KICD, 2017). The other competencies to be acquired include, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving. Creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy and learning to learn are also part of the competencies to be acquired. Effective acquisition of these competencies is only through language. This underscores the need for language teachers to make a deliberate effort to equip learners with the language skills necessary for developing the afore-mentioned competencies.

The vision and mission of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework [BECF] (2017) seek to develop these competencies so that all Kenyans can thrive in the 21st century and in achievement of vision 2030. The Curriculum Based Education (CBE), two years' pre-primary, six in lower and upper primary, six years of junior and senior high school and three for university (2-6-6-3) is aimed at imparting skills to learners that will enable them to function well in the society (BECF, 2017). According to KICD (2017) self-efficacy as a competency will enable learners to develop and nurture intra-personal skills and values such as self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence and personal integrity. These competencies are likely to enhance the learners' ability to heighten and sustain efforts in the face of failure and effectively manage stressful situations. A learner with a strong sense of self-efficacy is likely to be courageous and bold enough to set and pursue personal educational, family, community, entrepreneurial, professional, and career goals in all forms of employment that will lead to personal accomplishment (Bandura & Schunk, 1984). Bandura (1997) opines that learners with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided. A study of secondary-school students in Kerala, India, revealed a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance in English. Students with higher self-efficacy beliefs tended to show greater motivation, persistence, and confidence, which translated into better academic achievement in English

(Meera., & Jumana, 2015). Magogwe and Oliver (2007) highlighted the importance of enhancing learners' self-efficacy in order to improve second language acquisition. Thus, the emphasis placed on self-efficacy is an indicator that it is a variable worth investigation, a task this research undertook.

2.6.3 Gender as a Concept

Kayaoglu (2012) and Cakici (2011) define gender as the social, cultural and psychological construct that refer to the males and females. Gender comprises of the roles, behaviours, activities and expectations the society relate with men and women (WHO, 2022). It extends beyond biological differences between males and females. It is something acquired or constructed through relationship with others in the society. Individual's adherence to certain cultural norms and prescriptions often influences their behaviour, beliefs and interactions within society, shaping their identity and guiding their responses to social expectations. According to Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, gender is not something one is, but rather something one does (Butler, 1990). Further, it is argued that gender is a series of acts and performances shaped by societal and cultural norms and repeated over time. Thus, gender depends on roles a person plays in the social context. Institutions such as the family, media, education systems, and religion play a significant role in shaping individuals' understanding of gender roles (Connell & Pearse, 2015). Historically, access to education has been unequal between genders, often favouring boys, particularly in developing countries. Diverse cultural practices such as; early marriage, female genital mutilation, household responsibilities, and gender-based violence are among the many barriers girls face in obtaining and completing their education (UNESCO, 2022).

Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) in their investigation on School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) reported that both girls and boys are victims of SRGBV. This results in adverse consequences such as: violation of their freedom, security, privacy and integrity. SRGBV also results to major physiological and psychological health challenges, such as high exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. This also leads to both genders either underperforming or over performing depending on the socio-economic status of their environment. For example, in most developed countries, girls achieve better compared to boys in literacy and school retention rates. However, in developing countries, the scenario is different whereby, the boys are outperforming girls. Therefore, there is need for gender mainstreaming policies in education to promote both genders (UN Women, 2021).

Various studies have examined gender not only in relation to societal, cultural or

environmental aspects but researchers have also explored it through other aspects such as; gender differences in self-efficacy, motivation, attitude, study habits and career aspirations among others. Busch (2006) for example, investigated how male and female students differ in self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance in business education. The study findings revealed that male students reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy, particularly in areas related to quantitative subjects such as finance and economics. However, actual academic performance revealed minimal or no significant differences, indicating that female students, though less confident in their abilities, performed just as well as their male counterparts. Bandura (1997) retaliates that gender is a significant predictor of self-efficacy beliefs levels, which influence academic achievement of learners. Githua (2002) reported a statistically significant gender difference in students' motivation to learn mathematics, mathematics self-concept, perceptions of evaluation in mathematics and in preferences for some instructional approaches. This implies that, both sociological and psychological factors related to gender influence how males and females learn and perform in various subject fields.

Gender and language, has been extensively investigated, revealing that male and female may differ in their language acquisition and learning may be due to both biological and sociocultural influences. In this regard, it is important to delve deeper into this concept especially in relation to academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

2.6.4 Students' Gender and Academic Achievement

Gender is the social, cultural and psychological construct that refers to the males and females (Cakici, 2011; Kayaoglu, 2012). It is something acquired through relationships with others. Gender is a significant and influential characteristic in academic achievement and subject choice (Naderi et al., 2009). Gender disparities in secondary schools are relatively high where enrolment and performance are usually open. For instance, girls are more likely to enrol in languages while boys in mathematics and sciences.

Voyer and Voyer (2014) conducted a Meta-Analysis of gender differences in scholastic achievement and found that there is a noteworthy gender influence skewed towards the male gender in overall achievement in mathematics and science courses but females scored highly in language courses. In a study on effects of cooperative learning on learners' achievement in writing in English, girls performed better than boys (Adongo 2021; Kanja, 2015). However, Bett (2016) in a study on effects of neurological bimodal teaching approach on learner achievement, motivation and gender in written English language, concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between boys and girls in English composition writing skill.

This fact had been reported earlier by Soori and Zamani (2012) who observed that language features were used equally by both males and females.

However, studies done all over the world have continuously portrayed females as better performers in language than males (Voyer & Voyer, 2014). For instance, a study carried out in 50 countries by Mullis et al. (2016) on aptitude test on fourth graders showed that females outscored males on reading literacy in every country. There are normally differences in the way men and women speak a language due to the social roles of men and women who speak them. The difference may be due to structures of a language and societal norms, which prescribe the ways men and women use it.

Mulandi (2021) examined gender disparities in mathematics and science subjects among secondary school students. The findings revealed that boys performed better than girls in mathematics, chemistry and physics while girls performed better than boys in biology. Usawa Agenda (2024) and African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) (2023) attributed this seemingly good academic achievement of boys in mathematics and sciences to the fact that boys' schools are better equipped with STEM-related facilities, including laboratories and ICT resources than girls' schools. APHRC (2023) continues to report that girls lack female role models in STEM fields resulting to lower participation and performance compared to their male counterparts.

Kimani et al. (2018) study carried out among the youth in Nairobi County, Kenya established that female and male students used languages differently. Female students were more likely to use English while male students were more likely to use Sheng. The exploration confirmed that females have better language acquisition skills than males. The researcher found that the females outperform males in writing and speaking tasks. Kiswahili was used equally among males and females while mother tongue was not used at all. Kang'ahi et al. (2012) explored on gender and students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language and found out that female students outperformed male students on the average. However, comparison of the mean scores in Kiswahili language achievement of the two groups showed statistically insignificant difference.

Adongo (2021) delved gender differences in academic performance of form four students' in Nyakach Sub-County, Kenya. The mean score of the males was higher than that of the females. The difference in academic performance between the two groups was found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval ($t=2.14$, $df = 350$, $p=.033$). Chemutai et al. (2019) conducted a study on performance differences and gender in Kiswahili creative writing in secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study revealed that girls

outperformed boys in Kiswahili creative writing, style and spelling conventions, whereas the two sexes remained at par in content presentation, use of vocabulary and grammar. These observations are prerequisites that motivated this study, to investigate whether indeed there was any relationship between gender and Kiswahili language academic achievement.

According to a KNEC (2023) examination report, boys performed better than girls in key subject areas such as mathematics and sciences, while girls did better in arts and languages.

It is evident from the above literature that limited research has been done on students' gender and their Kiswahili language skills academic achievement. Given the dearth in literature, this study sought to fill this gap by investigating whether there was any relationship between students' gender and Kiswahili language skills academic achievement.

2.6.5 Concept of Perception and Teaching Methods

The concept of perception will be discussed before endeavouring to expound on the various teaching methods that are likely to be used in a Kiswahili language classroom.

2.6.5.1 Perceptions as a Concept

Perception is a multifaceted concept that can be viewed through various lenses, each emphasizing different aspects of how individuals interpret and understand their environment and experiences (McDonald, 2012). Perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory information to give meaning to their environment. It involves recognizing, selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli from the environment through our senses. The Berkeley Well-Being Institute, (n.d) definition of perception emphasizes the cognitive processes involved on how we make sense of the sensory data received. Perception has been defined as the cognitive process by which an individual selects, organizes and gives meaning to environmental stimuli obtained through hearing, seeing, smelling, touching and tasting (Berkeley Well-Being Institute, n.d). It is concerned with use of senses to generate signals from the environment and cognitive processes, to appreciate the world around us (McDonald, 2012). It is a way of understanding phenomena by interpreting sensory information based on experience, ability to process information and create mental models. A learners' attitude, motivation, and prior experiences can shape how they perceive both the language and the learning process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). For example, a learner may perceive Kiswahili as a language not related to their future career may be less motivated to learn it.

In language teaching and learning, perception plays a foundational role because it influences learners' interpretation of linguistic inputs and the way teachers engage them in the

teaching /learning process. In this context, perception refers to the learners' ability to recognize, interpret, and make sense of spoken and written language through auditory and visual channels. Language acquisition begins with the learner's ability to perceive phonemes, words, and grammatical structures effectively (Goldstein & Brockmole, 2020). The foundation of effective language acquisition is phonological perception. Kiswahili being a second language to almost all the learners in Kenyan schools, learners must distinguish between sounds that may not exist in their mother tongue or first language, which can be challenging due to the influence of first language experiences (Escudero & Boersma, 2021). Perceptions have been associated with teaching and learning because they reinforce teachers' decision-making and students' desire to learn (Ahmed & Aziz, 2009).

Socio-cultural backgrounds may influence students' perceptions and consequently affect their language acquisition (Nickerson, 2023). This is due to the fact that, individuals perceive information in ways that affirm their pre-existing beliefs (Nickerson, 2023). Individuals from different cultural backgrounds may perceive the same stimuli differently due to variations in learned and acquired values and expectations. Moreover, perception is subject to biases, such as negativity, confirmation, stereotyping or attentional ones hindering language learning (Nickerson, 2023). Perception is not just a passive process but actively shapes language development and classroom interaction therefore, teachers can enhance learners perceptions by developing deep understanding of how learners perceive linguistic input and instructional practices (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Perceptions are shaped by the perceived relevance and clarity of teaching methods. When students view a method as clearly aligned with learning objectives and applicable to real-world contexts, they are more likely to value the approach and invest effort in learning (Arhin et al., 2025).

2.6.5.2 Teaching Methods

Killen (2011) defined teaching method as the general principles, pedagogy, and management strategies used for classroom instruction. It is a way of instruction using prescribed objectives and guidelines and a teacher has little or no leeway of changing it during implementation. A teaching method is unlike a teaching approach which is a set of principles, beliefs, or ideas about the nature of learning that is translated into the classroom (Stevick, 1980). Mariani (2002) observes that learning strategies are intentional behaviours and thoughts that are used by learners during learning, they are techniques consciously used by learners to improve their progress in acquiring new information.

The teaching method adopted by an instructor has been cited as one of the significant

predictors of academic achievement (Sarmauli et al., 2020). Effective use of pedagogical methods influences not only learners' achievement but also their critical thinking and problem solving skills are developed (Ndwiga, et al., 2020; Peels, 2019). Chiniwar (2014) asserts that methods used to instruct learners should always have an impact in their motivation to learn. Pedagogical approaches inclined to learners promotes democratic classrooms, critical thinking, and raises student's communication goals as well as improving their achievement (Cummins, 2007; Doherty & Hilberg, 2007).

The teacher as the implementer of curriculum, should ensure that various methods and strategies are used to implement and deliver the content adequately for students to benefit maximally (Wanjala & Kavoi, 2013). For this to happen, the instructors must use a variety of teaching methods during the course of their work (Stevick, 1980). Larsen-Freeman (2000) emphasizes the importance of teachers to understand that principles that influence teaching methods before applying them. Some of the most frequently utilized teaching methods are; the lecture, individual assignment, class discussion, question and answer, drama, storytelling, project work, songs and poems, role play, group assignment and group discussion (Agonya, 2021; Atandi et al., 2019; Kirui, 2015; Murunga, 2018; Wanjala & Kavoi, 2013).

A study conducted by Atandi et al. (2019) in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-county examining the influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in the Kiswahili subject found that teachers predominantly employed a combination of lecture, group work, and question-and-answer techniques. In contrast, methods such as demonstration, guided learning, and role-play were used less frequently. Teachers' choice of teaching method is usually guided by various factors, such as; availability of resources, storage facilities, content and teachers' workload as well as their commitment (Iqbal et al., 2009). Iqbal et al. (2009) continue to assert that teachers have limited options in choosing a teaching method since this depends on available resources. This results in most teachers adopting teacher-centred strategies.

Adelabu and Nder (2013) did a survey of methods of teaching English and Literature among secondary school teachers in Benue State Nigeria and found that teachers were unaware of most teaching methods. They observed that majority knew and utilized the textbook, discussion and demonstration methods. However, teachers have limited options to adopt teaching methods that are learner-centred, as a result, the lecture method is usually the most commonly adopted teaching strategy by most teachers (Iqbal et al., 2009). This approach encourages students to rote memorize the language concepts from the textbooks in order to replicate in the examination. This could be the reason behind poor acquisition of Kiswahili

language skills of secondary school learners.

Bett (2013) revealed that teachers predominantly used traditional methods such as lecture and note-taking, which are teacher-centred and limit student interaction. Nehru (2015) posits that there is need for a well-structured and student-centred approach in instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners while aligning with educational goals and societal expectations. They recommended adoption of learner-centred teaching strategies which are rich in learning activities such as group discussions and project-based learning, to enhance student engagement and comprehension of English and Literature subjects. Language teachers should adopt recommend teaching methods for the learners to develop a better understanding of language concepts and skills (KIE, 2002).

The following section therefore, will discuss various teaching methods as found in literature and how they relate to the teaching and learning of Kiswahili language skills.

2.6.5.2.1 Lecture Method

The lecture, also known as the transmissive method, is based on vertical learning, whereby the teacher has all the knowledge, that is, the “know-how” which they transmit to the students (Illeris, 2018). The teacher provides information both orally and visually to students with the aid of audio-visual (Woodrow et al., 2020). This enables students to follow the presentations and build on their understanding of concepts learnt. It is the most preferred mode of instruction when teaching large classes and delivering a wide content (Illeris, 2018). Lecture method is the most used teaching method followed by group discussion and other teaching methods that included: individual presentation, seminars, workshops, conferences, brainstorming and case study (Agonya, 2021; Atandi et al., 2019).

Ouma (2010) in a study on factors affecting performance in the KCSE English language examination in Nyamache Division, Gucha District found out that lecture was the leading method used by teachers with a percentage of 79.4. Bett (2013) established the same scenario in Kericho Municipality where 78% of classroom interaction in an English lesson was teacher-talk.

Agonya (2021) investigated the influence of teaching methods on students' performance in Kiswahili poetry in secondary schools in Lugari Sub-County and established that 91.7% of Kiswahili teachers adopted lecture method and a similar observation had been made earlier by Atandi et al. (2019). Atandi et al. (2019) explored the influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Kiswahili subject in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County and concluded that lecture method was most

commonly utilized at 19.5%. However, though the lecture method is the most preferred and utilized in classroom setup, its main weakness is that it is passive in nature. Learners are reduced to passive recipients of information, and are not given opportunities to develop skills which is key in language learning.

2.6.5.2.2 Group Discussion Method

Classroom discussions often take place in small groups of about five members and have specific objectives. The teacher should play a supervisory role during the discussion, by maintaining order and ensuring that all participants are given attention and a fair chance to make contributions (Gustavsen & Vennebo, 2024). They continue to assert that, group discussions promote active engagement, reflection and collaborative learning. Nasibi (2003) alludes that discussion can be either expository or inquiry learning activity. In expository, the teacher defines objectives of the lesson, explains learning activities, allows discussion, and invites questions before concluding the activity. where the teacher and the learners talk together to share opinions, views, or information about a topic or issue. Through it, learners make a fundamental contribution to learning since it attempts to elicit their opinions and knowledge. Nekesa (2012) asserts that discussion as a method that permits open interaction between the teacher and the learner as well as between the learner and the learner. Nasibi (2003) explores two approaches to the discussion: inquiry discussions and guided or recitation discussion, In inquiry discussion, the teacher arranges the discussion on a given issue in an open-ended way and serves as a leader while the learners carry out the discussion. This enhances learners' critical thinking, independence and creativity. In guided or recitation discussion, the teacher directs and guides the process through structured questioning and learners respond. Group discussion method enhances interaction among learners and builds teamwork skills.

Students should be encouraged to exchange ideas freely, ask questions and actively participate in discussions. The teacher may occasionally interject during the discussion process to direct learners' attention towards key areas. Kauchak and Paul (2017) argued that discussions are useful for exploring prior knowledge of students, uplifting students' involvement, evaluation, and development of interest. In this process, students are involved by questioning, listening, and responding to the questions asked by the teacher. Students think about the possible answers to a question posed by the teacher, and then discuss the answers with each other before responding (Kauchak & Paul, 2017). However, in poorly managed group discussions students may become rowdy and reckless and hinder realization of set lesson's outcomes.

Literature reveals that discussions are very effective in assisting learners improve

problem-solving and social skills and promote divergent thinking by allowing them to exchange ideas (Fisher, 2020; Mercer & Howwe, 2012). When effectiveness of lecture and discussion strategies are compared, the results show that the discussion strategy is preferred for it boosts students' knowledge due to an increased level of participation. Nekesa (2012) researched in Wareng District, Kenya and revealed that the use of group discussion enhanced positive performance though its use in schools is limited by problems such as insufficient time. The findings also revealed that teachers and students had positive attitudes towards use of group discussion. Wakasiaka (2022) investigated the influence of task-based approach on students' English listening and speaking skills in public secondary schools in Busia County. Group discussions accounted for 63.2% of the variance in students' language skills. Kiswahili language teachers rarely used this method because of inadequate time and heavy teacher work load among other factors. Teachers felt that such learner-centred methods are time consuming yet there is a lot of content to be covered within specified time (KIE, 2002).

2.6.5.2.3 Individual Assignment Method

The individual assignment is an instructional method that entails teachers giving students tasks related to topics under study and learners performing them individually (Sarmauli et al., 2020). The teacher creates an assignment with clear instructions, milestones, and grading criteria based on an outcome that students need to achieve. The teacher monitors and advises students as they work on the assignment and provides feedback that challenges students to improve. Individual assignments give students a chance to apply what they have learnt, this helps in reinforcing what has been learned (Dalland & Klette, 2016). By actively engaging with the subject matter when doing assignments, students solidify their understanding and develop practical skills. Teachers use individual assignments to gauge students understanding of the topics, knowledge and skills acquired. This feedback is used to review the teaching-learning process and also ascertain if the learning outcomes were achieved.

2.6.5.2.4 Group Assignment Method

A group assignment is a way of teaching that allows students to work together on an assignment and submit it as a group. This method is entrenched in Vygotsky (1978) Constructivist Theory which underscores learners construct knowledge through experiences, which in turn promotes deep learning and critical thinking. Group assignment success depends on learner characteristics such as self-efficacy and teacher's ability to assign roles and tasks (Cohen et al., 2015). The teacher must set clear objectives at each stage, ground rules must be set, roles of each member be defined, records well-kept and performance of tasks be guided by

a plan (Wilson et al., 2018). Studies show that group work improved students' achievement, persistence, and attitudes towards learning because it promotes collaborative learning (Mercer (2000). It also provides students with opportunities to explain to their classmates the reason behind their actions. Group work is one of the best methods to teach language, since it gives learners opportunities of listening, speaking, and writing (Madani & Kheirzadeh, 2022). Johnson and Johnson (2009) and Mercer (2000) postulate that communicative, teamwork and collaborative competencies are enhanced through group discussion since learners must engage to arrive at a consensus. Thanasoulas (2001) observed that group discussion in the teaching of language helps the learners develop critical thinking skills, therefore, it is imperative for teachers to employ this method in the teaching-learning process.

2.6.5.2.5 Project Method

The project method is a medium of instruction which was introduced during the 18th century into the schools of architecture and engineering in Europe when graduating students had to apply the skills learned (Rakhmonberdiyeva, 2019). The project method can be considered as a process that covers identification of a problem, design of the investigation, data collection and analysis, interpretation and generalization. Project work is very effective if implemented well because it aids in the development of higher order cognitive abilities such as observation, analysis and application (Kolodziejski & Przybysz-Zaremba, 2017). Rahma (2025) probed students' involvement in project-based Kiswahili learning and established that learners exposed to this approach demonstrated greater engagement and mastery of vocabulary compared to those taught through traditional methods. Project method approach enables learners apply knowledge learnt to solve real-world problems (Bell, 2010). Bell (2010) continues to emphasize that this approach not only deepens understanding of subject matter but also equips students with transferable skills. Project method therefore, promotes students development in all the domains of learning and should be promoted in language teaching.

2.6.5.2.6 Role Play Method

Role play is a form of experiential learning in which students take on assigned roles and act out those roles through a scripted play. The role play can be carried out one-to-one (individual role play) or as a group, with each member in the group taking on a role/character (Munna & Kalam, 2021). Role-play is an instructional method that is frequently used in language teaching because it is student centred (Ma, 2018). The method enhances learners' interest and emotions as it reflects fragments of real life in the form of games, and requires participants to step out of themselves and play different roles (Case & Cheek-O'Donnell, 2015).

Applying this method to language teaching gives learners the opportunity to fully use their vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills under various settings.

According to Erturk (2015) students who succeed in learning depend on doing, observing, digesting and giving feedback to their teachers and role play accomplishes this very well. Role play, when designed accordingly and implemented successfully, incorporates these positive elements of enjoying learning and digesting knowledge concludes (Erturk, 2015). The research findings of Munna and Kalam (2021) on teaching and learning process to enhance teaching effectiveness: a literature review suggest that, the introduction of role-play in teaching has a profound positive impact on the students' confidence and self-esteem. The study also revealed that, active learning environment promotes inclusivity and improves critical thinking and students' academic performances. Moreover, role play when used to teach language helps learners to acquire communicative skills as well as building their self-confidence.

2.6.5.2.7 Drama Method

Drama is a teaching method that allows students to participate, demonstrate, and observe in a controlled and conducive environment (Mohammed & Zaroog, 2021). Drama helps students get in touch with their creativity and spontaneity as well as to develop confidence in expressing ideas. Exposing learners to drama provides the teacher with another way of assessing students. Through drama, students reveal how they organize ideas, solve problems, work in a group, deal with conflict and use their imagination.

Observing how students dramatize an event offers valuable insight into how they perceive, interpret, understand and analyse the material at the core of the lesson. A study by Kirui (2015) revealed that use of drama teaching method was limited because teachers preferred other approaches which enabled them to complete the syllabus on time. The study noted that when drama was employed student participation was high. The study noted that those who enjoyed teaching employed drama techniques, and it was effective since it provides more resources to aid understanding of language.

2.6.5.2.8 Question and Answer Method

One of the most important sessions conducted by a teacher in the teaching and learning process is the question and answer session (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020). Farrat (1985) as cited by Shanmugavelu et al. (2020) posits that questioning is one of the most effective ways to get students involved in the delivery of the lesson. By asking questions, teachers can engage students to think about the content of a lesson and simultaneously get feedback from students to demonstrate the effect of teaching. Nasibi (2015) pointed out that the question and answer

method promotes interactive learning and enhances learners' ability to remember what they are taught. In the question and answer method students are given cues that may lead to correct answer if necessary (Githua, 2002). Students are required to freely express themselves without fear of making either pronunciation or grammar mistakes because this is a sign that they are learning the language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The questions should encourage and challenge them to understanding the concepts being taught (Chirayangyuenyong et al., 2022). They continue to assert that the teacher should provide the right opportunity and environment that prompt students to answer the questions correctly. They concluded that question and answer method improved the students understanding of concepts. This study intended to establish the students' perceptions of this method and how often teachers used it in Kiswahili language class.

2.6.5.2.9 Songs and Poems Method

Songs and poems are among the commonly used methods of teaching languages (Florence, 2020). Poetry is a literary form that uses phonaesthetics and sound symbolism to evoke meanings beyond the common usage while songs integrate lyrics with melody, harmony, and rhythm (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). The major difference between them is that a song is set to music while a poem is written to be read either loudly or silently. Songs and poems are used as methods of teaching languages because their lyrics stimulate and arouse phonetics, vocabulary and help in the development of grammatical skills of learners (Dineshika, 2022).

Empirical studies show that listening to songs in a second or foreign language provides interesting, engaging, and motivating learning experiences (Kulmagambetova & Akimkhanzy, 2023). The studies further show that singing enhances second language students' learning process because it improves listening and speaking skills, pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary. According to Kanonidou and Papachristou (2019) songs, lyrics and poetry generally improve students' English language skills. Songs and poems are thus an easy and relaxed method of teaching that help learners to quickly memorize new words and build grammar. They promote not only development of verbal skills, but also the creative and informative abilities of students. Listening to a song or reciting a poem is considered as the most effective ways of introducing a topic (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017). They are not only recommended methods of teaching listening and speaking skills in Kiswahili language but they are part of the content in the syllabus (KIE, 2002).

2.6.5.2.10 Story Telling Method

Story telling is a technique of imparting knowledge and skills by adopting use of words in a manner that enhances human beings' ability to pass themes and make learners understand real and imagined worlds (Medupin, 2024). The method helps young learners to solve given problems and tasks in a playful way and creates constructive and creative comprehension of the given matter. According to Smith et al. (2023), when the method is adopted, a theme is presented with a storyline, a technique that makes the learning process easy and effortless. Story telling boosts learners' ability to recount events in chronological order. Listening to and reading stories, is an important component in a child's reading development. Further, stories also make learning more enjoyable while at the same time helping students better understand relevant information. The method of teaching to be used by a teacher should be that which is appropriate to the topic and the learners being taught (Momanyi, 2012).

In spite of the apparent importance of the various teaching methods investigated by different researchers, no empirical data is available to ascertain the students' perceptions of them and how they are linked to their Kiswahili language skills academic achievement. Thus, the current study endeavoured to establish if indeed there is relationship between learners' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

2.6.6 Students' Perceptions on Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement

Students' perceptions of teaching methods that their teachers employ in the teaching-learning process in developing Kiswahili language skills is of great importance. Students' perceptions of teaching methods play a crucial role in shaping their learning experiences, engagement, and academic achievement (Muthwii & Mwangi, 2023). The effectiveness of the teaching/learning process depends on students' interpretation to various instructional strategies used by their teachers. This in turn may influence their attitude, motivation and active participation in language classes. Students' perceptions are among factors that affect learning and achievement (Nur, et al., 2022). They continue to posit that positive perceptions interact with teaching process to create a conducive classroom environment for learning and realization of set outcomes.

Yıldırım and Kurnaz (2022) observed that perceptions influenced learning because they affect students' behaviour and reinforce their desire to learn. Perceptions may also affect learning in relation to the learning strategy adopted by teachers in a given situation. They also influence workers' attitudes and how they perform tasks assigned to them (Sukmawati, et al., 2023). It means that students with positive perceptions towards a teaching method would be

more receptive to it and actively participate in learning. Rahma (2025) notes that students' positive perceptions of a teaching approach increase their motivation, engagement, and active participation in learning tasks. When learners view a teaching method as effective, enjoyable, and relevant to their needs, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning, collaborate with peers, and apply greater effort in classroom activities concludes (Rahma, 2025). Cultivating positive attitudes in language learning enhances learners' understanding and memory of content while strengthening their self-confidence, creativity, and motivation to engage in communication using the target language (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2022).

Govender (2015) carried out a study on students' perceptions on the teaching methods used in higher education. The findings revealed that the lecture method was the most used (92%). Students felt that they were less frequently exposed to alternative teaching methods that require them to participate actively in class concludes (Govender, 2015). These findings are also supported by Onyango (2017) who observed that 75% of pupils in primary schools in Homabay County preferred discussion method because it allows them to be active in class. This scenario was also observed by Magogwe and Oliver (2007) in Botswana who reported that students in Botswana preferred teaching strategies that made them active in class. According to Tufail and Mahmood (2020) there was a difference between students' and teachers' perceptions on teaching methods; teachers indicated that they adopted constructive teaching methods, but their students did not support their claims. Students reported that their teachers used lectures and discussions most of the time. However, students' preferred teaching methods that were interactive and rich in learning activities. Many students perceive interactive and learner-centred approaches such as group discussions, project-based learning, and the use of multimedia as more engaging and effective compared to traditional lecture methods (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2020). These methods are often associated with increased motivation, deeper understanding, and better retention of content contends (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2020).

Momanyi (2012) established that the most appropriate teaching methods a teacher could use in teaching of Kiswahili include; demonstration method, small group discussions, question and answer method, story- telling, and role-play among other methods. These findings are in tandem with Kang'ahi et al. (2012) and Atandi (2019) who established that there is a positive relationship between learner-centred teaching styles and students' academic achievement. They therefore, recommend that teachers should adopt these interactive approaches to improve Kiswahili language achievement. Murunga (2016) similarly emphasized the importance of interactive teaching methods, recommending that teachers should incorporate listening

activities that represent real-life situations to enhance students' listening skills. Kenyatta (2023) found that incorporating learner-centred approaches such as drama significantly influenced the teaching/learning process of Kiswahili language, especially in grammar and literature.

Scrivener (2005) observed that the classroom is a world of uncertainty and that a teacher is never sure whether the students will be motivated to learn or not. Therefore, for a teacher, the choice of how to teach a particular concept is neither simple nor beyond challenge. Each teacher must therefore weigh the pros and cons of various alternatives of instruction before making a selection. Evidence from the past has shown that teachers tend to select the same instructional model over and over again, (Scrivener, 2005). Ogweno et al (2021) explored on effects of problem-based learning method and lecture teaching method on academic achievement of students. The study concluded that overreliance on the lecture method tends to limit learner participation, reduce critical thinking, and lead to student boredom, whereas learner-centered approaches like PBL enhance understanding and retention of concepts.

Bett (2013, 2016) reported that 'teacher-talk' dominated the classroom. This observation is similarly noted by Mekonge (2017), who, in a research exploring the factors influencing secondary school students' acquisition of English-speaking skills, found that classroom interactions were largely dominated by teachers, leaving students inactive. The study continued to posit that, this could be due to fear of errors, lack of language mastery and speaking skills. Kangu (2015) analysed teaching strategies on students' performance in science and reported that teachers mostly used teacher-centred approaches in the classroom leading to low performance. However, Mbae (2014) was of different opinion where in the study on factors influencing implementation of Kiswahili curriculum in public primary schools in Igoji Division, revealed that teachers integrated all the teaching methods at different levels in the classroom. MoE (2019) asserts that teachers should always put learners at the centre in the teaching/learning process. This implies that learner centred methods should be used as much as possible so that learners can remain active participants in the teaching /learning process especially in language classes.

The teaching strategy a teacher adopts is one of the factors that may affect students' positive learning outcome and achievement (Bett, 2016). Githua (2002) asserts that the method of instruction is an important influence on achievement and retention. In choosing any instructional strategy the teacher must consider a variety of factors such as; the subject matter, nature of the learner, ability of the learner and type of the learner (Adhikari, 2017). They continue to posit that students differ in characteristics that are part of their genetic inheritance. They also differ in their emotional make-up and in experiences derived from their families and

community. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers understand their learners' individual differences when selecting a teaching method. Topics to be taught, availability of teaching/learning resources among others are factors teachers may consider in choosing an instructional method (Adhikari, 2017).

Quality teaching initiatives depend wholly upon the teachers, so they should plan their teaching strategies well (Odundo & Gunga, 2013). However, Mbiti (2013) and Odundo and Gunga (2013) reported that most teachers choose familiar and non-challenging methods such as lecture, demonstrations, question and answer and drilling. They should supplement teacher centred/traditional methods with learner centred methods such as group discussions, case studies, problem solving and simulations (Miima, 2014). Odeo (2007) indicated that Kiswahili language should be taught through different approaches that encourage learners' involvement. These observations are shared with Killen (2011) who posits that teachers should adopt methods that involve their learners fully. Students who are involved in the teaching /learning process are motivated to learn and hence achieve more highly than those who are not.

The objective of any teaching is to ensure effective learning takes place, and every teacher wants to leave the classroom convinced that the objectives have been achieved. (Cohen et al., 2018). Each student ranging from the fastest to the slowest has a contribution to make to ensure that the set objectives are achieved (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). This not only does depend on the type of the learner but also on the perceptions they have on the methods the teacher uses in the teaching/learning process (Peel, 2019). Learner centred methods enables the learners to develop social skills and appreciation for teamwork (Akiri, 2014). The study focused on assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance and it established that, learning activities that take place in the classroom determines a student's academic achievement and therefore the need to investigate further this relationship.

Kiswahili language to many Kenyans is a second language (L2). This affects the process of learning because the learners tend to build upon the pre-existing conceptual knowledge and perceptions they may hold on the target language (Nityanandam, 2015). Ellis (2021) postulates that in mother-tongue/first language (L1) learning, a learner has lexically specific patterns from which abstract categories are developed. In second language learning, knowledge of abstract categories has already been acquired from the L1. Therefore, in the process of learning L2 there is always constant conflict between the rules of L1 and L2. Moreover, there is very little scope for actual use of the L2 outside the classroom situation (Ellis, 2021). This implies that Kiswahili is only one of the subjects in the curriculum where it

is taught for 35 minutes in primary schools and 40 minutes in secondary schools (Cheruto & Orocho, 2016).

This scenario can be compared to India, where English is learnt as a second language while Gujarati is the L1. Learners are ill equipped to use L2 in actual life situations when need arises (Tyagi, 2006). Snow (2001) asserts that it is necessary to ensure that students gain language competences that will be useful in settings beyond the school itself. This means that students should be able to apply the skills acquired in real life. Kiswahili language skills meet this purpose, especially listening and speaking. There is therefore need for teachers to adopt teaching methods that would allow learners to practice language skills in different communicative settings.

It is important that learners have positive perceptions of teaching methods because students tend to remember what has been taught clearly and accurately if they perceive that teaching is effective and their emotional needs have been met. Korir (2022) argues that perceptions affect learning and achievement because the learning strategy adopted by teachers in a given situation is determined by interaction between students' pre-existing beliefs about knowledge and learning and the general disposition towards a particular method of instruction. Campbell et al. (2001) in a study on students' perceptions of teaching and learning: the influence of students' approaches to learning and teachers' approaches to teaching established that when teachers focused strongly on actively engaging students and creating a supportive environment with learner-centred approaches, students were more focused in their studies. In contrast, when traditional expository teaching methods were used exclusively, students tended to lose interest in learning.

Therefore, students' perceptions could be a factor that may contribute to the low achievement in Kiswahili language skills observed among secondary school students in Nakuru County. Extant literature shows that there are limited published works which link students' perceptions on teaching methods and their Kiswahili language skills academic achievement. Teachers' understanding of their learners' perceptions of various teaching methods they adopt will help meeting learners' needs and preferences, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. Filling this gap was one of the drivers of this study.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986) and Krashen's Monitor Model (MM) (1981). The two, SCT and MM were utilized because they complement each other. This study investigated the relationship between students' self-

efficacy, gender and perceptions on Kiswahili language skills achievement. SCT helped in explaining the role of students' personal beliefs in learning and knowledge acquisition, which is a precursor to achievement. MM assisted in explaining skills acquisition which was also the focus of the study.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is based on the premise that an individual can acquire knowledge and skills by observing others within the context of social interactions and experiences. In other words, people learn new behaviours by replicating the actions of others. In language learning, students acquire skills by observing and modelling others, teachers and fellow students. The theory states that when people observe a model performing a behaviour, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviours (Bandura, 1989). According to Bandura (1997), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is based on the idea that individuals possess a self-system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions. Self-efficacy beliefs are concerned with individuals' perceived capabilities to produce results and to attain designated types of performances.

People's beliefs in their own capabilities influence whether or not they will reproduce an observed behaviour (Vinney, 2020). Individuals can acquire new behaviours by observing others being rewarded for a particular behaviour. According to Bandura (1994), the belief in personal efficacy not only affects life choices; but also, the ability to persist in order to achieve a goal, in this context to acquire language skills. The goal of teaching language is to enable learners to be competent in all the skills for communication purposes. Acquisition of language skills largely depends on observing others and learning from them. SCT is closely related to self-efficacy theory which is about an individual's beliefs and actions (Ngatia, 2019). SCT aids in understanding the learning process, and provides insights that teachers can use to guide students to acquire skills.

According to Krashen's Monitor Model (MM), language learning occurs with comprehensible input such as hearing, or reading things that are just slightly above a person's current language level. It further defines a monitor as anything that connects one's language performance and pressures one to communicate meaning. Krashen (1985) postulates that, humans learn language by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible inputs. In the classroom setup, students learn language skills by listening and following instructions given by teachers as a facilitator. Therefore, the Monitor Model is appropriate since this study examined students' achievement in Kiswahili language skills which are acquired after listening and following teachers' instructions and related factors

2.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a network of interlinked ideas that together provide a comprehensive understanding of an occurrence or occurrences (Jabareen, 2009). It comprises of ideas, notions, or perceptions, which support one another, articulate their respective occurrences, and establish a framework-specific philosophy. A conceptual framework supports and strengthens research by providing clear links among variables in literature (Babbie, 2020). Creswell and Creswell (2018) considers it as a product of consolidating a multiplicity of key findings relevant to research in a narrative or schematically form, into a single unit that reveals the position of a study with what is in literature. A conceptual framework thus describes a contextual setting under which variables interact. This study was based on the premise that achievement in Kiswahili language skills depends on student’s self-efficacy, gender and perceptions on teaching methods. The interaction between these variables is depicted in figure 2.

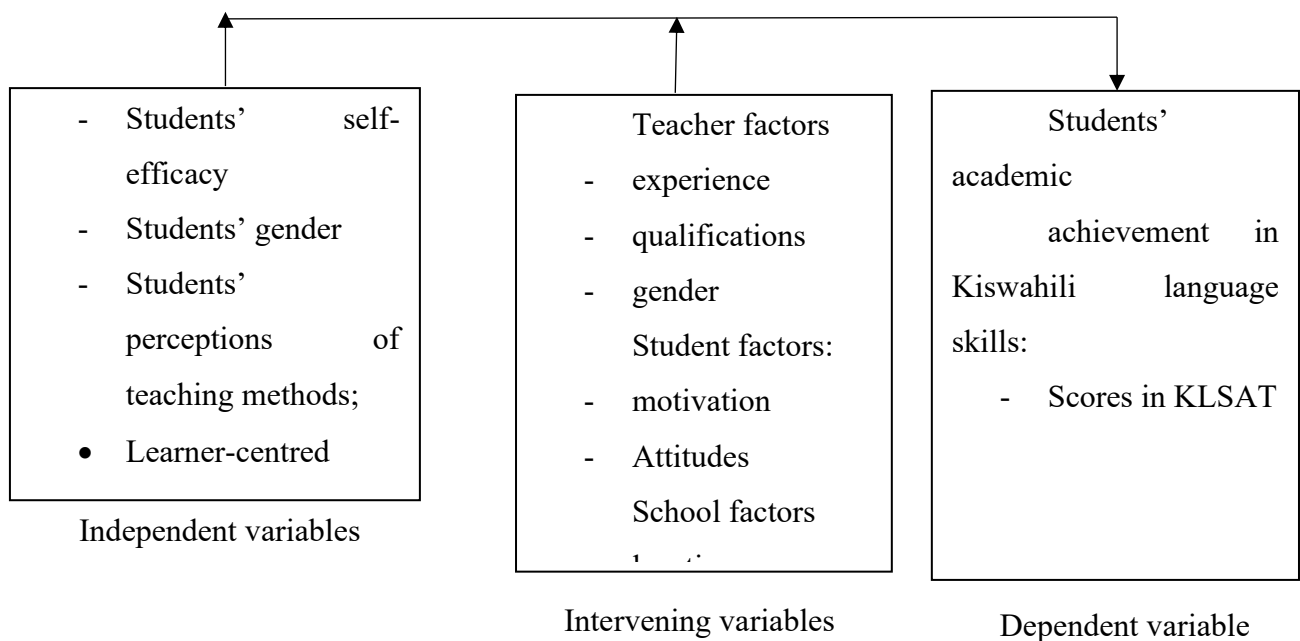


Figure 2: The conceptual framework showing the relationship between variables

Figure 2 illustrates the interaction among the variables of the study, which were categorized as independent, intervening and dependent. The components of the independent variable were self-efficacy, gender and perceptions on teaching methods while Kiswahili language skills were measured by KLSAT mean scores. The intervening variables were teacher, students and school factors. The teacher factors were qualification and experience while students’ traits were motivation and attitudes. Self-efficacy and attitudes are different in that the former is concerned with self-beliefs while the latter is about disposition towards

something, idea or process. The other intervening variable was school factors. Figure 1 indicates that under ideal conditions, achievement in Kiswahili language skills were totally dependent on students' self-efficacy gender and perceptions on teaching methods. However, under dynamic conditions, the relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and Kiswahili language skills achievement was affected by teacher, students and school factors.

Attempts were made during the study to minimize the effects of the intervening variables on the relationship between the predictors and the outcome through sampling and randomization. The effects of teacher factors like qualification and experience were minimized by targeting teachers who are employees of the Teachers Service Commission, had a minimum qualification of a diploma in education and above, and at least two years teaching experience. In addition, the effects of students and school factors were minimized by involving only public schools which use similar management guidelines from the government.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design that was adopted in this research, as well as the location, population and sample size and sampling procedures. Instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures as well as ethical considerations that guided the study are also described here.

3.2 Research Design

A research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Babbie, 2020; Kothari, 2004). It is therefore essential that the appropriate research design is selected since doing so makes an inquiry as efficient as possible by giving maximum information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. Bordens and Abbott (2011) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that a correlational study determines whether two variables are related. This entails establishing whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other variable. It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation.

There are four types of correlations: positive, negative, curvilinear and no correlations (Pawar, 2020). Positive Correlation between two variables is when an increase in one variable leads to an increase in the other and a decrease in one lead to a decrease in the other. Negative Correlation is when an increase in one variable leads to a decrease in another and vice versa. A Curvilinear Relationship is a type of relationship between two variables in which as one variable increases, so does the other variable. However, this works only up to a certain point. Two variables are uncorrelated when a change in one does not lead to a change in the other and vice versa.

According to Kothari (2004), a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The correlational research design was utilized during this study. Creswell (2015) and Gay et al. (2006) assert that a correlational research design involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. It seeks to explore and describe the nature of prevailing conditions or relationships between variables in a certain phenomenon (Akhtar, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011).

These studies assert that this design ensures that the research process is systematic and scientific in nature. Kathuri and Pals (1999) observed that correlational studies are ideal for exploring the association between characteristics of the same group of people. Their opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions are sought Creswell and Creswell (2018).

This design was considered appropriate because it involved exploring relationship between selected students' characteristics and their Kiswahili language skills achievement. Data on students' gender, self-efficacy, their perceptions of teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was gathered using a questionnaire, observation schedule and a test. The questionnaire used had several sub-sections in order to determine beliefs, opinions, preferences and perceptions of the respondents (Kathuri & Pal, 1999). The relationship between the selected students' characteristics was correlated with achievement in Kiswahili language skills without manipulating them.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Nakuru County, one of the 47 counties of Kenya. It is situated in Rift Valley region and comprises of 11 sub counties, namely, Naivasha, Gilgil, Nakuru East and West, Bahati, Subukia, Njoro, Molo, Rongai and Kuresoi North and South (Kenya Open Data, 2014). The county has both rural and urban settings and a population of 2.2 million people that is made up of many ethnic communities (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). The main economic activity of the county is agriculture as the majority of the residents engage in crop, livestock and fish farming (Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries [DOALF], 2021). The inhabitants also engage in other economic activities such as business, manufacturing, mining and tourism.

Nakuru County has been chosen because most of its population comprises of many ethnic communities from other counties. This implies that Kiswahili is a second language (L2) to almost all the learners in the county. Consequently, this affects their Kiswahili language learning because students speak their mother tongue or other languages as first language (L1). According Ellis (2021), learners who have learnt a L1 tend to build upon pre-existing knowledge and perceptions they may hold on the target language and therefore this may affect the process of learning L2. Savage (2019) and Oloo (2023) contend that mother tongue dominance or any other first language (L1) tends to interfere with the learning of L2 and this leads to learners facing challenges in acquiring and learning L2 leading to poor academic achievement. This implies that the target population in Nakuru learns Kiswahili as a second language (Abobo, 2017).

The selection of the county was also based on achievement in Kiswahili language in the national examinations, which has generally been low (KNEC, 2023). Further, the choice of the study location was informed by the fact that the county has both rural and urban schools. It is important to note that language policy in Kenya stipulates that the language of instruction during the first five years of formal education is the predominant language of the area. This may also affect the learning of second language. The other factor was that Nakuru County has many schools of different categories. These include girls and boys schools, day and boarding institutions, as well as mixed ones.

3.4 Target Population and Accessible Population

Population has been defined as that to which findings may be generalized (Gay et. al., 2006). According to Nakuru County Government (2023), the county has a total of 361 public secondary schools with a student population of 158,619. This population is comprised of 80,806 girls and 77,813 boys. The target population of this study was 43,190 Form three students in all public secondary schools in Nakuru County given that Kiswahili is a compulsory subject. Out of the 43,190 students, 19,000 were boys while the rest (24,190) were girls. The accessible population was all the 23,596 form three students in public secondary schools in the four sub counties as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Distribution of the Accessible Population by Sub County

Sub-counties	Boys	Girls	Number of Form 3s
Nakuru East	2,091	1,916	4,007
Naivasha	2,430	2,435	4,865
Nakuru	2,222	2,794	5,016
North			
Gilgil	2,124	7,584	9,708
Total	8,867	14,729	23,596

Source: Nakuru County Director of Education Office (2024)

Table 5 highlights the four sub counties sampled for the study which include; Gilgil, Naivasha, Nakuru East and Nakuru North. Gathii et al. (2019) assert that, the accessible population is the portion or subset of the target population that the researcher has reasonable access to and are best placed to provide the required data. The four sub counties were chosen

because they have high number of students (23,596) and also high number of schools in all categories (national, county, extra-county and sub-county). Schools in these sub counties also comprised of mixed and single-sex institutions. This was essential since gender was one of the study variables. Additionally, schools in these sub counties are located in urban, peri-urban and rural settings. The form three students were selected because they have covered a considerable portion of the secondary school Kiswahili syllabus. This was important because the study focused on skills which require considerable training to acquire.

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The accessible population of the study was 43,190 form three students, which were distributed in the 4 sub counties of Nakuru County. It was not possible to involve the whole accessible population due to logistical constrains, hence the need for sampling. Leavy (2017) outlines the importance of selecting a sample that is representative of the population being studied to ensure the validity and reliability of research findings. The number of students who took part in the study was determined using a formula developed by Yamane (1967). The formula is:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where:

- n = required sample size
- N = the given population size of form two students
- e = Error of margin assumed to be 5%

According to Gathii et.al. (2019), Yamane’s formula is easy to use and produces a high sample size thus giving a better representation of the population. Given that the population of students in the selected four counties was 23,596, the sample size was;

$$(23596) / (1 + 23596 \times 0.05 \times 0.05) = 394$$

The number of respondents from each of the participating four sub-counties was determined using proportionate sampling techniques as follows:

$$n_s = [N_s / N] \times n$$

Where n_s = number of respondents from the strata

N_s = Population of strata

N = Accessible population

For instant, the number of students drawn from Gilgil sub-county was

$$n_s = [9708 / 23596] \times 394 = 162$$

At the sub county level, the number of respondents from each school category, which

participated in the study, was established using stratified and proportionate sampling procedures. The schools were organized by category (national, extra-county, county and sub-county) and the number of respondents from each determined using proportionate sampling procedures. Simple random sampling was then used to select participating schools. At institution level, in single stream schools intact form three class was selected. However, in schools with more than one stream, simple random sampling techniques were used to select an intact form three class. The distribution of the sample by Sub County is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Sample Size of the Study by Sub County

Sub-counties	Sample size
Nakuru East	67
Naivasha	81
Nakuru North	84
Gilgil	162
Total	394

3.6 Instrumentation

An instrument is a tool that is used for collecting data during empirical studies (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). Data was collected using three instruments, a Students' Questionnaire (SQ), the Kiswahili language Skill Achievement Test (KLSAT) and an Observation Schedule (OS). A questionnaire was deemed appropriate because it is recommended when a study involves collecting data from respondents that are spread in a wide geographical area. Its other advantages are that it is an ideal for gathering data on sensitive matters that require anonymity and is easy to administer, score, and analyse (Sadan, 2017). The observation schedule was preferred because it enables a researcher to observe and record what actually happened on the ground (Sileyew, 2019).

3.6.1 Students' Questionnaire (SQ)

The SQ (Appendix A) was adapted from Panc et al. (2012) Self-efficacy: A new assessment tool and Bandura's General Self-Efficacy scale (1977). These instruments were appropriate because they are based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which guided the study. Moreover, their reliability and validity have been proven. In addition, Bandura's General Self-Efficacy scale (1977) was deemed appropriate because it is recommended for students of twelve (12) years and above.

The questionnaire comprised of three parts, A, B and C. Part A was for eliciting bio-data of the respondents. This section assisted in capturing data on gender of subjects since it was one of the study variables. Part B was used to elicit information about the respondents' self-efficacy in learning Kiswahili language. It contained 33 closed ended item that were used to rate the strength of students' beliefs in themselves to learn Kiswahili language skills. The rating scale used was; very strong belief, strong belief, weak belief and very weak belief,

Section C was for gathering data on students' perceptions of the teaching methods used during Kiswahili language lessons. The items were both closed ended and open-end. The closed ended items were based on the extent to which the respondents agreed with the statements. The scale used was; strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The section also had some open-ended items, which enabled the respondents to provide additional information that they felt was necessary.

3.6.2 Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT)

The KLSAT (Appendix B) was for measuring students' achievement in Kiswahili language skills. It was in form of a poem 'U Wapi Ujana Wangu' (KNEC, 2020). The teachers guided learners to read in turns as the rest listened attentively. The teacher then dictated questions related to the poem as the learners took note of them. The questions were used to assess the learners' language skills proficiency and consequently their academic achievement. The teacher instructed learners to attempt answering the questions by writing answers on the provided answer sheets. The teacher asked learners not to write their names on the answer sheet but to indicate the random numbers given both in the answer sheet and in the questionnaire. This was to ensure confidentiality of data collection. Learners were given 45 minutes to write the answers. The teacher then collected the answer sheets for marking. Learners were awarded a mark for every correctly written answer as per the marking scheme provided. The distribution of marks was indicated against each question. The test was marked out of twenty points. After marking the results were moderated by an expert (KNEC Examiner of Kiswahili Paper 2).

3.6.3 Observation Schedule (OS)

The OS (Appendix C) was used to collect information on the teaching methods teachers use during teaching/learning process in Kiswahili language in form three classes. Kathuri and Pals (1993) and Cohen et al. (2011) contend that direct observation is sometimes necessary when conducting research because it enables the investigator to collect information about human behaviour and pay attention to specifics as opposed to self-reported evidence. The researcher made the observations by sitting in class during Kiswahili language lessons and

rating the frequency of use of various teaching methods. The teaching methods were the lecture, group and class discussion, role play, drama, storytelling, and songs and poems. The observer was also free to indicate any other method used by them during the observation sessions and rate its frequency. The scale used to rate the occurrences was never, rarely, occasionally, frequently used and most frequently used.

3.6.4 Validity of Research Instruments

The validity of the three tools, SQ, KLSAT and OS were checked by research experts at the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management, Egerton University. Bhattacharjee (2012) posits that validity is the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct that it is supposed to measure. Vithal and Jansen (1997) on the other hand, point out that validity is that soundness, the effectiveness of the measuring instrument. Borg and Gall (1989) posit that, it is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. They recommend that content validity should be established to ensure that the items in an instrument are indicators of the construct the tool is designed to measure.

The experts checked the content and face validity of the three instruments. Taherdoost (2016) recommends that validation should be done by a panel of experts since the process involves theoretical assessment, suitability of items rating, and evaluating their fitness in defining a construct. According to Kothari (2004) and Kathuri and Pals (1999), content validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument tests or measures what it should. It is the representativeness of the items on the instruments in relation to measurement of a variable study (Zamanzabdeh et al., 2015). Face validity on the other hand is concerned with ensuring that the format, layout and language of an instrument is appropriate (Kasomo (2006). Three problems were identified in SQ, 2 poorly constructed items in section B, and a double-barrelled item in section C. The corrections recommended by the experts were affected before they were used to collect data.

3.6.5 Reliability of the Research Instruments

The reliability of SQ and KLSAT were estimated before they were used to collect data. According to Jacob (2017), reliability is the ability of a measurement tool to produce consistent results over time. A form three class from Rongai sub County that comprised of 38 students from a school which did not take part in the actual study, was used during the reliability estimation. The sample was deemed adequate since it was above 10 to 30 subjects recommended for piloting by Kathuri and Pals (1999), The reliability of this instrument was

estimated using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The formula was:

Cronbach Alpha $\alpha = K.c / [v + (K - 1) c]$ (Institute of Digital Research and Education, 2016).

Where K is the number of items in the test tool

c is mean inter-item covariance among the items

v is overall mean variance

The Cronbach Alpha formula was selected because the instrument was administered once and constructed using close ended multiple choices items (Canals, 2017). The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of .812 and was deemed reliable given that it was above the recommended 0.7 threshold (Taber, 2018).

The reliability of KLSAT was also estimated using data collected in a school in Rongai Sub County which did not take part in the study. It involved one form three class that had 38 students which was randomly chosen. The reliability of the test was estimated using the Kuder Richardson (KR21) formula:

KR21 reliability coefficient $r = (k/k - 1)[1 - M(k - M)/k \sigma^2]$

k is the number of test items

M is the mean

σ^2 is the variation of the entire test (Taherdoost, 2016).

This formula was chosen because it is recommended for estimating reliability of an instrument that generates continuous data. It is administered once and items are of the same difficulty index (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2017). The reliability coefficient of KLSAT was .756 and it was considered reliable.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

An introductory letter was obtained from the Board of Postgraduate Studies of Egerton University. This enabled the researcher to seek a permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Clearance to conduct the study was sought from the Nakuru County Commissioner and Director of Education. The Sub-County Education Officers (SBEOs) of the sub-counties that were involved in the study were also notified. The respondents were formally contacted through their respective principals, the purpose of the study explained to them and their consent sought. Dates and venues for administering the questionnaires and making observations were set in consultation with the participants.

The students were briefed on how to fill the SQ and sit for the test before they were administered. Kiswahili language teachers assisted in administering the instruments.

Participants were given ample time to complete the task, after which the questionnaires and test answer sheets were collected, awaiting analyses. The researcher made observations in all the 14 schools that were involved in the research. The observation involved sitting in a 40 minutes Kiswahili language class and recording on the Observation schedule the frequency of use of teaching methods listed in it. Observations were made in each of the form three classes of the 14 schools three times.

3.8 Data Analysis

After data collection, the information was examined for errors and cleaned prior to the coding process. A code book was prepared and used to code the cleaned data. Two data files were prepared using the Statistical Package for Social Science. Self-efficacy, gender, perception of teaching methods and achievement data was keyed in. Data that was generated by the observation schedule was stored in the second file.

Qualitative data from the observation schedule and questionnaire were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Data gathered using open-ended items were organized into themes as per the study objectives and summarized. Responses to closed-ended items from SQ Section A on students' self-efficacy were based on the extent to which they believed with them namely; Very Strong Belief (5), Strong Belief (4), Moderate Belief (3), Weak Belief (2) and Very Weak Belief (1) were scored. Items from SQ Section C on students' perceptions of teaching methods were based on the extent to which respondents agreed with them namely; Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). These items were scored, their means determined and transformed into measures of the construct. Students' mean scores in the KLSAT was also determined.

The first three study hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance using simple linear regression while the fourth one was tested using multiple regression. Regression techniques were selected because they are robust for exploring relationships among constructs measured at ratio or interval scales (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Field (2018) recommends the procedures when predicting an outcome based on more than one explanatory variable and parametric conditions are not violated.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refers to moral principles that people use to decide what is right or wrong, or dos and don'ts (Powell et al., 2018). It is essential in research because it is a concern with consent. It also ensures honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, and respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, and responsible publication.

Attempts were made during this study to conduct the inquiry within the recommended education ethics guidelines. First, the researcher sought clearance from the University Research and Ethics committee before applying for a permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) as required by law. Secondly, the purpose of the study was explained to the subjects and their consent sought. Thirdly, the participants were treated equitably, with respect and dignity during data collection. The study also adhered to confidentiality and anonymity by asking the respondents not to write their names on the questionnaire and test papers and controlling access to data by locking it in a safe and use of passwords. Fourthly, the results were not tampered with to suit the researcher's opinion and plagiarism was minimized by listing all sources cited in the research report in the reference.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the results and discussion of the study, which are organized in line with the objectives of the study. It presents the questionnaire return rates and respondents' characteristics. It then presents the relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The results of each objective are discussed with respect to the related literature.

4.2 Instruments Return Rate

The return questionnaires were analysed before presenting the results related to the study objectives. Even though it was not an objective, the analysis was deemed necessary as a way of ascertaining that the sample size was adequate. The return rate of these instruments are summarized on Table 7.

Table 7

Instruments Return Rates

Instrument	Administered	Returned	Used in Analysis	Return rate in %
SQ	428	428	404	94.4
KLSAT	428	428	405	94.6

As Table 7 indicates, two instruments, the Students' Questionnaire (SQ) and Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT) were used to gather data. This study thus involved only students as respondents. The proposed sample size of the study, determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, was 394. However, during the study, the number of questionnaires administered, and students tested was 428. This was well above the proposed sample of 378. This increase was due to the fact that intact classes were used during the data collection, as it is unethical and against school rules to break classes for purposes of research (Wango, 2009).

The results in Table 7 indicate that some of the returned questionnaires were not included in the analysis. This was because they were either blank or incomplete. The results further indicate that the return rates for SQ and KLSAT were 94.4% and 94.6% respectively. A 60% questionnaire return rate is acceptable in education and social science research (Babbie, 2010). The high return rates were also due to the support of teachers who helped in mobilizing

students who participated in the study. This is contrary to available literature that shows that questionnaire return rates is normally a common phenomenon in studies that use instruments such as questionnaires to collect data (Lavidas et al., 2022). Studies should ensure high instrument return rates; otherwise, the effective sample size may be reduced, weakening statistical power and representativeness (Van Slyke et al., 2020). The reduced sample may not be representative of the population, raising issues of validity and generalization of findings. These results confirm that the study did not suffer from low instrument return rates.

4.3 Characteristics of the Respondents

The characteristics of the students were also analysed. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that analysing characteristics of respondents gives a better understanding of the demographic context of a study. Describing the characteristics of a sample provides a foundation for a detailed discussion of the results of the study (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The characteristics of the students examined were school type and school category as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Characteristics of the Students (n = 405)

Scale	Characteristic	N	Percentage
	School Category		
	National	95	23.5
	County	53	13.1
	Extra-Country	108	26.7
	Sub-County	149	36.8
School type	Boys	86	21.2
	Girls	170	42.0
	Mixed	149	36.8

Table 8 shows that the highest percentage (36.8%) of the students' sample were from sub county schools while the rest were from extra-county (26.7%), national (23.5%) and county (13.1%) schools respectively. These results concur with those of studies done in Kenya by Kitur et al. (2020) and Owiti et al. (2020). These investigations showed that sub-county schools were the majority. The studies attributed this observation to the fact that such schools branch off from nearby primary schools, admit students of both sexes and are deemed low cost to

operate. These results confirm that the sampling techniques adopted ensured that all categories of schools were involved in the study.

The results continue to show that the highest percentage (42.0%) of the respondents were from girls' only schools, (36.8%) from co-education and only (21.2%) were from boys only institutions. These results show that the highest proportion (42.0%) of the sample comprised of participants from girls only school. These results suggest that the number of females in secondary schools in Nakuru County is high. This observation could be due to gender mainstreaming programs which tend to emphasize the girl-child's participation in education (UN Women, 2021). These results, however, confirm that all category of schools were involved in the study. They demonstrate that with regard to school type and category, the sample was representative of the population. Gender distribution in this study is as indicated in Figure 3.

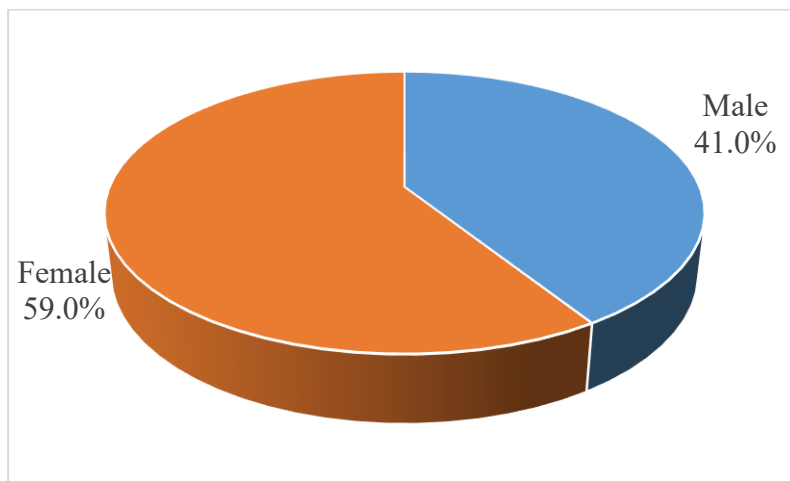


Figure 3: Gender distribution of the study sample ($n = 405$)

Figure 3 shows that majority of the respondents (59.0%) were females while the rest (41.0%) were males. These results imply that there are more girls than boys in secondary schools. This is in harmony with what was in the records of Nakuru County Director of Education (2021) at the time of the study. The records indicated that out of the student population of 76,515 in the sub counties which were involved in the study, majority (59.0%) were girls while boys were the minority (41.0%). The results are also in tandem with data from The GlobalEconomy (n.d) which showed that girls outnumbered boys in secondary schools. This implies that, while many countries have made efforts to improve girls' access to education, the boy child is being sidelined. However, Migosi (2018) revealed that, female student enrolment at Moi University is quite low compared to male enrolment. This scenario may

create gender disparities that were being addressed by supporting the girl child education. Teachers of Kiswahili language should therefore lay strategies to address this emerging disparity.

These findings contradict those of several studies done in the past, which showed that male access to secondary school education was higher than that of their female counterparts (Andiema, 2021; Holloway, 2020). Omoregie and Ihensekhien (2009). observed that there was persistent gender inequality in access to education in Nigeria where more males were enrolled at basic education level at 56.3% while that of females was at 43.7%. They attributed the observation to cultural, religious norms and beliefs, societal expectations, traditional gender roles and stereotyping, which restrict girls from accessing education. There is still gender disparity in access to secondary schools in Kenya in favour of males (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). Enrolment of males and females is at 51.6% and 48.4% respectively and, the disparity is more pronounced in rural than in urban locations.

The observed gender disparity in favour of the females could be due to several factors. It could be due to gender mainstreaming programs which tend to emphasize the girl-child's participation in education (Sage, 2022). For instance, UNESCO in collaboration with Global Partnership for Education (GPE) (2011) emphasized quality education for girls and women at secondary level especially in literacy. These initiatives continue to favour the girl-child education and may be the reason to gender disparity observed in this study. It could be due to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number three which is concerned with women education and empowerment (World Development Report [WDR], 2012). This initiative has seen promotion of the girl-child education at the expense of the boy-child. Creation of awareness and introduction of policy that favour girl child education and career opportunities for the females has led to this scenario in which most school age girls are learning.

The observed gender disparity could also be due to policies and legislation enacted by the Kenya government that promote education of the girl child such as re-entry policy, ban on early marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (Walela, 2020). The re-entry policy was enacted in 1994, it stipulates that expectant teens should continue schooling until when due and be re-admitted upon childbirth to the same school or alternative school to reduce psychological and emotional trauma (Imbosa, et al.,(2022): Onyango, et al., 2015; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2022). Legislation that bans early marriage has also been enacted and is being implemented (UNESCO, 2005; UNICEF, 2022).

4.4 Relationship between Students' Self-Efficacy and Achievement in Kiswahili

Language Skills

The first objective sought to explore the relationship between students' self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The students' self-efficacy was measured using its six dimensions namely mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, goal setting, emotional and psychological state and self-regulation. The items that were used to measure the dimensions were close ended based on the extent to which the students believed in them. The responses to the items were scored as follows; Very Strong Belief = 5, Strong Belief = 4, Moderate Belief = 3, Weak Belief = 2, Very Weak Belief = 1. The means of the items were computed and then transformed into the overall self-efficacy mean score (the index).

4.4.1 Mastery of Experiences

Mastery of experiences was established using a set of five items. The students' response to the items were scored, their mean scores computed and transformed to mastery of experiences. Table 9 gives a summary of the item mean scores, their standard deviations and mastery of experiences overall mean score.

Table 9

Mastery Experiences Items Means

Item	N	Mean	SD
I can always detect Kiswahili language pronunciation errors when speaking with my classmates	404	3.37	1.39
I am able to take note of whatever my Kiswahili teacher dictates correctly	403	3.89	1.18
I can answer most of the questions the teacher asks after reading a Kiswahili comprehension passage.	404	3.64	1.18
I can figure out answers to any questions the teachers ask in class on listening skills if I try hard enough	402	4.00	1.05
I am capable of finding several solutions to a task given by my Kiswahili teacher	403	3.67	1.14
Mastery Experiences mean score	404	3.71	0.24

Table 9 shows that the item mean scores ranged from 3.37(SD = 1.39) to 4.00 (SD =

1.05). Items such as; I can figure out answers to any questions the teacher asks in class on language skills if I try hard enough ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.05$) and I am able to take note of everything my Kiswahili teacher dictates ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.18$) posted high mean scores. These high scores imply that students believed they could take dictated notes and answer questions posed to them in class. Further, they believed that they could improve their listening and other Kiswahili language skills if they practiced these activities every day. The mean score of this dimension of self-efficacy ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.24$) was also high. The students thus had high levels of mastery experiences.

Mastery of experiences occurs when students succeed in academic endeavours that help them develop deeper beliefs in their abilities. When students score high grades in assignments or tasks, they are encouraged to continue learning deeper and complex content (Ngatia, 2019). Bandura (1986) and Bandura (1997) assert that past experiences are crucial indicators of self-efficacy. Hier and Mahony (2018) investigated on the contribution of mastery experiences, performance feedback, and task effort to elementary-aged students' self-efficacy in writing on second language learning. Among children aged 8-12 found that mastery experiences did not predict their writing self-efficacy even though they were highly efficacious. These findings are consistent with the current study where by the students' levels of self-efficacy was high Mean =3.71 ($SD =0.24$) but their academic achievement was low Mean = 6.70 ($SD = 3.47$). According to Wang et al. (2013), learners who experience consistent success in language tasks are more likely to develop strong self-efficacy, which in turn leads to higher levels of engagement and persistence.

In language acquisition, mastery of experiences is critical because it involves mastering new vocabulary, an objective outlined in Kiswahili syllabus (KIE, 2002). Understanding grammar structures encourages the learner to participate more in classroom activities such as group discussions, debates, drama and in answering questions. This motivates the learner to build confidence in language learning consequently encouraged to set and achieve higher goals.

4.4.2 Vicarious Learning

Vicarious learning refers to the extent to which students believe that success of others influences theirs (Austin et al., 2015). This dimension of self-efficacy was measured using a set of five closed-ended items. The responses to the items were scored, their means calculated and transformed into vicarious learning overall mean score as shown in Table 10.

Table 10*Vicarious Learning Items Means*

Item	N	Mean	SD
Working with my friends in groups is motivating because it gives me chance to speak in Kiswahili language	404	3.59	1.43
I can do oral literature projects extremely well with the assistance of my classmates	404	3.23	1.25
My ability to speak Kiswahili language more fluently would be improved tremendously if I listened to better Kiswahili speakers	403	3.66	1.36
I am capable of imitating the way my Kiswahili teacher pronounces words	404	3.84	1.48
I can speak as well as my Kiswahili teacher if I engage in more speaking drills	402	3.67	1.40
Vicarious learning mean score	404	3.60	0.23

An examination of the results in Table 10 reveal that the item mean scores were between $M=3.23$ ($SD=1.25$) and $M=3.84$ ($SD=1.48$). I am capable of imitating the way my Kiswahili teacher pronounces words (3.84 , $SD=1.48$) and I can speak as well as my Kiswahili teacher if I engage in more speaking drills ($M= 3.67$, $SD=1.40$) posted the highest means. Generally, the students vicarious learning was high, given that it posted a mean score of 3.60 ($SD = 0.23$) out of a maximum of five. Vicarious learning occurs when an observer sees another person accomplish activities without any adverse effect (Grusec, 2020). It refers to a situation in which students witness others succeed or fail, and this experience can influence their own level of self-efficacy. It is evident in the learners' responses to items such as; 'My ability to speak Kiswahili language more fluently would improve tremendously if I listened to better Kiswahili speakers' ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.36$) and I am capable of imitating the way my Kiswahili teacher pronounces words ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.48$).

These results indicate that students' vicarious learning depend on what their teachers or peers do, which they can imitate. Schunk et al. (2020) assert that being able to observe or "listen in" on experts or peers as they discuss a topic makes one have a belief that they too can also learn and achieve what the others achieved. This implies that students' vicarious learning is influenced by the actions and behaviours modelled by teachers or peers, which they tend to imitate. Bandura (1997) reports that friends have a positive effect on an individual's self-efficacy, meaning that peers are relevant social models. Pajares and Urdan (2006.) reported

that students' self-efficacy levels improved significantly by observing friends or fellow students succeed or overcome challenging tasks. Similar observations were made in the present study with items like 'Working with my friends in groups is motivating because it gives me chance to speak in Kiswahili language' and 'I can do oral literature projects extremely well with the assistance of my classmates' reporting high Mean=3.59; SD=1.43 and Mean=3.23; SD=1.25 respectively.

4.4.3 Social Persuasion

Social Persuasion is about how students feel motivated by their teachers, parents and peers (Mullen et al. 2017). Seven items were used to measure this dimension of self-efficacy. Students' responses to the items were analyzed to obtain the mean score for this dimension of self-efficacy, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Social Persuasion Items Means

Item	N	Mean	SD
I am capable of doing Kiswahili language drills exceptionally well especially if my teacher motivates me	404	4.03	1.11
I am able to follow instructions as given by the Kiswahili teacher during a lesson	404	4.23	1.02
I am capable of reciting Kiswahili poems to other students in school during parents' meetings	404	2.55	1.45
I have the ability to score good grades if I do what the teacher instructs me to do and rewards me later	403	4.64	0.72
I am able to keep members of my group focused on difficult tasks given to us by the teacher if they encourage me	403	2.95	1.30
I am able to do presentation before the class after a group discussion if my group members support me	404	3.30	1.45
Social persuasion mean score	404	3.69	0.76

The results in Table 11 indicate wide variations (M = 2.55, SD = 1.45 to M = 4.64, SD 0.72) in the items mean scores. Item such as; 'I have the ability to score good grades if I do what the teacher instructs me to do and rewards me later' (M= 4.64, SD=0.72) and 'I am able to follow instructions as given by the Kiswahili teacher during a lesson' (M= 4.23, SD=1.02)

posted very high scores. ‘I can do better in Kiswahili language skills if the teacher motivated me more’ (M= 4.11, SD=1.12.) also had a high mean score. These results imply that students’ beliefs are motivated by their teachers. These results are in agreement with the findings of a study by Lam et al. (2017) which established that parents and, teachers contributed most to students’ social persuasion than their peers.

However, items like “I am capable of reciting Kiswahili poems to other students in school during parents’ meetings (M=2.55, SD=1.45) and ‘I am able to keep members of my group focused on difficult tasks given to us by the teacher if they encouraged me’ (M=2.95, SD=1.30) had low mean scores. Peer encouragement was not a key contributor to social persuasion as indicated by the low mean score. This aligns with Nob’s (2021) findings, which revealed that social persuasion from parents and teachers had a significantly greater impact on students’ academic self-efficacy than that from peers. However, Peter et al. (2021) established that peer social persuasion is one of the determinants of behaviour change among students. The current study however, established that, students believed that their teachers, parents and peers motivate them as the mean was high (M = 3.69, SD= .76) given that it was out of 5 agreeing with the previous researches.

Kleppang et al. (2024) examined association between social support, mastery experiences and self-efficacy among adolescents and reported that those who experienced social support from friends, parents, and teachers, and those who felt useful and felt that they were mastering things, all had significantly higher self-efficacy than those with less social support and fewer mastery experiences. Verbal persuasion, one of the means of developing self-efficacy according to Bandura (1997), might be an indicator for social support. Verbal encouragement and expressions of belief from others are key components of social support. The support and confidence shown by peers, parents/guardians and teachers play a vital role in an adolescent's development of self-efficacy concluded (Kleppang et al., 2024).

4.4.4 Goal Setting

Goal setting is the ability of a learner to set achievable and challenging academic targets (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007). When a learner is goal oriented and works towards the achievement of set goals, their self-efficacy is enhanced. Such students tend to keep setting higher goals and consequently become more motivated to learn and excel in their academic achievement. Goal setting was measured using a set of seven close-ended items as illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12*Goal Setting Items Means*

Item	N	Mean	SD
I can succeed in my academics if I keep working hard in Kiswahili language skills by meeting my targets	403	4.46	0.87
If I practiced every day, I will develop all the necessary skills in Kiswahili language	403	4.24	0.99
I am able to overcome challenges in the school environment that can hinder my progress in achieving set Kiswahili language targets	403	3.31	1.36
I am capable of solving any Kiswahili language skills problem when I stay focused	404	4.05	1.10
I am likely to excel in Kiswahili examinations above my classmates, if I work hard enough	404	3.91	1.21
I can remember most of what I have been taught in class during Kiswahili lessons if I revise regularly	403	3.46	1.15
I am capable of studying Kiswahili language to the highest level	404	3.55	1.35
Goal setting mean score	403	3.85	0.43

Table 12 indicates that items “I can succeed in my academics if I keep working hard in Kiswahili language skills by meeting my targets” (M = 4.46, SD = 0.87) and “If I practiced every day, I will develop all the necessary skills in Kiswahili language (M = 4.24, SD = 0.99) posted high mean scores. It means that the students believed that they could perform to their expectation if they achieved set goals. The goal setting mean (M = 3.85, SD = 0.43) was also high, meaning that the students believed in their abilities to set goals. This is important given that goal setting helps students’ master specific content and focus on academic tasks thus improving their academic achievement (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2007). Schunk (1995) and Walker (2010) observed that highly efficacious students achieve their goals. They recommended that teachers should help their students to set goals at the onset of learning activities because this gives them a sense of self-efficacy for attaining them.

4.4.5 Emotional and Psychological States

Emotional states are a combination of physiological arousal, psychological appraisal and subjective experiences which are informed by experiences, backgrounds and cultures (Ongero, 2021). Three items were used to rate the emotional and psychological beliefs of

students. The responses to the items were scored and their means calculated as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Emotional and Psychological States Items Means

Item	N	Mean	SD
I am able to express myself confidently in Kiswahili language when answering questions in class	404	3.57	1.32
I am very confident during a Kiswahili language test	404	3.35	1.22
I can remain calm even when I am faced with difficult Kiswahili language skills tasks that am to complete within set time lines	403	3.20	1.34
Emotional and Psychological states mean score	404	3.37	1.29

Table 13 indicates that the mean scores of the three items used to measure emotional and psychological states of students were moderately high given that they ranged from 3.20 (SD = 1.34) to 3.57 (SD = 1.32) out of a maximum of 5. The mean of this dimension of self-efficacy was 3.37 (SD = 0.19), an indication that emotional and psychological condition of the students was moderate. These results support those of Pajares (2006) who found that students with less stress were more psychologically stable and had more control on their academic achievement.

However, these findings do not support those of Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) (2013) which found that 66% of students felt stressed about poor grades and 59% felt anxious before school tests. Nyayieka, et al. (2020) examined the relationship between clinical depression, anxiety, and academic performance among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Homabay County, Kenya. The study established that, learners who reported higher levels of psychological distress tended to perform poorly in school examinations compared to their counterparts with lower anxiety and depression levels. The researchers concluded that emotional well-being is a key determinant of students' academic success. The item, 'I can remain calm even when I am faced with difficult Kiswahili language skills tasks that am to complete within set time lines' had high mean 3.20 (SD=1.24). Jerusalem and Klein-Hessling (2009) explored on mental health promotion in schools by strengthening self-efficacy and concluded that learners with higher self-efficacy are more capable of managing stress, adapting to challenges, and maintaining positive emotional well-being. These results therefore, underscore the importance of psychological health for students to fully

participate in learning effectively. The school environment should aim at enhancing students' self-efficacy not only to support their mental health but also assist improve their academic engagement and performance.

4.4.6 Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is an aspect of self-efficacy that is concerned with the ability to understand and manage one's behaviour and reactions (Pham et al., 2021). Self-regulation helps children and teenagers learn, behave well, get along with others and become independent (Lee & Stankov, 2014). Self-regulation of the students was determined using a set of six items. The responses to the six items were scored and used to compute the mean score of this dimension of self-efficacy. Table 14 gives a summary of the mean scores.

Table 14

Self-Regulation Items Means

Item	N	Mean	SD
Kiswahili language is one of my best subjects in school and I always do my best to excel in it.	404	3.54	1.24
I can source for extra materials on Kiswahili language to assist me in doing assignments	403	4.19	1.09
If I improved on listening skills, I would do better in all the other Kiswahili language skills	403	3.75	1.17
If I improved on speaking skills, I would do better in all the other Kiswahili language skills	403	3.83	1.25
I am self-motivated to do my Kiswahili language skills assignments	403	3.56	1.26
I am capable of listening to Kiswahili programs from the media and take notes concurrently and correctly	404	2.91	1.46
Self-regulation mean score	404	3.63	0.42

The results in Table 14 indicate that the mean score of all the items were above three points mark except one. An item like, 'I can source for extra materials on Kiswahili language to assist me in doing assignments' (M = 4.19, SD = 1.09) posted the highest score and was followed by "If I improved on listening skills, I would do better in all the other Kiswahili language skills" (M = 3.75, SD = 1.17). These results imply that the students believed that they had the ability to control their behaviour and enhance their performance in Kiswahili

language. These findings concur with those of Adesola and Li (2018) which showed that students with high self-regulation levels were more likely to apply cognitive strategies and self-efficacy in achieving their goals. According to Bandura (1994) self-regulatory mechanisms shape not only performance outcomes but also the resilience individuals display in the face of obstacles, thus overcoming them.

However, the results show that the item mean of “I am capable of listening to Kiswahili programs from the media and take notes concurrently and correctly” ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.46$) was relatively low. The low mean score is an indication that the students did not strongly believe that they had the ability to concentrate on listening to digital programs and take notes concurrently and correctly. However, Wang et al. (2013) explored how students’ personal characteristics, self-regulated learning strategies, and technology self-efficacy influence their performance in online learning environments. The study found that students with higher levels of self-regulation and confidence in using technology were more likely to achieve better academic outcomes and report higher satisfaction with online courses. The mean score ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.19$) of this aspect of self-efficacy was average given that it was out of 5 points. Panadero (2017) advocate for high levels of self-regulation. Self-regulated learners are proactive in reaching learning goals and taking control of the learning process because they are intrinsically motivated to do so (Panadero, 2017).

Dallad and Klette (2016) argue that self-regulated students tend to have high self-efficacy toward the learning tasks and commitment to learning goals. They normally show personal initiative and motivation for learning. Self-regulated students remain focused and demonstrate deep understanding of concepts being taught (Schunk et al. 2007). Self-regulation in the context of learning refers to the process whereby students activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours and affects, which are systematically oriented toward attainment of their goals (Lee & Stankov, 2014). Lee & Stankov (2014) continue to argue that self-regulation enables learners to manage their behaviour, control impulses, and persist in learning tasks, which in turn improves both academic performance and social functioning. Self-regulation is thus an important factor that positively influences students’ academic success. Pajares (2003) found that gender differences in perceived self-efficacy influence students’ self-regulated learning strategies. Therefore, it is essential that students be assisted to be able to self-regulate their actions and assist teachers to adopt teaching/learning strategies that will be most effective for achieving set goals (Zimmerman & Clearly, 2006).

Students’ self-efficacy was determined by summing the means of the six dimensions and averaging them as shown in Table 15.

Table 15*Students' Self-efficacy Mean Scores*

<i>Self-efficacy dimension</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mastery experiences	404	3.71	0.24
Vicarious learning	404	3.60	0.23
Social persuasion	404	3.69	0.76
Goal setting	403	3.85	0.43
Emotional and psychological states	404	3.37	0.19
Self-regulation	404	3.63	0.42
Overall self-efficacy mean score	404	3.64	0.16

Table 15 shows that the overall mean score for self-efficacy ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.16$) was high given that it was out of five. The observed high mean score is an indication of high levels of self-efficacy and a pointer that students believed they had the ability to effectively deal with tasks, obligations, and challenges encountered when learning Kiswahili language. These findings are in tandem with those of a study by Aseti (2019) which examined students' academic performance in Kiswahili composition in public secondary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County. It established that, students had high self-efficacy levels and positive attitudes towards Kiswahili language. The study also established that the two factors were significant predictors of performance in Kiswahili composition writing.

The results in Table 15 indicate that the students' belief in their ability to learn Kiswahili language was strong. This is in harmony with Zee and Koomen (2016) assertion that self-efficacy motivates students, shapes their thoughts, behaviours and learning, acquisition of knowledge and skills. This is so because self-efficacy influences people's beliefs about their capacity to perform specified tasks. Evidence in literature also shows that self-efficacy is associated with acquisition of skills and achievement. Madhuri and Saini (2019) contend that self-efficacy plays a significant role on how a person approaches tasks, objectives and challenges. This is because individuals believe they possess the ability to succeed or achieve a goal or objective under specific circumstances.

Pajares and Urdan (2006) noted that students' self-efficacy significantly affected their academic performance. They argued that, efficacious students perform better because they are confident about what they can achieve, always challenges themselves, are committed and work harder. Students with a strong sense of academic self-efficacy often willingly undertake

challenging tasks and put in a lot of effort to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1996). Zhao et al. (2024) concurs by asserting that learners with high levels of self-efficacy tend to excel as they have lower anxiety levels, are flexible and can accurately self-evaluate their academic performance, work and attain higher achievement.

4.4.7 Students’ Self- Efficacy and Academic Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

The students’ achievement in Kiswahili language skills was assessed using their scores in KLSAT, which was marked out of 20. The scores were converted into ranges and summarized using frequencies and percentages as presented in Figure 4.

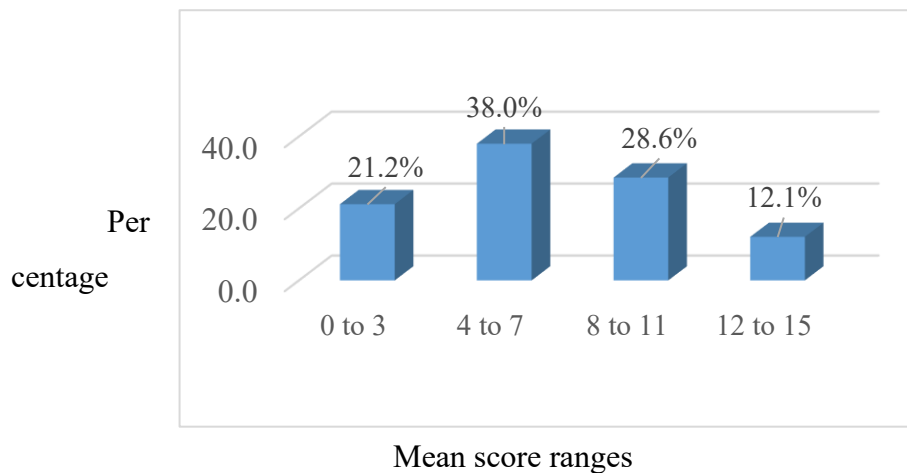


Figure 4: Distribution of the students’ KLSAT mean scores ranges ($n = 405$)

An examination of the results in Figure 4 reveals that the majority of the students (66.6%) in the test ranged between 4 and 11. The overall of the test was also computed and found to be $M = 6.70$ ($SD = 3.47$). These results were considered unsatisfactory given that the test was marked out of 20. These findings are consistent with the results of the KNEC Reports (2018, 2020, 2022) which revealed students’ mastery of Kiswahili language, especially the written component, was low.

These results support those of Njoroge and Ndirangu (2018) who noted that performance of secondary students in Kiswahili was low, as most of them could not speak the language fluently and write in it well. The unsatisfactory performance was attributed to effects of ‘sheng’, shortage of Kiswahili teachers, inadequate instructional materials and inappropriate teaching methods. Unsatisfactory performance in Kiswahili language was also noted by Chemutai et al. (2019) in a study conducted among public mixed secondary schools in Nyamira North Sub-County. The study noted that most students had positive attitudes towards Kiswahili language learning and attributed the unsatisfactory performance to failure to use of the library

facilities, inadequate instructional materials, lack of a formal school language policy and tendency of students to use mother tongue and sheng.

The first hypothesis of the study was tested using simple linear regression. It stated that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The results of the test are in Table 16.

Table 16

Regression Test Results on Self Efficacy and Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.398	1.054		2.274	.023
Students' self-efficacy mean score	1.171	.283	.202	4.134	.000

$r = .262$, $R^2 = .042$, Adjusted $R^2 = .038$, $F(1, 402) = 17.094$, $p = .000$

The results in Table 16 show that there was a positive relationship ($r = .262$) between self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. It means that students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to perform better in Kiswahili language skill tests. The results also show that self-efficacy scores explained 4.2% ($R^2 = .042$) variation in Kiswahili skills achievement test. The results further show that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of achievement in Kiswahili skills, $F(1, 402) = 17.094$, $p = .000$. These results confirm that the two constructs are related. They do not support the first hypothesis which stated that the relationship between students' self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. The hypothesis was thus rejected.

The results of the hypothesis test posted a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. These findings are similar to those of a study by Hayat et al. (2020) conducted among medical students. The results of structural equation modelling revealed that the students' self-efficacy had an impact on their learning-related emotions and metacognitive learning strategies. These in turn, affected the students' academic performance. Bakar et al. (2016) established that there was a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement. This was attributed to the fact that strong belief in self-drives an individual to excel through increased commitment, endurance and perseverance.

A study by Madhuri and Saini (2019) concluded that self-efficacy was a predictor of students' academic performance. The conclusion was based on the fact that self-efficacy influences how a person approaches tasks, objectives and challenges. Klomegah (2007) noted that human action was influenced by personal qualities, social factors, and past experience, all of which help determine one's self-efficacy. Klomegah (2007) further noted that self-efficacy and academic achievement were highly correlated. Schunk (1995) emphasized that self-efficacy strongly influences learners' motivation, effort, and eventual performance. All these observations support these findings since they are evidence that self-efficacy and achievement are related. Velma and Bhandari (2022) opine that self-efficacy can foster emotional health and well-being, and serve as a valid predictor of motivation, and learning of students and boost their achievement. This is so because students with high levels of self-efficacy assign themselves higher goals and exercise more effort and willingness to have them accomplished.

Yokoyama (2019) supports these sentiments by asserting that student with strong self-efficacy do well in academics. The tendency to do well is attributed to the fact that such students feel confident about their learning abilities, often take part in classroom activities, are proactive all the time, motivated to apply and adapt to new situations, show strong intrinsic motivation to learn from mistakes and overcome, hurdles and do their assignments well.

These results show that self-efficacy enhances achievement. Tenaw (2013) in an exploration on relationship between self-efficacy, academic achievement and in analytical chemistry established that there is a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy, and achievement ($r=0.38$). It is evident that self-efficacy is key in academic achievement across all subject areas and students' level of education. It is therefore important that Kiswahili language students be in possession of high levels of self-efficacy. First, self-efficacy is one of the seven core competencies that should be acquired by every learner in basic education according to the Needs Assessment Study carried out by KICD (2017). The other competencies to be acquired include; communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving. Thirdly, the self-assurance that they can manage difficult tasks. This could determine whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities to acquire Kiswahili language skills and perform well in the subject.

4.5 Students' Gender and Academic Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

The second objective of the study sought to determine whether there was a relationship between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. Data was gathered using the students' Kiswahili language achievement test and the results are in Figure 5.

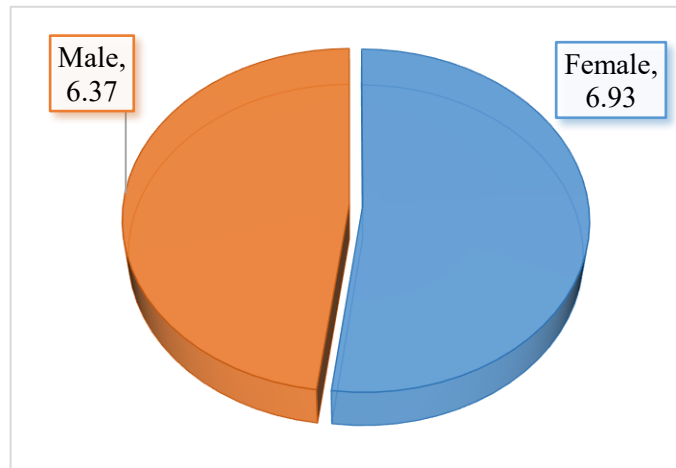


Figure 5: Kiswahili language skills achievement mean scores by gender (n=404)

Figure 5 data by gender revealed that the females ($M = 6.93$, $SD = 3.30$) posted a higher mean score than their male ($M = 6.37$, $SD = 3.69$) counterparts. Juma and Atoni (2022) in a study to establish the relationship between students' attitudes, towards Kiswahili and Kiswahili performance in secondary schools in Vihiga County established that female students performed better in the Kiswahili subject than males. This is in agreement with this study and also KNEC (2022) examination report which observed that boys outperformed than girls in key subject areas such as mathematics and sciences, while girls did better in arts and languages. Kang'ahi et al. (2012) concluded that girls outperformed boys in Kiswahili language. These results are in agreement with the current study where female students had higher means than males.

Hypothesis two sought to establish if there was any statistically significant relationship between gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression. It involved regressing data on gender and achievement in Kiswahili skills test. Prior to running the regression test, gender, which is categorical data was coded as dummies, as the procedure requires continuous data. The code for male students was "0" while that of the females was "1". The results of the regression test are shown in Table 17.

Table 17*Regression Test Results Relating Gender and Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	6.367	.269		23.694	.000
Gender	.561	.350	.080	1.605	.109

$r = .080$, $R^2 = .006$, Adjusted $R^2 = .004$, $F(1, 403) = 2.575$, $p = .109$

An examination of the results in Table 17 reveals that the relationship ($r = .080$) between gender and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was positive but weak. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) relationship coefficients (r) are categorized as weak ($0.01 - 0.30$), moderate ($0.40 - 0.60$), strong ($0.70 - 0.99$) and perfect (1.00). The results also indicate that 0.6% ($R^2 = .006$) variation in the outcome was explained by gender. The results further indicate that gender was not a significant predictor of achievement in Kiswahili skills, $F(1, 403) = 2.575$, $p = .109$. This means that gender is not related to achievement. These results support the second hypothesis which stated that gender is not significantly related to Kiswahili language skills achievement.

Table 17 indicates that the relationship between gender and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. This finding agrees with those of a study by Denies et al. (2022) which examined gender differences in the second language competences of European adolescents across three languages, three skills and fourteen countries. They established that English was gender-neutral, with males sometimes outperforming females and vice versa. The study concluded that gender did not affect English language competencies of adolescents. These results support those of Kashu (2014) who carried out a trend analysis of students' performance in KCSE for the years 2007 to 2011. The study found that overall performance of both boys and girls in three languages, English, Kiswahili and French, were almost equal. The similarity in performance implies that gender does not influence performance in the languages.

The findings in Table 17 are in tandem with those of a study conducted in Nyamira County, Kenya by Chemutai et al. (2019) which revealed that the female and male students were at par in content presentation, vocabulary and use of grammatical elements in Kiswahili

creative writing. The statistically insignificant difference between the two sexes was an indication that gender was not related to performance in Kiswahili language writing skills. Kang'ahi et al. (2012) on a study on gender and students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language found out that female students outperformed male students on the average. The study also revealed a statistically insignificant difference between males and females in achievement in Kiswahili language examination; $t(315) = 0.79$, $P = .94$. This confirms earlier research by Voyer and Voyer (2014) which concluded that there seems to be minimal but significant female advantage over male in language achievement.

However, Mnamani and Oyibe (2016) in a study on impact of impact of gender on the academic performance of secondary school students in social studies in the Abakaliki urban area of Ebonyi State concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female in social studies. This implies that gender does not play a significant role in students' academic achievement not just in languages but also in art-based subjects. Ouma (2015) conducted a study on students' performance in Kiswahili language in Kenya certificate of secondary education examination in Winam division, Kisumu County. The study observed that students' performance was low due to negative attitudes, inadequacies in instructional materials and Kiswahili teachers. No statistically significant gender difference in performance was observed. It means that gender does not affect performance in institutions that face such inadequacies.

These findings contradict those of Adongo (2021) and Ying et al. (2023) which revealed that school grades for girls were better than those of boys in languages and music. These results are inconsistent with Mwihi (2021) who studied on gender difference in academic achievement of students in Kinangop Sub-County and concluded that males ($M=67.89$, $SD=4.92$) outperformed females (64.11 ; $SD=3.3$) in KNEC examinations.

Abdullahi and Bichi (2015) also noted that there was relationship between gender and academic achievement of students in English language in Nigeria since girls attained higher grades than boys did. In the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA; OECD, 2013) competence tests in language, girls' grades were far higher than those of boys. Ying et al. (2023) established that females were better at learning and performing in second languages than males. The study demonstrated that, female learners consider it more valuable to learn second languages compared to males, as a result, they tend to have higher emotional and communicative motivation to excel in them.

The results in Table 23 do not concur with those of Van der Silk et al. (2015) which involved 27,119 adult learners from 88 countries with 49 varying mother tongues who were learning Dutch as a second language. The study confirmed that females had higher language

acquisition skills as they outperformed males in writing and speaking tasks. There is a close relationship between gender and language use because of differences in the way males and females communicate. This is so because the structure of a language and societal norms, dictates how people speak (Ying et al., 2023). In addition, gender is a social construct and because of this, men's and women's speaking styles are deeply rooted in power structure between the two sexes.

The foregoing discussions show that gender does not affect students' achievement in Kiswahili language skills. It means there are other factors which relate to academic achievement in language. Skills acquisition and performance in a subject, has been associated with factors such as availability of instructional materials, teaching methods, teacher characteristics and school climate among others (Bett, 2016; Githaiga, 2018, Korir, 2022). It is important that school administrators and Kiswahili teachers are cognizant of these findings as they could assist school staff direct their efforts on factors that relate to learning of Kiswahili language skills and academic achievement in the subject.

4.6 Relationship between Students' perceptions of Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

Objective three sought to investigate whether there was relationship between students' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This objective was achieved by determining the methods used by Kiswahili language teachers during lessons and students' perceptions on these teaching methods. The association between students' perceptions on teaching methods was then determined using a simple linear regression test.

4.6.1 Teaching Methods used during the Teaching of Kiswahili Language

The methods used in instruction by Kiswahili language teachers were established before determining the relationship between students' perceptions on teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This was deemed necessary because the study was based on the premise that teachers use a blend of teaching methods during lessons. It was also a way of confirming that students had been exposed to the teaching methods before seeking their perceptions of them.

An observation schedule was used to gather data on teaching methods used by Kiswahili language teachers. The scale used to rate the observed frequency of use of the teaching was; Very Frequently Used (VFU), Frequently Used (FU), Occasionally Used (OU), Rarely Used (RU) and Never Used (NU) The gathered data was summarized using frequencies

and percentages as shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Methods of Teaching Kiswahili Language

Teaching method	n	VFU	FU	OU	RU	NU
Lecture	14	78.6	-	-	14.3	7.1
Group discussion	14	7.1	35.7	21.4	28.6	7.2
Individual Assignment	13	69.2	7.7	15.4	7.7	-
Group assignment	13	-	38.4	7.7	30.8	23.1
Project	14	-	-	-	7.1	92.9
Role playing	14	-	7.1	21.4	14.3	57.2
Drama	13	-	-	15.4	23.1	61.5
Class discussion	14	35.7	35.8	21.4	7.1	-
Question and answer	14	21.4	28.6	50	-	-
Songs and poems	13	-	7.7	7.7	15.4	69.2
Story-telling	14	14.3	21.4	21.4	14.3	28.6

Table 18 indicates that the most frequently used teaching methods were the lecture (78.6%), individual assignment (76.9%), class discussion (71.5%) and question and answer (50.0%). These results confirm that the lecture method is the most popular mode of instruction among Kiswahili language teachers. This is consistent with those of a study by Govender (2015) on students' perceptions of the teaching methods used at institutions of higher learning. The findings revealed that the lecture was the most frequently used method. Similarly, a study by Mutende et al (2021) did an investigation on the teaching and learning of science subjects at secondary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa. They reported that, currently lecture method dominated the classrooms in delivering learning materials. Agonya et al. (2019) in a study of influence of teaching methods on students' performance in Kiswahili poetry in secondary schools in Lugari Sub-County, reported that lecture method dominated poetry teaching in Kiswahili lessons.

It is important to note that even though lecture method has many advantages such as coverage of a large portion of a topic in a single lesson and development of listening skills, it is not effective in boosting writing skills (Murunga, 2016). Wambua (2019) is of the view that acquisition of writing skills is enhanced through direct participation and students taking responsibility for their work. These results contradict those of Adelabu and Nder (2013) in a

survey of methods of teaching English and Literature among secondary school teachers in Nigeria which revealed that only 20% of teachers used lecture method. They however, found out that the use of text books (88.2%) and discussions (72%) were the most common. These findings also contradict the current study which established that 78.6 % of teachers used lecture method.

The findings of this study show that individual assignment was among the most frequently used teaching methods. These results support those of Sarmauli et al. (2020) who found that Christian Education teachers frequently used this method because it enhanced students' ability to perform tasks. Daminova (2020) contends that individual assignments are often given to students at the end of each lesson. These assignments allow teachers to assess whether learners understood what was covered during lessons.

Class discussion was also among the dominant methods used by Kiswahili teachers. These results are in concurrence with those of Nekesa (2012) who noted that teachers often used the method when teaching Kiswahili literature. The study revealed that teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of group discussion because the method was found to enhance students' performance. However, the study indicated that some teachers avoided using class discussions due to time constraints and heavy workload. This was its shortcoming as noted by Atandi et al. (2019). The majority of the students who participated in the study felt that group discussion was not effective it created opportunities for discussing totally unrelated matters to the subject matter at hand. A study by Agonya (2021) also found that teachers show less interest in active learning teaching methods because of their fear of wasting time and not being able to complete the syllabus. The study found that the preferred method by the students was the lecturing followed by discussions. This is similar to findings by other studies such as (Casado, 2000; Gillies & Kim, 2015; Tufail & Mahmood, 2020).

These findings further show that the frequency of use of question and answer method was at 50 percent. This is an indication that that the method is occasionally used in the teaching of Kiswahili. Lambani and Nephawe (2022) and Smith (2020) argued that question and answer method improved learners' proficiency in using English prepositions of movement. The method enhanced language acquisition and fluency among high school students. The method facilitated active participation and helped learners to give immediate feedback leading to improved language skills mastery (Rakhmonberdiyeva, 2019). These findings are also in tandem with those of a study by Agonya (2021) which found that the question and answer sessions and the lecture dominated the teaching of Kiswahili poetry in secondary schools' in Lugari Sub-County, Kenya.

The results in Table 18 show that there were quite a number of teaching methods which were never/rarely used by the Kiswahili teachers. These included project (0.0%), drama (0.0%), songs and poems (7.7%) and role play (7.1%). The results reveal that the project was among the most infrequently used methods. Similar observations were made by Atandi et al. (2019) who noted that projects were rarely used in the instruction of Kiswahili language underscoring a persistent lack of active, learner-centred pedagogy. Perhaps this may be due to the misconception that projects are only related to science subjects like physics and biology and not languages (Ngatia, 2019). Rakhmonberdiyeva (2019) is of the view that projects should be incorporated in the teaching of languages given that they enable students to develop integrated skills and conceive the world individually and in groups. Juday et al. (2024) examined the influence of collaborative writing strategies on public secondary students' performance in functional English writing skills in Kiambu County. They recommended the use of project-based collaborative writing in language teaching for it significantly enhanced students' writing quality and overall functional writing abilities.

Drama was hardly used (61.5%) by Kiswahili language teachers. These results support those of Kirui's (2015) which revealed that use of dramatization in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili language in secondary schools in Nandi South District, Kenya was limited. The inquiry attributed infrequent use of this method to the fact that teachers select methods that would enable them to easily complete the syllabus. However, the study noted that when the dramatization was adopted, students' participation during the lessons was high, enjoyable and effective. Similar sentiments were expressed by (Fayambo, 2015) who observed that, using drama in the class provided a stimulating environment in which learners engage in activities, practice and acquire skills. Kikechi (2022) results showed that students exposed to drama-based activities had statistically significant improvements in understanding and interpreting literary characters. Additionally, learners were reported to enjoy Kiswahili language lessons more when drama was incorporated. Kenyatta (2022) research also confirmed that integrating drama in teaching, significantly improves Kiswahili learning outcomes and communicative competence. However, drama is rarely used within the classroom situation as it requires a lot of preparation by both the teacher and students (Mohammed & Zaroog, 2021). In addition, it is time consuming, hence reluctance of teachers to adopt it.

Table 18 further shows that songs and poems are some of the methods that were hardly used in the teaching of Kiswahili language. Florence and Santos (2020) conducted research in Phillipines with grade 8 students on using songs as springboard to teaching poetry and narratives towards improved comprehension. The investigation found out that songs when

frequently used to teach poetry and narratives, students' comprehension of literary texts improved tremendously. They continued to reveal that learners' understanding of basic figurative language and literature also improved. These results are in agreement with what was observed by Kanonidou and Papachristou (2019) in an exploration conducted in Greece which indicated that songs, lyrics and poetry were widely used by teachers and improved students' English language skills. These results are also not in harmony with those of Alisaari and Heikkola (2017) which revealed that teachers in Finland viewed songs and poems as highly beneficial for language learning. According to the results, singing and reciting poems were considered most suitable for teaching pronunciation while listening to songs was considered most suitable for introducing topics. However, these researches contradict the current one, which revealed that songs and poems were some of the methods that were hardly used in the teaching of Kiswahili language. This may be the reason Kiswahili language academic achievement has remained wanting over the years.

Role-playing was among the methods that was rarely used even though it is a good example of an active learning and teaching strategy. These results do not support those of Ma (2018) who noted that role-play was used in teaching English among adult learners in China. Ma (2018) noted that learners found the method interesting and enjoyable since it incorporates drama, simulations, games, and demonstrations of real life cases. However, it can be time-consuming and may fail to achieve the desired learning outcomes if the play's plots and dialogues are too simplistic, outdated, or unable to capture students' interest. (Erturk, 2015). Atandi et al. (2019) investigated the influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Kiswahili subject in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County. The exploration revealed that teachers rarely used role-play to teach Kiswahili, a fact the current study also established.

These results indicated that learner-centred methods such as projects, drama, role play songs and poems were rarely used in the teaching despite their effectiveness in facilitating learners' acquisition of skills. Korir (2022) recommends use of learner-centred methods given that they provide students with the opportunity to gain "hands-on" experience by putting into practice theory that has been taught in class. Arishaba and Balimuttajjo (2024) argue that effective learning takes place when students are involved in learning by "doing". This should be a continuous process in which students are continuously exposed to problem solving activities that are different from previous experiences. The methods that are unpopular among the teachers are those that would make their lessons more interesting, stimulating and are result oriented observed (Adelebu & Nder, 2013). Methods such as; field trips, drama, role playing,

poems and songs as well as story-telling and computer aided methods were ignored probably because of the teachers' ignorance about them, or because of constraints of time and funds. Given that learner centred methods enhance skill acquisition, teachers should be encouraged to blend them with others as a way of boosting realization of Kiswahili language skills.

4.6.2 Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods

Students' perceptions of teaching methods were measured using a set of 23 close ended Likert type items scale items. The students' responses to the items were scored and their means computed. The item means were then transformed to an overall mean, which gave the measure of the students' perceptions on teaching methods as shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Students' Responses to Items on their Perceptions of Teaching Methods

Item	N	Mean	SD
I love when my Kiswahili teacher uses lecture method whereby they talk all the time	401	3.05	1.57
My teacher organizes us into small groups to discuss various topics and I love it	401	3.44	1.46
My best time in class is when the teacher asks questions, and we answer orally	402	3.55	1.40
I like it when my teacher gives assignments/homework, and they mark them	402	3.37	1.49
I like it when my teacher gives us a poem and asks one of us to recite in front of the class	400	3.56	1.36
My favourite lesson is when the teacher prepares us to give a speech in class on a topic	402	3.11	1.41
The teacher gives us exercises on oral literature and supervises as we complete in our exercise books	402	3.27	1.40
My Kiswahili teacher gives us role-playing in certain scenarios such as conversation between the teacher and the learner	401	3.81	1.38
Our Kiswahili teacher gives us opportunity to ask him/her questions on areas we do not understand	402	4.57	0.89
I love it when we go for field trips, then write reports, and do presentations in class	402	3.72	1.43

The oral literature lessons are more fun when we go out of school to interview the local people	402	3.92	1.40
My best Kiswahili lesson is when the teacher reads us a listening comprehension and then asks questions related to the passage	402	3.43	1.40
It is exciting to listen to a radio presentation and then our Kiswahili teacher asks us questions that we answer orally	402	3.06	1.36
Sometimes our Kiswahili teacher gives us an opportunity to listen to a CD presentation then asks us questions that we answer orally, this motivates me a lot	402	2.59	1.43
I feel excited when our Kiswahili teacher allows us to go to the computer room to watch and listen to a presentation and then asks us to narrate what we watched	402	3.14	1.53
Listening and speaking drills are more interesting when the teacher allows us to play games in the field	402	3.71	1.45
I enjoy the lesson most when our Kiswahili teacher allows us to play singing games when learning listening and speaking skills	402	3.73	1.41
It is exciting when our Kiswahili teachers invite resource persons to talk to us on topics that relate to specialized issues such as writing books or poems	402	3.47	1.39
Our teacher always invites a resource person to facilitate topics related to emerging issues such as political issues in the country	402	2.49	1.37
I enjoy most when the teacher allows us to ask visiting speaker questions relating to their presentations	402	3.45	1.31
It is very exciting when my classmates ask many questions and the teacher or resource persons respond adequately after a presentation	402	3.84	1.31
Our teacher gives us many assignments to research on from the library on listening and speaking skills	402	3.06	1.49
I enjoy my Kiswahili lessons when the teacher narrates a story and then asks us oral questions	402	4.03	1.26
Students' perception of teaching method overall score	402	3.45	0.61

The results in Table 19 indicate that the item mean scores ranged between 2.49 (SD =

1.37) and 4.57 (SD = 0.89). The range shows that, there were wide variations in the students' perceptions on the various teaching methods. The results show that the items "Our Kiswahili teachers give us opportunities to ask them questions on areas we do not understand (M = 4.57, SD = 0.89) posted a high mean score. It means that students were receptive to the question and answer method of teaching. Korir (2022) contends that allowing students to ask questions provides them with the opportunity to think for themselves and explain to the teacher the difficulties in learning that they are encountering. This enables the teacher to evaluate effectiveness of their teaching and adopt strategies that assist students overcome any difficulties they could be encountering. This enhances students' understanding of concepts during lessons and achievement. Nasibi (2015) asserts that, the question and answer sessions promote interactive learning, enhance learners' abilities to think and express themselves.

The item "I enjoy my Kiswahili lessons when the teacher narrates a story and then asks us oral questions" (M = 4.03, SD = 1.26) also posted a high mean score. It means that the students had positive views of the story telling teaching method. Medupin (2024) found that students taught by storytelling method demonstrated improved critical thinking and understood content better. They also experienced increased motivation to learn.

The results further show that the mean score of "the oral literature lessons are more fun when we go out of school to interview the local people" (M = 3.92, SD = 1.40). It means that learners had positive perceptions of field trips. These results are in harmony with those of Hauan and Dankert (2014) who noted that students had positive perceptions of field trips. The investigation also revealed that students considered out-of-school field trips to be exciting, enjoyable, and valuable opportunities to socialize with their peers. This contributed towards skills acquisition because, as Namasaka et al. (2017) observed, such experiences boost students' motivation to practice language skills in real life situations.

The results indicated that some items posted low mean scores. For instance, the item "Our teacher always invites a resource person to facilitate topics related to emerging issues such as political issues in the country (M = 2.59, SD = 1.37)". This means that resource persons were not usually invited by language teachers to facilitate teaching of some topics. It implies that this method of teaching is infrequently used. This could perhaps be due lack of resources given that inviting resource persons has cost implications. Dearden et al. (2014) noted that most secondary schools worldwide have limited resources and one of the challenges they face is how to make use of limited human capital and facilities they possess, to best satisfy their unlimited wants for education. Kitur et al. (2020) also observed that most public secondary schools in Kenya have financial challenges and thus focused on what they consider as necessities.

The item “sometimes our Kiswahili teacher gives us an opportunity to listen to a CD presentation then asks us questions that we answer orally, this motivates me a lot” ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.43$) also posted a low mean score. The low mean score implies that schools rarely avail digital instruction resources such as DVD and CDs to students during lessons. This could perhaps be due to inadequate instructional materials in schools, which is a common problem in schools. Chala and Wami (2020) noted that most schools lacked instructional materials and had inadequate library and laboratory facilities. This affected negatively on teaching/ learning process and academic achievement.

The results further show that the mean score of items “I love it when my Kiswahili teacher uses lecture method whereby they talk all the time” ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.57$) was low. It means that the respondents were not receptive to the use of lecture method. This negative perception towards the lecture method could be due to its nature. Ngatia (2019) contends that during a formal lecture, the role of the teachers is to inform, persuade, or entertain and that of the learner is limited to just listening. This makes the learning process not exciting to students. Studies show that teacher-centred methods like the lecture, which assumes that knowledge is owned by the teacher and is transmitted to the learners are not recommended in facilitating acquisition of skills (Hasanova, et al., 2021; Miranda & Damico, 2015). This is because teacher-centred methods do not promote active participation of learners in class. Educators normally strongly favour learner-centred approaches since they enable students to participate more actively in the learning process (Smith et al., 2018). Arishaba and Balimuttajjo (2024) in a study on learner centred instructional methods and observable academic competencies in Kiswahili language among secondary school students in Mbarara Municipality, Uganda observed that, when teachers adopt learner-centred instructional methods to teach the Kiswahili language, learners academic achievement improved tremendously.

Table 19 shows that the overall mean of students’ perceptions of teaching methods was 3.45 ($SD = 0.61$). The overall mean score was above the 2.5 points middle point mark, given that a 1 to 5 points scale was used measure perceptions. This is an indication that the students had positive perceptions on teaching methods used by Kiswahili language teachers as they agreed with the items that were used to measure it. These findings are in tandem with those of Ohwjero (2020) which revealed that, students had positive disposition towards teaching methods such as field trips that were enjoyable, motivating and interesting. The enjoyment enhanced knowledge and skills acquisition because such experiences boost students’ motivation to learn. It is thus important that students have positive perceptions towards teaching methods used during lessons. Wafula (2015) contends that if students perceive a

teaching method as effective and their emotional needs have been met, they will remember what has been taught clearly and accurately and enhance realization of teaching outcomes.

4.6.3 Relationship between Students' Perceptions of Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

The simple linear regression test was used to determine if the relationship between students' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills was statistically significant. This entailed regression on the students' perception of teaching methods mean score on their achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The results of the test are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

Regression Test Results Relating Students' Perception of Teaching Method and Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	4.869	.990		4.918	.000
Students teaching method perception	.529	.282	.093	1.873	.062

$r = .093, R^2 = .009, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .006, F(1, 400) = 3.507, p = .062$

The regression test results reveal that the relationship ($r = .093$) between students' perceptions on teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills achievement was positive but weak. An examination of the results reveals that students' teaching method perceptions accounted for only 0.9% ($R^2 = .009$) variation in achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The test results further reveal a not statistically significant association between perceptions on teaching methods and Kiswahili language skills achievement, $F(1, 400) = 3.507, p = .062$. This implies that students' perceptions of teaching methods did not affect their achievement in Kiswahili language skills. These results support the third hypothesis which stated that the relationship between students' perceptions on teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills achievement.

The findings in Table 20 are in harmony with the results of Zaim and Rahmyanti's (2019) exploration found that, there was no statistically significant effect of students'

perceptions on teaching strategies and their academic achievement in English language. This implies that, students' perceptions of teaching methods utilized by their teachers did not directly influence their academic achievement. Similarly, the findings align with Chang (2010) research on students' perceptions of teaching styles and use of learning strategies on Taiwanese junior high school students. This study found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between students' perceptions of teaching styles, their learning strategies and their academic achievement.

The insignificant relationship between the students' perceptions and their achievement in Kiswahili language skills could also be due to differences in how they view some of the teaching methods. Kose (2017) noted that some students considered methods like field trips as a time to go out and enjoy, not an extension of a lesson. This category of students may not gain anything from field trips that could boost their academic achievement. The results also concur with Behrendt and Franklin (2014) argument that perceptions of teaching methods may not be related to acquisition of skills if the methods used to teach skills are not appropriate. They contend that skills can only be taught and learned effectively when students participate in relevant activities repeatedly.

Fayambo (2015) differs with the findings of the current exploration, for the research found out that learning styles and teaching strategies impacted on academic achievement. The study noted that when students perceive that the teaching methods were motivating and engaging, their learning outcomes were normally higher or likely to improve. Active learning strategies such as group discussion, problem solving, role-playing or drama were significantly related to higher academic achievement concluded (Fayambo, 2015). Gustavsen & Vennebo (2024) assert that group discussions enhanced active engagement, reflection and collaborative learning consequently improving academic achievement. These results are contrary to Nordin and Alias (2013) who argued that perceptions affect learning because the learning strategy adopted by students in a given situation is determined by a complex interaction between their pre-existing beliefs about knowledge and learning and the general disposition towards a particular teaching method.

These results do not support those of Ja'afar-Furo et al. (2017) who found that teaching methods that involved individual participation in learning activities and were perceived positively, improved students' knowledge and skills acquisition, and achievement. The findings were attributed to the fact that such teaching methods provide students with opportunities to discover and relate what is taught in class to reality. Darling-Hammond, et al. (2020) advocates use of teaching methods that provide students with opportunities to participate in the teaching-

learning process. According to Wu et al. (2022), involving students in the teaching-learning process shapes their perceptions towards teaching methods and fosters deeper understanding of concepts. It is important that students have positive perceptions because they affect their behaviour and desire to learn. Perceptions are also associated to acquisition of knowledge and skills (Wu, et al., 2022).

The findings in Table 20 indicate a not statistically significant relationship between students' perception on teaching methods employed by their teachers and their achievement in Kiswahili language skills. It means that there are other factors that affect achievement in Kiswahili language skills achievement. This could also be due to use of inappropriate teaching methods. Li (2016) recommends use of blended teaching methods to enhance achievement. Li (2016) continues to posit that there is no one teaching approach that that can be used to effectively in teaching all topics and subjects. Teachers should be equipped with relevant pedagogical skills and be encouraged to use a blend of teaching methods as one of the strategies of enhancing acquisition of Kiswahili language skills and performance in the subject (Ndwiga, et al., 2020).

4.7 Relationship between Students' Self-efficacy, Gender, Perceptions of Teaching Methods and Achievement in Kiswahili Language Skills

The fourth objective sought to investigate the relationship between the selected students' characteristics and achievement in Kiswahili skills. The selected students' characteristics were self-efficacy, gender, their perceptions of teaching methods. This involved regressing measures of the factors on that of the outcome. The measures of self-efficacy and achievement (Table 15) were determined when exploring the relationship between the two. The gender distribution (Figure 5) of the study sample and students' perceptions of teaching methods (Table 19) were also determined when exploring the relationship between these two variables and achievement. The results of the multiple regression test are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Relationship between Self-efficacy, Gender, Perceptions on Teaching Methods and Achievement on Kiswahili Language Skills

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

Constant	2.193	1.217		1.801	.072
Students' self-efficacy mean score	1.112	.325	.188	3.424	.001
Gender	.441	.347	.063	1.271	.205
Students' perception of teaching method mean score	.044	.310	.008	.142	.888

$r = .206$, $R^2 = .042$, Adjusted $R^2 = .035$, $F(3, 398) = 5.883$, $p = .001$

The results in Table 21 show that the relationship ($r = .206$) between the three predictor variables, self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching method and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was positive and the strength of association rated moderate. The results also show that the three explanatory variables accounted for 4.2% ($R^2 = .042$) variation in achievement in Kiswahili language skills. An examination of the coefficients of the explanatory variables reveals that students' self-efficacy ($\beta = .188$, $t = 3.424$, $p = .001$) is a significant predictor of achievement in Kiswahili language skills. However, gender ($\beta = .063$, $t = 1.271$, $p = .203$) and students' perception of teaching methods ($\beta = .008$, $t = .142$, $p = .888$) are not statistically significant predictors of the outcome. The results further reveal that the selected students' characteristics (three factors combined) significantly predicted achievement in Kiswahili language skills, $F(3, 398) = 5.883$, $p = .001$. This means that students' characteristics affect their achievement in Kiswahili language skills. These results do not support the fourth hypothesis, which stated that the relationship between selected students' characteristics and achievement in Kiswahili language skills is not statistically significant.

The findings in Table 21 indicate that students' characteristics affect achievement in Kiswahili language skills. Boz et.al. (2016) made similar observations in their study on relationship between students' self-efficacy, their perceptions of classroom learning environment, gender and Chemistry achievement. They discovered that students' self-efficacy, perceptions of constructivist learning environment and gender were significantly related to Chemistry academic achievement. The results align with those of Mutua (2015) which concluded that majority of students had negative attitude toward Kiswahili, this contributed to poor performance in the subject. The results of Mutua's study confirm that student factors such as attitudes affect performance.

The results in Table 21 are in harmony with those of Ouma's (2015) study, which identified inexperienced teachers, infrequent utilization of instructional materials, and

instructors' non-attendance of Kiswahili inductive on-the-job seminars as factors that affect performance in Kiswahili language. The inquiry also attributed the unsatisfactory performance to students' infrequent participation in Kiswahili competitions. It is important to note that competitions sharpen students' oral and written Kiswahili language skills. Additionally, it fosters the interaction of the students with others in the spoken realms. This lack of experience, which can be considered as an aspect of a student's character, is a major impediment to development of language skills given that competitions provided students with opportunities to plan, prepare and make presentations. These results are in concurrence with those of Mumia (2018) examined influence of learners' characteristics on performance in Kiswahili poetry in public secondary schools, in Kenya. The study discovered that the explanation of poems made Kiswahili literature difficult, students used 'sheng' most of the time while communicating and could not write without mixing Kiswahili and 'sheng'. The study also established that students' attitudes towards Kiswahili were negative, this contributed to low performance in Kiswahili poetry.

The results in Table 21 support those of Chemutai et al. (2019) who noted that most students had a positive attitude towards Kiswahili. The study concluded that the unsatisfactory performance was due to failure to use the library facilities and inadequate instructional materials, lack of a formal school language policy and tendency of students to use mother tongue and sheng. Aseti (2019) investigated the influence of gender, attitudes and entry qualification mark on students' and academic performance in Kiswahili composition. The study found that these selected student characteristics were significant predictors of performance in Kiswahili composition writing. Chularut and DeBacker (2004) in their exploration on the influence of concept mapping on achievement, self-regulation and self-efficacy in students of English as a second language, there is a statistically significant relationship between method of instruction, self-efficacy and achievement. This observation is in tandem with the current study that showed a relationship ($r = .206$) between the three predictor variables, self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching method and achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

However, the results in Table 21 contradicts those of Kashu (2014) which compared the academic performance between boys and girls in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) over a period of five years (2007-2011). The boys performed better than girls in most cases. The only exception was between boys and girls in private schools where there was no significant difference in their overall performance. This is an indication that gender, which is a student characteristic, is not related to performance in private schools. The

results are also not in concurrence with those of a study by Argaw et al. (2017) in Ethiopia among secondary school students. The research established that, students' attributes such as motivation to learn is not a significant predictor of academic achievement in a subject.

Students' academic achievement in Kiswahili and other languages is dependent on many factors. Some of the factors that contribute to learners' academic success are school related such as; physical facilities, management, teachers' perceptions and attitudes, learners' socio-economic background, and parents' educational level and occupation (Githinji, 2017). Academic achievement may also be due to teacher characteristics such as qualification, experience, attitudes, motivation or other student related factors like study habits and time management, entry behaviour and attitudes. It is important that Kiswahili teachers are cognizant of these factors in their endeavour to enhance acquisition of skills and performance in the subject. This awareness could enable teachers to develop more effective strategies for improving the acquisition of Kiswahili language skills and enhance students' academic achievement in the subject.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study examined the relationship between selected students' characteristics, namely self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods, and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study

This study had four objectives. The first and second objectives explored whether there was a relation between students' self-efficacy, gender, and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The third objective examined whether there was a relationship between students' perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills, while the fourth objective investigated the association between the three students' characteristics and achievement. Four hypotheses were derived from these objectives and tested at the .05 significance level.

In determining whether there was a relation between self-efficacy and students' achievement in Kiswahili language skill in the first objective, self-efficacy was measured using its six dimensions namely; mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, goal setting, emotional and psychological state and self-regulation. The findings of the study showed that the average mean score from the six dimensions of self-efficacy was $M = 3.64$ ($SD = 0.16$) out of 5. The mean score of the Kiswahili language achievement test was also computed and found to be $M = 6.70$ ($SD = 3.47$) out of 20. The results of a simple linear regression test showed that the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was statistically significant, $r = .262$, $F(1, 402) = 17.094$, $p = .000$. These results failed to support the first hypothesis, which stated that the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. The hypothesis was thus rejected.

Objective two sought to find out whether there was a relationship between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The results confirmed that majority (59.0%) of the respondents were females while the males were the minority (41.0%). The results showed that the relationship between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant, $r = .080$, $F(1, 403) = 2.575$, $p = .109$. These findings supported the second hypothesis which stated that the relationship

between students' gender and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. The hypothesis was accepted on the basis of these findings.

The third hypothesis explored the relationship between students' perceptions on the teaching methods and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The results indicated that lecture (78.6%), individual assignments (76.9%), class discussion (71.5%) and question and answer (50.0%) were the most frequently used teaching methods. The regression test results revealed that the relationship ($r = .093$) between students' perceptions on the teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was positive but weak. The results also revealed that students' perceptions on the teaching methods accounted for only 0.9% ($R^2 = .009$) variation in achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The test results further reveal a statistically insignificant association between perceptions on Kiswahili teaching method perceptions and Kiswahili language skills achievement, $F(1, 400) = 3.507$, $p = .062$. This implies students' perceptions on teaching methods do not affect their achievement in Kiswahili language skills. These results supported the third hypothesis, which stated that the relationship between students' perceptions of the teaching method and academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

The fourth and last objective sought to determine whether there was a relationship between the combined three student characteristics of self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The relationship ($r = .206$) between the three predictor variables and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was positive. An examination of the coefficients of the explanatory variables reveals that students' self-efficacy ($\beta = .188$, $t = 3.424$, $p = .001$) was a significant predictor of achievement in Kiswahili language skills. However, gender ($\beta = .063$, $t = 1.271$, $p = .203$) and students' perception of teaching methods ($\beta = .008$, $t = .142$, $p = .888$) were not statistically significant predictors of the outcome. The results further reveal that the students' characteristics studied significantly predicted achievement in Kiswahili language skills, $F(3, 398) = 5.883$, $p = .001$. The findings are not in harmony with those of the fourth hypothesis, which stated that the relationship between self-efficacy, gender and perceptions of teaching methods combined, and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was not statistically significant. These findings do not support the fourth hypothesis; hence it was rejected.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of this study:

- i. Students' self-efficacy influences achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This conclusion has implications in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili language. It means that enhancing student's self-efficacy has the potential to improve achievement in Kiswahili language skills and the subject in general.
- ii. Gender is not related to students' achievement in Kiswahili language skills.
- iii. Students' perceptions of teaching methods do not affect their achievement in Kiswahili language skills.
- iv. Students' self-efficacy, gender and their perceptions of teaching methods are related to achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings of the study indicated that the students' self-efficacy level was high, their perceptions towards the teaching methods positive and achievement in Kiswahili language skills low. It was further observed that the relationship between the self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was significant while the association between gender and perceptions towards teaching methods, and achievement in Kiswahili language skills was insignificant. The following recommendations were made based on these findings:

- i. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of exposing learners to experiences that enhance their self-efficacy, such as setting achievable goals, linking them with role models, and creating environments where they interact with successful peers. These may go a long way in enhancing students' self-efficacy and confidence in themselves, learning, and achievement.
- ii. The findings implied that gender does not affect learners' achievement of Kiswahili language skills since the two were not significantly related. Teachers should be encouraged to focus on other strategies that enhance learners' acquisition of Kiswahili language skills in their endeavour to boost their academic achievement. These include creating classroom environments that promote gender equity, involving students in activities that improve language skills.
- iii. Students' perceptions on teaching methods did not affect their achievement in Kiswahili language. However, teachers of Kiswahili should be encouraged to use learner centred teaching methods which provide them with opportunities to

engage in learning activities that are interesting and enjoyable. These activities include reciting poems, role play, debates among others. Engaging in such activities tend to assist learners obtain high grades.

- iv. A significant relationship was observed between the three student attributes and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. School administrators should be encouraged to come up with policies, resources and leadership styles that favour language teaching and learning. These have the potential to promote gender equity in schools and improve learners' self-efficacy, perceptions and their achievement in Kiswahili language.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study focused on the relationship between secondary school Kiswahili language students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and academic achievement. However, there were issues that arose during the investigation which call for further inquiry. They include:

- i. Only three students' characteristics were selected during the study, whereas there are many others that also affect academic achievement, such as students' attitudes and social background. Studies that focus on these other student characteristics should be done to provide a more holistic picture of their impact on achievement.
- ii. The results of this study and the literature show mixed results on relationships between the selected students' characteristics and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. This study conceptualized that teacher and school factors were the intervening variables between students' characteristics and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. The mixed findings could be due to the effects of these intervening variables. This calls for a study that examines the effects of these intervening variables on the relationship between selected students' characteristics and achievement in Kiswahili language skills.
- iii. There is also a need for future studies that involve larger samples drawn from several counties given that such an investigation would improve the generalizability of the results.
- iv. This study covered listening and writing skills only. It would be interesting to find out through an inquiry whether similar results would be realized with other Kiswahili language aspects such as grammar.
- v. This study adopted a correlational research design. The design was deemed adequate

in the circumstances and time frame for PhD research. However, it may be likely that the results and arguments of the study would have been different if a longitudinal design that monitors achievement trends of students as they pass through several teachers with different qualifications and experience over some years.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire (SO)

Dear Student,

I am a PhD candidate at Egerton University conducting research as part of the course work. The research is titled Relationship between students' self-efficacy, gender, perceptions of teaching methods and Kiswahili language skills academic achievement in secondary schools in Nakuru county, Kenya. this questionnaire is for gathering data required by the study. I am kindly requesting you to participate in the study by filling this questionnaire. May I take this opportunity to assure you that your information will be used for the purpose of this study only and it will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you

Anne W. Kabutu-Kariuki

Instructions

- Please do not write your name or that of your school on the questionnaire.
- Place a tick (✓) in the cell of the selected option or provide the answer on the provided spaces
- There are no right or wrong answers

Section A: Bio Data

Q1 Please indicate your gender

Male

Female

Q2 Category of your school

- (a) National
- (b) County
- (c) Extra-County
- (d) Sub-County

Q3 Type of School

- (a) Boys
- (b) Girls
- (c) Mixed

Part B: Self-Efficacy

Use the given scale to rate your beliefs in each of the statements in the table below by putting a tick in the selected option.

Scale: Very Strong Belief -**VSB** Strong Belief -**SB** Moderate Belief-**MB** Weak Belief-**WB** Very Weak Belief-**VWB**

Statement: I believe that:	SB	B	B	B	WB
Speaking Kiswahili language with my friends all the times help me improve in pronunciation					
I am capable of doing Kiswahili language drills exceptionally well especially if my teacher assists me.					
Kiswahili language is one of my best subjects in school and I always do my best to excel in it					
I am capable of studying Kiswahili language to the highest level.					
I am able to express myself confidently in Kiswahili language when answering questions in class.					
I am likely to excel in Kiswahili examinations above my classmates.					
I can source for extra materials on Kiswahili language to assist me in doing assignments					
Working with my friends in groups is motivating because it give me chance to speak in Kiswahili language					
I can assist my classmates to do oral literature projects extremely well.					

Statement: I believe that:	SB	B	B	B	WB
I can always detect Kiswahili language pronunciation errors when speaking with my classmates					
I am capable of imitating the way my Kiswahili teacher pronounces words					
I am able to follow instructions as given by the Kiswahili teacher during a lesson.					
I am capable of listening to Kiswahili programs from the media and take note correctly concurrently					
I am able to take note of whatever my Kiswahili teacher dictates					
I am very confident during a Kiswahili language tests					
I am able do presentation before the class after a group discussion.					
I can answer most of the questions the teacher asks after reading a Kiswahili comprehension passage.					
I am capable of reciting Kiswahili poems in school when given an opportunity					
If I improved on listening skills I would do better in all the other Kiswahili language skills					
I can succeed in my academics if I keep working hard in Kiswahili language					
I have the ability to score good grades if I do what the teacher instructs me to do					
.I can figure out answers to any question the teachers asks in class on listening skills if I try hard enough.					
I can do better in Kiswahili language skills if the teacher motivated me more.					
If I improved on speaking skills I would do better in all the other Kiswahili language skills.					

Statement: I believe that:	SB	B	B	B	WB
If I practiced every day I will develop all the necessary skills in Kiswahili language					
I am able to keep members of my group focused on a difficult task given to us by the teacher.					
I can remember most of what I have been taught in class during Kiswahili lessons.					
I am self -motivated to do my Kiswahili language skills assignments.					
I am able to overcome challenges in the school environment that can hinder my progress in achieving set Kiswahili language targets					
I can speak as well as my Kiswahili teacher if I practiced more in speaking drills.					
I am capable of solving any Kiswahili language skills problem when I stay focused					
I can remain calm even when I am faced with difficult Kiswahili language skills tasks that am to complete within set time lines					
I am capable of finding several solutions to a task given by my Kiswahili teacher					
My ability to speak Kiswahili language more fluently would be improved tremendously if I listened to better Kiswahili speakers					

Section C: Perceptions of Teaching Methods

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the items below. Us the given scale

Scale: Strongly Disagree - **SD** Disagree - **D** undecided – **U** Agree - **A** Strongly Agree

- **SA**

Statements	D	S	U	A	S
I love it when my Kiswahili teacher uses lecture method whereby she/he talks all the time					
My teacher organizes us into small groups to discuss various topics and I love it.					
My best time in class is when the teacher asks questions and students answer orally					
I like it when my teacher gives assignments/homework and she/he marks it					
I like it when my teacher gives us a poem and asks one of us to recite in front of the class					
My favorite lesson is when the teacher prepares us to give a speech in class on a topic					
The teacher gives us exercises on oral literature and supervises as we complete in our exercise books					
My Kiswahili teacher gives us role-playing in certain scenarios such as conversation between the teacher and the learner					
Our Kiswahili teacher gives us opportunity to ask him/her questions on areas we do not understand					
I love it when we go for field trips, then write reports, and do presentations in class					
The oral literature lessons are more fun when we go out of school to interview the local people					
My best Kiswahili lesson is when the teacher reads us a listening comprehension and then asks questions related to the passage.					
It is exciting to listen to a radio presentation and then our Kiswahili teacher asks					

Statements	D	S	U	A	S
us questions that we answer orally.					
Sometimes our Kiswahili teacher gives us an opportunity to listen to a CD presentation then asks us questions that we answer orally. This motivates me a lot.					
I feel excited when our Kiswahili teacher allows us to go to the computer lab/room to watch and listen to a presentation and then asks us to narrate what we watched.					
Listening and speaking drills are more interesting when the teacher allows us to play games in the field					
I enjoy the lesson most when our Kiswahili teacher allows us to play singing games when learning listening and speaking skills.					
It is exciting when our Kiswahili teacher invites resource persons to talk to us on topics that relate to specialized issues such as writing books or poems.					
Our teacher always invites a resource persons to facilitate on topics related to emerging issues such as; political issues in the country					
I enjoy most when the teacher allows us to ask visiting speakers questions relating to their presentations					
It is very exciting when my classmates ask many questions and the teacher or resource person respond adequately after a presentation.					
Our teacher gives us many assignments to research on from the library on listening and					

Statements	D	S	U	A	S
speaking skills.					
I enjoy my Kiswahili lesson when the teacher narrates a story and then asks us oral questions					

1. Indicate on the space provided other methods your teacher uses and they are not captured in Q1-23.

a) _____

b) _____

THE END

THANK YOU

Appendix B: Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT)

Maagizo:

- Mwalimu kuongoza wanafunzi wasome shairi kwa zamu huku wengine wakisikiliza kwa makini.
- Mwalimu awaulize wanafunzi wawe tayari na madaftari yao ili wanakili msamiati na istilahi watakazosikia.
- Mwalimu ateue wanafunzi wachache waimbe shairi kwa zamu kwa mahadhi mbalimbali huku wengine wakisikiliza.
- Mwalimu kusoma kila ubeti mmoja baada ya mwingine, huku akiuliza wanafunzi wanakili kwenye karatasi ya majibu.
- Mwalimu kuuliza wanafunzi kwa njia ya imla maswali huku wakiyanakili kwenye karatasi ya majibu.
- Mwalimu kuuliza wanafunzi waandika jibu la swali moja baada ya lingine katika karatasi ya majibu.
- Mwalimu kurudia kusoma maswali, moja baada ya lingine huku akiuliza wanafunzi wapitie majibu waliyoandika ili wafanye marekebisho.
- Mwalimu kukusanya karatasi za majibu kutoka kwa wanafunzi ili akayasahihishe .

SHAIRI

U wapi ujana wangu, na madhubuti ya nia?
Niko hapa peke yangu,ujana umepotea.
Umeanacha na machungu, mambo niliyozoea.
Afya ya ujana wangu,nayo imeshika njia.
Siku za ujana wangu,nazo sizioni pia.
Nadhari sasa si yangu, tazama hii dunia!

U wapi ujana wangu,ubungwa na mazoea?
Ndugu za jamaa zangu, na watu niliojua.
Wamhama ulimwengu, ni pweke nimebakia.
Nguvu wanazo wenzangu, sas wanazitumia.
Nikishikacho si changu, ajabu hii dunia.

Hutia kizunguzungu, wakati wa kuchingua.
Kama hukumbuki Mungu, kufuruni utakuwa.

U wapi ujana wangu, na maringo ya tabia?
Hamna kinywani mwangu, jino lililobakia.
Na laini gumu kwangu, sina cha kutafunia.
Kitamu sasa kichungu, hata kama ni hulua
Kama ningefungwa pingu, sina la kufurahia.
Katika maisha yangu, nimebaki na fadhaa
Kama fumbo ulimwengu, na watu wazuzuliwa.

NAMBARI -----

Jinsia: Kike/kiume

Maswali

- a) Bainisha kwa njia **tano** kinyume kinavyojitokeza katika shairi hili. **(alama 5)**
- b) Eleza muundo wa shairi hili. **(alama 4)**
- c) Eleza aina nne za taswira katika shairi hili. **(alama 4)**
- d) Onyesha mifano ya mbinu zifuatazo katika shairi. **(alama4)**
- i. Kweli kinzani
 - ii. Tashihisi
 - iii. Tasfida
 - iv. usambamba
- e) Bainisha nafsineni katika shairi hili. **(alama 1)**
- f) Eleza toni ya shairi hili. **(alama 2)**

MWISHO

Appendix C: Observation Schedule

The researcher attended lessons and rated frequency of use of the teaching methods listed using the following scale.

Scale: Never Used (NU), Rarely Used (RU), Occasionally Used (OU), Frequently used (FU), Very Frequently Used (VFU)

Teaching Method	Frequency of use				
	NU	RU	OU	FU	VFU
Lecture					
Group Discussion					
Individual Assignment					
Group Assignment					
Project					
Role Playing					
Drama					
Class Discussion					
Question and Answer					
Songs and Poems					
Story-Telling					

THE END

Appendix D: Research Permit

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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. Anne wamuyu Kariuki of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: Relationship between Secondary School Language Students' Self Efficacy, Gender, Perceptions of Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement in Nakuru County-Kenya for the period ending : 25/April/2024.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN KISWAHILI LANGUAGE SKILLS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Secondary school students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language in Nakuru County has been low over the years. This unsatisfactory achievement could be due to the students' self-efficacy given that it has been cited as a significant predictor of performance. This paper examined the relationship between self-efficacy and secondary school students' academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in Nakuru County. It was grounded on the Social Cognitive and Krashen's Monitor Model theories and adopted the correlational research design. Purposive, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 405 students who participated in the study. Data was collected using Students' Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SSEQ), and Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT). The face and content validity of the two instruments were checked through expert judgement. The reliability of SSEQ and KLSAT were estimated using the Cronbach Alpha and Kuder Richardson formulae and found to be 0.812 and 0.756 respectively. Simple linear regression test, conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science, was utilised to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and Kiswahili language achievement. The results showed that self-efficacy mean score was at $M = 3.64$ ($SD = 0.16$) out of 5 while Kiswahili language achievement mean score was 6.70 ($SD = 3.47$) out of 20. There was a positive relationship ($r = .262$) between self-efficacy and achievement in Kiswahili language skills. Self-efficacy explained 4.2% ($R^2 = .042$) variation in the outcome and was a significant predictor of achievement in Kiswahili language skills, $F(1, 402) = 17.094, p = .000$. This paper concludes that students' self-efficacy was high while achievement in Kiswahili language skills was unsatisfactory and there was none causal relationship between the two.

Keywords: academic achievement, language skills, relationship, self-efficacy

Introduction

Every society has a language that distinguishes it from others (Crystal & Robbins, 2024). In the African and East African context and specifically Kenya, the language for identity is Kiswahili. Apart from unifying and identity purposes, a language bridges cultural gaps and breaks related barriers (Aseti, 2019). Kiswahili language is the main business language in East and Central Africa and has been recommended as the official language of East African Community (East African Community [EAC], 2017). The Kenyan constitution promulgated in 2010 recognizes Kiswahili not only as a national language but also as the official language (Wamalwa et al., 2017).

Kiswahili is the national and official language of Kenya (Atandi, et al., 2019). It thus plays a key role in the social and economic development of the country. This could partly explain why it is a mandatory subject at both primary and secondary school levels in Kenya. Kiswahili and English are among the compulsory subjects in secondary schools in the current education system that is being faced out 8-4-4 and even in the incoming Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). The objectives of teaching Kiswahili at secondary school level are to: recognize, investigate, evaluate and develop the different genres of language and literature in

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' GENDER AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN KISWAHILI LANGUAGE SKILLS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Acquisition of skills for learners is meant to help them communicate either in spoken or written form. This in turn is expected to help them improve in their academic achievement in Kiswahili language irrespective of gender.

Purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' gender and their academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills in public secondary schools in Nakuru County.

Methodology: The study employed the correlational research design. Data was collected using Kiswahili Language Skills Achievement Test (KLSAT). This instrument had a place for respondents to indicate their gender. Findings were presented using percentages for the gender construct and Simple Linear Regression was used to determine the relationship between gender and academic achievement.

Results: The findings indicated that majority (59.0%) of the participants were females while Kiswahili language skills achievement mean score was $M = 6.70$ ($SD = 3.47$) out of 20. The findings also indicated a statistically insignificant relationship between gender and achievement in Kiswahili language skills, $F(1, 403) = 2.575$, $p = .109$.

Conclusion: The study concluded that other factors, not gender, influence students' achievement in Kiswahili language skills since there was no statistically significant relationship between gender and achievement in Kiswahili language skills.

Recommendations: The results of this study imply that gender does not relate with learners' academic achievement in Kiswahili language skills since the two were not significantly related. Teachers should therefore be encouraged to focus on other student characteristics that relate to learners' acquisition of Kiswahili language skills in their endeavour to boost their academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic achievement, gender, language skills, relationship



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