

ABSTRACT:

English is the official language as well as the medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges and universities in Kenya. It is also the pre-eminent language of international communication. Consequently, those who master English achieve academic, social and professional benefits. This study therefore explored Kenya's secondary school students' attitude towards English language learning. Learners' attitude towards any language can be either positive or negative. Students with positive attitudes put more efforts into the task of learning the required language and therefore learn it better, faster and easier than those with negative attitudes towards the same language. Therewith, gender could be one of the factors influencing students' attitudes towards English language learning. The present study was undertaken on a sample size of 218 secondary school students drawn using stratified and random sampling methods. Questionnaires were used to collect the required data from students and teachers of English. Descriptive (percentages and frequencies) were used to analyse the data. The researcher used the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 for windows in data analysis. Findings revealed that female students hold more positive attitude towards English language than their male counterparts. It was therefore concluded that the perennial poor performance of English subject in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) particularly among the male students is attributed to the attitudes, students hold towards the subject. As such, education stakeholders in the country need to be sensitized on the effects of negative attitudes towards English and how it affects performance among secondary school students.

Keywords; Influence, gender, attitude, English performance