

**SELF ESTEEM AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS;
A CASE STUDY OF EMPLOYEES AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY, NJORO
CAMPUS – KENYA.**

BY

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A project report submitted to graduate school in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of education in guidance and counseling of Egerton University.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project report is my original work and has not been previously published or presented for the award of a degree in any University.



JENARO GUANTAI ITHINJI

Date: 9th/10/2003

RECOMMENDATION

This project report has been submitted to graduate school with my approval as a University supervisor.



Dr. B. E. E. OMULEMA

Date: 9/10/2003

2005/65485

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my loving family; my wife Hellen Kiende, my daughter Vanessa Nkatha and all lovers of knowledge.

2005 | 65485

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem is an important aspect in human life. This is perhaps due to its role on determining how human beings relate and interacts with each other. High or Low levels of self-esteem seem to have direct effects on how one resolves personal conflicts, cultivates inter-personal relations and lays foundations for career success. The university being an institution of higher learning where healthy socialization is expected to take place needs to ascertain the self-esteem status of its workers and undertake appropriate intervention measures if necessity demands.

This study therefore, was intended to assess the levels of self-esteem and its effects on the employees of Egerton University and make appropriate recommendations geared towards achieving desirable relations at the university. The study was a survey, in which 335 respondents were sampled out of a population of 1203 employees. Sampling was done after stratifying employees into three categories: - senior staff, middle level staff and junior staff. However, it was only 305 out of a sample of 335 respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires as required. The stratum was further clustered by gender whereby 164 males and 141 females were interviewed. The data was collected using questionnaires and it was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics using SPSS computer package. The study established that 99.7% of employees at Egerton University have high self-esteem. It was however noted that the majority of the employees fell within the lower quartile of the self-esteem scale. Consequently it was concluded that there is a need to establish a staff support centre at the university, where the employees can be offered emotional and psychological support through professional counseling.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

L1 Background information.

Self-esteem being one component of self-concept plays a pivotal role in forming solid friendship and relationships among individuals. An individual's self-esteem can be viewed as low or high depending on how one evaluates his or her worth. People are motivated to have high self-esteem rather than low self-esteem. Having high self-esteem indicates positive self regard, not egotism. However, neither of the extremes of self-esteem is desirable. Too high self-esteem means comparing one's value to others and finding himself/herself superior. This leads to arrogance, selfishness and difficulty in coping with others. Nevertheless, this is different from healthy comparisons with the peer group which is based on popularity, power over others, task competence and virtue.

On the other hand, Low Self-Esteem is obviously undesirable. It is characterized by focusing on one's failures and inadequacies. Victims of low self-esteem are immobilized by self-pity and self hatred. They have deep feelings of nothingness and in most cases suffer from inferiority complex. These are name – droppers and the bombasts who seek to be associated with significant personalities in the society in order to compensate for their inadequacies. Avoidance by other people who hate bombasts' behavior lead to a development of self defeating vicious cycle by the victims thus adversely affecting personal and interpersonal relationships and task performance.

Self-esteem varies along its continuum rating scale depending on situations and prevailing circumstances. For instance loss of a job or business failure may lower an individual's self-esteem which was once high. Conversely, a promotion or acquisition of a prestigious award may uplift someone's self-esteem which was previously low.

1.2 Statement of the problem

A positive or good self-esteem is essential to forming solid and genuine friendship with members of the opposite sex, workmates, peers and significant others in the society. This enhances healthy relationships in families, workplaces and in the society as a whole. Poor self-esteem on the other hand is aversive and undesirable. Insecurity, lack of confidence and withdrawal tendencies associated with it leads to lack of performance, poor working relations and indulgence in unhealthy relationships among the workers. Self-esteem is invisible but its effects are insurmountable. Due to this fact, bloated self-esteem or lack of it has taken a heavy toll on the human resources in business enterprises, institutions of learning and other service delivery sectors in Kenya. Unexplained interpersonal misunderstanding, infighting and industrial action by unionisable members of staff have become a common phenomena not only in Egerton University but also in other Kenyan Public Universities. In recent times, disciplinary measures against members of staff at Egerton University have been on the rise. This study will serve to unearth the levels of esteem, which may be the main cause of employees' discontent with one another as well as with the management of the University.

1.3 Purpose of the study.

This study was aimed at assessing the levels of self-esteem among employees of Egerton University and exploring on how these levels affect their interpersonal relationship at work. The study also endeavored to recommend various positive self-esteem formation measures, which would form an important component in employees support programme for the universities in future.

1.4 Objectives of the study.

1. To determine the levels of Self-esteem among employees of Egerton University; Njoro Campus.
2. To establish the relationship between self-esteem levels and the job position (grade) of the various staff members at the University.
3. To determine the effects of self-esteem on quality of interaction among the employees.
4. To determine the level of interaction between the three cadres of employees in the university.

1.5 Research questions.

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the self-esteem status of employees at Egerton University?
2. Does the job position (grade) influence the level of self-esteem of employees at Egerton University?
3. How does self-esteem affect the process of interaction among employees of Egerton University?
4. What is the level of interaction between the three cadres of employees at Egerton University?

1.6 Significance of the study.

The findings of this study were to assist the University management in establishing the self-esteem status of its employees. Now that self-esteem status of employees at the University is known, the management will use the recommendations of the study to act accordingly. The results of this study and the recommendations therein can also act as a good foundation on which the university can establish an appropriate staff support programme such as self-esteem enhancement project. With desirable level of self-esteem among employees;

conflicts, witch hunting and burnout can be controlled if not completely eradicated. The University, cognizant of current interpersonal relations among its workers can formulate and launch appropriate staff counseling services as one of the components of staff support programme, which is currently not in place.

1.7 Assumptions of the study.

This study was based on the following assumptions;

- Other than self-esteem, other factors such as educational background and social status do not affect interpersonal relationships among the University employees
- That the University management cares about how its employees relate to each other.
- That the degree of self-esteem varies in degree from one individual to another within the university working fraternity.

1.8 Scope and limitation of the study.

This study was covering employees of Egerton University; Njoro Campus. The expected limitations were as follows: -

- The inability of the respondents in disclosing their true self -esteem status.
- The inability to get employees at their work stations during the interviewing period
- Unavailability of adequate time and funds.

Definition of terms.

1. Good self-esteem – Denotes the desirable levels of self-esteem; neither too high nor too low.
2. Interpersonal relationship – This is the interaction between individuals or people either at places of work or in social circles.
3. Professional burnout – This is the situation where the career or the job ceases to excite the worker and working conditions are almost unbearable.
4. Self-esteem – A Positive or negative orientation towards oneself; an over all evaluation of one's worth or value.
5. Egotism – A situation where an individual is primarily interested in oneself and his own concerns and indifferent to the concerns of others.
6. Extroverts – People who are outgoing and interacts freely with others.
7. Introverts – People who are more withdrawn and like keeping to themselves.
8. Narcist – a person who possess an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Self-esteem

Rosenberg (1986) refers to self-esteem as a positive or negative evaluation people make of and apply to themselves. Its application generally touches on feelings of worthiness. A person may have a good, average or bad opinion of himself. Stewart (1997) argues that the value of individuals is mirrored in the eyes of the society, a process that begins in childhood. To some extent our self-esteem is derived from a comparison between ourselves and other people. A surprising point about self-esteem according to Stewart, is the enormous range of variation between individuals. While some people think the whole world is theirs for the taking, others feel they have no right to exist. In some cultures, self-esteem is largely based on membership of family, social groups, tribe or nation. A child's self-esteem will suffer if he or she is not appreciated. As Abraham and Twerski (1986) contend, strong negative opinions can be felt by a child long before he or she is mature enough to think logically or form logical conclusions. This indicates that a child for instance, may have been a product of unwanted pregnancy and in spite of the efforts by the parents to conceal this, may have very keenly felt the underlying rejection.

Foster and Jim (1999) raises the concern of child therapists that many parents do not help their children to perceive themselves positively and instead concentrate too much on their weaknesses. Whenever these parents talk they dwell on what the children cannot do. Children reared in this way have high chances of developing poor self-esteem. A child who has been the mothers' favorite will forever keep the feeling that he or she is a conqueror while another, even within the same family grow up with the feeling that their very existence is a terrible mistake. Lalli (2002) pointed out that self-esteem largely depends on how one makes sense of his relationship to the rest of the universe. This yield to a healthy

interpersonal relations characterized by understanding of oneself and others, refraining from unkind comments or emotional outbursts and communicating accurately. This argument is perpetuated by Omulema (2000) who views interpersonal relationship as one of the seven major areas of functioning within the complex human personality in the multi model counseling approach. The nature of self-esteem can be summarized by the poem below;

“You can’t touch it, but it affects how you feel.

You can’t see it, but it’s there when you look at yourself in the mirror.

You can’t hear it, but it’s there every time you talk about yourself and listen to others”.

Owens, (1994; p. 397).

Considering the content of the above poem, it is clear that self-esteem is a difficult condition to discern. Many therapists concur in viewing self-esteem as being based on one’s attitude to: the job he does, his purpose of life, strengths and weakness, social status and overall rating of self worth.

2.2 Forms of self-esteem.

Self-esteem continuum has two extremes namely: - low and high self-esteem.

Low self-esteem is an enormous public health problem. People who report low self-esteem usually say that it has been present since early childhood or at least adolescence. Observers have commented that females generally suffer more from low self-esteem than do males.

Depression, often associated with low self-esteem is also thought to be closely linked to gender issues.

Low self-esteem results from one having a poor self image caused by his negative attitudes about himself, the job he does and his purpose in life.

High self-esteem is the opposite of low self-esteem. It is a very important aspect of one’s life. In American culture for instance, high esteem is viewed as the basis for good

relationships with other people and career success. Van Pelt (1980) observes that high self-

esteem forms the cornerstone of interpersonal relationships and positive attitudes towards living. High self-esteem in this regard refers to desirable levels of esteem, which are not too high or too low. Some scholars prefer referring to the positive self-esteem as middle ground. High self-esteem has the following characteristics: - Confidence, self respect, self love, self-acceptance, happiness, assertiveness, high attitudes, good interpersonal relations and motivation to succeed. These characteristics stem out from the two components of self-esteem namely; knowledge of personal value and a sense of personal ability. High self-esteem gives assurance of confidence in coping, in facing life, ability to meet life's challenges and opportunities, and to feel that life is meaningful. On the other hand low self-esteem is characterized by depressive illness, prejudice, poor interpersonal relationships, psychosomatic disorders, abuse and anxiety;" Stewart (1997). Low self-esteem expresses a feeling that one cannot cope, face life's problems and that he/she is not fit to function as a person. To a person with low self-esteem life means pain and this explains why most of the victims contemplate committing suicide. As Edward & Maxwell (1976) put it, after recognizing the undesirability of too high or too low self-esteem, therapists try for a middle ground." It is possible to identify an individual with high or low self-esteem depending on emotional conduct he/she displays. The following summary outlines basic emotional conduct displayed by people with different forms of self-esteem.

Emotional conduct of

People with high esteem

- Accepts others as they are
- Optimistic
- Looks at circumstances with acceptance
- Slow to anger

Emotional conduct of

People with low esteem

- Critical of others
- Pessimistic
- Complains about circumstances
- Short tempered

- | | |
|--|--|
| - Plans life positively around money and time | - Never have enough money, time etc. |
| - Loads no guilt on self or others | - Carries heavy guilt and unloads it on others. |
| - Never manipulates but persuades others | - Tries to manipulate others. |
| - High level of independence | - Overly dependent on others and God. |
| - Have developed rational character guidelines. | - May be devoid of rational character guidelines. |
| - Self motivated and have control over their impulses. | - Easily addicted to alcohol, drugs, job and love. |
| - Have self-confidence | - Lacks adequate self-confidence. |
| - Welcomes help from others. | - Rejects help from others. |

2.3 Predisposing factors for high and low self-esteem.

According to Carter, Meier & Minirth (1990), the family background plays a crucial role in determining the direction of development of an individual's self-esteem. Children who were emotionally scared by their parents and significant others when they were growing indicate signs of developing poor or low self-esteem. Conversely parents of pre-schoolers may be too busy to listen to their children's feelings. The society has perpetuated the culture of children being passive listeners as adults talk. Due to this, children grow to be timid and with low self-esteem.

Minirth et al (1990), observes that, adolescents talk bitterly about how they do not want to be responsible for bringing children into such 'a messed up world'. Family break ups have taken a heavy toll on their sense of self-esteem and feelings of belongingness. Most social psychologists are in agreement that human beings are creatures of habit and they tend to continue in their adult lives the same patterns that were started in childhood.

As manifested in countries where citizens are oppressed by dictatorial and corrupt authorities, association with people of bad reputation, who do not uphold human dignity or respect for humanity and its attributes, may cause some people to develop poor self-esteem.

Loss of a loved one, divorce or loss of a job leads to among other things, lowered self-esteem. In view of this Goldenberg (1990), argues that after death of spouse or divorce, nuclear family ties are disrupted and various emotional adjustments are called for. Such an occurrence affects each member of the family differently, depending on coping strategies and support systems.

Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1982) as quoted by Goldenberg (1990) reminds us that in some family the sequel of divorce (emotional distress, denial, depression, anger and loss of *self-esteem*) occur immediately following parental and spouse separation; for others, these effects may increase over the first year and for still other families such signs may not emerge until a considerable period of time has passed.

In his article on "abuse" (American Psychologist Vol. 34, No. 10, p. 872) Starr (1979) emphasized the fact that physical and sexual abuse leave obvious injuries including emotional distress and punctured self-esteem.

Conversely, people with no actual limitations in life, with stable family background, sense of security, confidence at work, healthy relationships and positive attitudes towards themselves have high chances of developing positive or high self-esteem. Other factors implicated in lowering self-esteem as pointed out by Goldenberg (1990) include: - loss of income, failure in examination, failure in life, physical handicaps, trauma and negative self-talk.

2.4 **Effects of high and low self-esteem.**

According to Van Pelt (1984), the results of high self-esteem are desirable and characterize individuals who have accepted themselves.

Individuals with self-esteem feel secure, learn to build on their strengths and to compensate for their weakness. They are able to live positively with what they are unable to change and yet accept themselves as worthwhile individuals.

High self-esteem enables a person to recognize the difference and uniqueness inherent in people. Thus one can appreciate the differences and unique characteristics in each human being instead of resenting or fearing them. In this regard these persons hardly suffer from rejection. Nevertheless too high or bloated self-esteem can be disruptive. Stewart (1997), warns against people who bolster their self-esteem at expense of others. He argues that this tendency hampers good interpersonal relationship and healthy communication with others. These people as Pearson (1982) observed, rarely focus on anyone for more than a moment and, even then, they do not concentrate on the other person's message.

Generally according to Rosenberg (1986), high self-esteem results in formation of solid families, good interpersonal relationships, success in life, self-confidence, personal security, motivation to work and good health.

Effects of low self-esteem are considered to be reverse effects of high self-esteem. These effects are pervasive and according to Stewart (1997), presents 'enormous public health problem.' (p. 369). According to Van Pelt (1984) victims of Low self-esteem feel as if no other human being has ever experienced what they are going through. (p.30). They attempt to hide their insecurities behind false fronts, while trying to fool themselves as they try to fool others.

Victims feel extremely self-conscious when in company of others and are hardly settled.

Self-dislike tends to make people highly sensitive to blame and praise. Feelings of self-

dislike or inferiority also reduces efficiency at work and school. Jobs performance will be affected in direct proportion to how secure or how insecure one feel about himself.

People suffering from low self-esteem constantly berate themselves and they will not be able to give their whole attention or energy to the task before them. Rather they will be too busy jabbing themselves, running themselves down and ridiculing their performance. Because of this low opinion of themselves many people drop out of school or accept jobs far below their training and capacity. They also tend to leave projects partly completed, jumping from one task to the next. They lack confidence in themselves and cannot conceive of finishing anything successfully.

Feelings of worthlessness will also cause one to rehearse the past and imagine ways in which he could or should have done things differently. Such feelings will make one critical of others and this will adversely affect his interaction with his mates.

More specifically as Van Pelt (1984) argues, low self-esteem is associated with; abuse, anxiety states, delinquency, depressive illness, disability or disfigurement prejudice and psychosomatic disorders.

2.5 Formation of self - esteem

According to Blascovich, Jim and Tomaka (1993), self-esteem cannot be taught; rather it is developed through individual's life experiences. Patterned social forces emanating from racial or ethnic statuses and institutional contexts like schools and families provide a characteristic set of experiences which are actively interpreted by individuals as self- concept is shaped. At least four key theoretical principles: - reflected appraisal, social comparisons, self-attributions and psychological centrality underlie the process of self- concept formation.

Thus self-esteem can be formed by among other things restructuring or rebuilding an individual's thought patterns.

Nowadays personal sense of insecurity has reached near epidemic proportions. As Rainey & Rainey (1986) puts it; Confidence, true bedrock confidence is rare. Rainey & Rainey (1986) retaliates that even those people who appear to possess unshakeable self-esteem shock counselors with confessions of self-doubt. They are puzzled when they see so many high performance people driven by poor self-esteem – people such as business leaders, speakers, pro athletes, entertainers and even many Christian leaders” Ibid (p.17). When 17,000 married and pre-married participants in a family life conference were asked the area they would most like to have further training, rated number one by wide margin above finances, parenting, fathering, working women and others was “How to build your mate’s self-esteem” Rainey & Rainey (1986; p.18).

One of the leading authorities in family therapy as quoted by Rainey & Rainey (1986), Dr. James Dobson underscores the importance of building self-esteem in marriage.

Self-esteem building forms the basis of an individual’s re-invention and getting back to the road towards success.

In an exclusive interview, when Richard Wagner, a successful American businessman and a billionaire was asked what he would say is the most important thing for a person starting out on the road to success, his reply was that he would tell him that the most important thing is to work on his self-esteem. (CNN Interview with Larry King 2002).

The above arguments therefore, underscore the importance of launching self-esteem building programmes in any institution whose aim is to succeed.

According to Van Pelt (1984) it is possible to enhance an individual’s self-esteem to desirable levels through what she termed as self-esteem building exercise. The exercise involves taking inventory of one’s strengths and weaknesses. The strengths include positive attributes, abilities, and potential of an individual while weaknesses points out at his limitations and inadequacies. To succeed in building his self-esteem, the individual is encouraged to focus more on his strengths or what he can do as he systematically works on

improving the areas of weakness. Rebuilding one's thought patterns and compensation as a way of substituting an attribute that cannot be changed brings about improvement in self-esteem status.

2.6 Self-esteem and family relationships.

The basis for marriage and sustenance of a family unit is Love. In order to appreciate and share love as adults, children must go through various steps, and have certain needs met.

These needs have a direct bearing on the children's self-esteem development. These include: -

- Physical needs – food, lodging and a sense that physical needs will be adequately provided for.
- Safety needs – freedom from fear, worry, abuse and hostility.
- Social needs – a warm feeling and satisfaction of belonging to parents, other family members, peer groups, church, school and God.
- Love needs – unquestioned acceptance of God's love, family love, parents' love and self-love.

One is said to be growing in real love when he is more dedicated to the satisfaction, security, growth, happiness and self-esteem of the one loved than for one's self. This ideal situation is rare in today's families. The failure of couples or mates to build each other's worth is perhaps as a result of the following four current social trends:-

A self-seeking culture.

Today's life is characterized by a culture of self-fulfillment. Modern men and women seem more focused on finding individual identity than at any point in history, yet to most people, a positive, healthy self-identity remains elusive.

The society has restless and self-indulgent members who often use each other to gain the acceptance they feel they deserve. Thus some people feel used and not genuinely needed,

valued or appreciated. This is mainly because the culture says that self-esteem is to be built on self-achievement.

Fractured families.

Divorce is prevalent in the society today. Broken families give yield to children who are at risk of developing poor self-esteem. Both legal and emotional divorce in the society leads to unstable families whereby males are left with punctured self-esteem. Even some Christian marriages, it seems, are contaminated with dangerously low, nominal commitments.

The fading of dignity in marriage.

There is growing disillusion with the dignity of marriage. The traditional marriage relationship is under attack and suspicion, and the civil courts have reduced to rubble the nobility and sacredness of marriage. Since marriage has been robbed of its honor, husbands and wives often feel the need to look elsewhere for the personal fulfillment and encouragement that builds self-esteem.

Single parenthood, cohabiting and tarnishing of the perception of marriage as a consecrated institution has caused married couples to feel insignificant, as though they are trapped in a dying institution. The individual self-esteem of the wife and the husband is bruised by these antagonistic ideologies.

Unequipped brides and grooms.

Many couples enter marriage life without fully understanding what it entails. They spend time and money preparing for wedding ceremonies and direct very little attention to marriage itself. Thus, they are unequipped to meet the unique needs of their mates. Rather than being able to accept and build up their spouses, they generally are burdened by their own fears and insecurities.

Under the influence of culture and carrying a self-image and value of marriage largely determined by parents, these men and women march off into life long relationships with a

partner who is equally ill prepared. Weighted down by the past and confused by the culture, these young couples are increasingly unqualified to deal with the complex issues surrounding their mates' needs for self worth.

Couples need to develop self-esteem in areas of their profession, family, romance and recreation. Each mate should encourage the other's independence, creativity, self-esteem, financial security, cultural and aesthetic interests. Once self-esteem is fully developed in one spouse, it radiates to the other. The following are some of the suggestions on self-esteem building among couples.

- Participation in an equal partnership
- Openness in feelings
- Non possessiveness
- Partnership in home responsibility.
- Respect for privacy and individuality
- Freedom to grow and encouragement of the other to grow
- Tender, warm and achieving sensuality.
- Enjoy and encourage effective communication
- Sincere empathy for the other's happiness
- Expression of genuine love and confidence among spouses.

2.7 Self-esteem and childhood.

Psychologist Carl Rogers as quoted by Douglas (1994) once said that God gave children to parents expecting them to be raised as princes and princesses, but parents have turned many of them into frogs. Children are a product of the society whose basic unit is the family and it is here where socialization process begins. Consequently, the parents and close relatives play critical role in shaping the character, behavior, self-esteem and other attributes of child's growth and development towards maturity.

Unfortunately, today, the society is characterized by a social structure that is rocked by instability in families leading to divorce, domestic violence and child abuse. Love that cements family relationships is becoming increasingly elusive among couples and children as well.

Children are affected not only by legal divorce within the family but also emotional divorce whereby a husband and wife decide just to “Live together,” settling for a mediocre marriage. As a result children suffer deeply and get into risk of developing low self-esteem. As the Chinese proverb goes, “in a broken nest there are no whole eggs.” Conversely, broken homes and dysfunctional families will hardly produce whole people. Children reared by parents and relatives who subject them to demeaning and negative comments, make them feel inferior and valueless are prone to developing low self-esteem.

The cause of low self-esteem in the society is based on three wrong principles governing so many children and teens; intelligence, beauty and money.

Intelligence – Teachers and parents favour the smartest or most clever students. All the others feel like failures. According to Douglas (1994), the so-called curve grading system is wrong. Equally wrong is the idea of segregating students into different classrooms according to their aptitude and performance. Grades should be based on the ability to master the course, discipline applied in study habits and the development of a high level of self-esteem that will enable the students to go on to further achievements. A student who fails even once and is not given adequate support by the teacher, may develop low self-esteem and may not try again. A teacher should never tell a student that he/she is stupid or dumb. Instead, he should challenge him/her to do his/her best.

Beauty. Everyone but the most beautiful girl and the most handsome boy is considered to be ‘ugly’. Children and teens are very sensitive to their looks and physique. Referring to someone as ugly or negative description of one’s physical features may lead to devaluation of the individual’s self-worth.

Money – In the society, people with a lot of money are considered successful and superior.

Children and teens from wealthy family background feel superior than children from financially humble background.

Children from poor families may compare themselves with others from affluent families and condemn themselves to be of lesser value. Money is a false standard of measurement for someone's value.

Stanley Coopersmitt as quoted by Douglas (1994), did extensive survey on self-esteem and found out the following:

- That when the father had regular work and enjoyed his work, 97% of his children had high self-esteem.
- When the father was out of work often and away from home often, 18% of his children had high self-esteem.
- When the mother had regular work and enjoyed her work, 66% of her children had high self-esteem.
- When the mother had high self-esteem, 66% of her children had high self-esteem.
- When there was no conflict between the parents, 82% of the children had high self-esteem.
- When the children were held to high standards, 80% had high self-esteem.

The above findings show that parents play a vital role in helping the children to acquire sound self-esteem.

Most low self-esteem stems out from unfortunate childhood experiences. For children the following have been identified as important sources of high self-esteem.

- Parental emotional support and approval
- Good adult role models
- Siblings and peer approval

- Educational achievement
- Skills mastery in sports, music and other hobbies
- Affirming romantic experiences

2.8 Self-esteem and work.

According to Sigmund Freud as quoted by Douglas (1994), "Man's link to reality is found in his work". People spend more time at work than any other thing they do except sleep. This argument underscores the importance of one acquiring positive attitudes towards his/her job. Career counselors often advise their clients to either positively change their attitudes about their job or change the job altogether. Victims of low self-esteem hardly perform their tasks and duties well. The following work values are necessary in task performance and are inherent to people with high self-esteem;

- Eagerness to set a leading pace.
- Being a good team player.
- Desire for acquisition of new job skills.
- Ability to influence others positively and effectively.
- Pride in one's work production.
- Strong occupational discipline
- Projecting the right personal and corporate image.
- Ability to get things done.
- Habits of thrift.
- Being creative and innovative.
- Accuracy of work.
- Open-mindedness.

2.9 Conceptual framework

Self-esteem of individual employees at Egerton University is dependent on many attributes. These range from professional, personal and social attributes.

From a professional standpoint, the level of training, job experience and task competences play a crucial role in determining the individual's level of self-esteem.

At personal level; attitudes towards work, personal discipline, self-confidence and initiative directs one's self-esteem pointer, while socialization level, family background, relationship with superiors and other colleagues at the place of work and levels of institutional motivation plays a crucial role in shaping individual's self-esteem.

The above interplay of attributes, which affects employees' self-esteem at Egerton

University, can be represented diagrammatically as follows: -

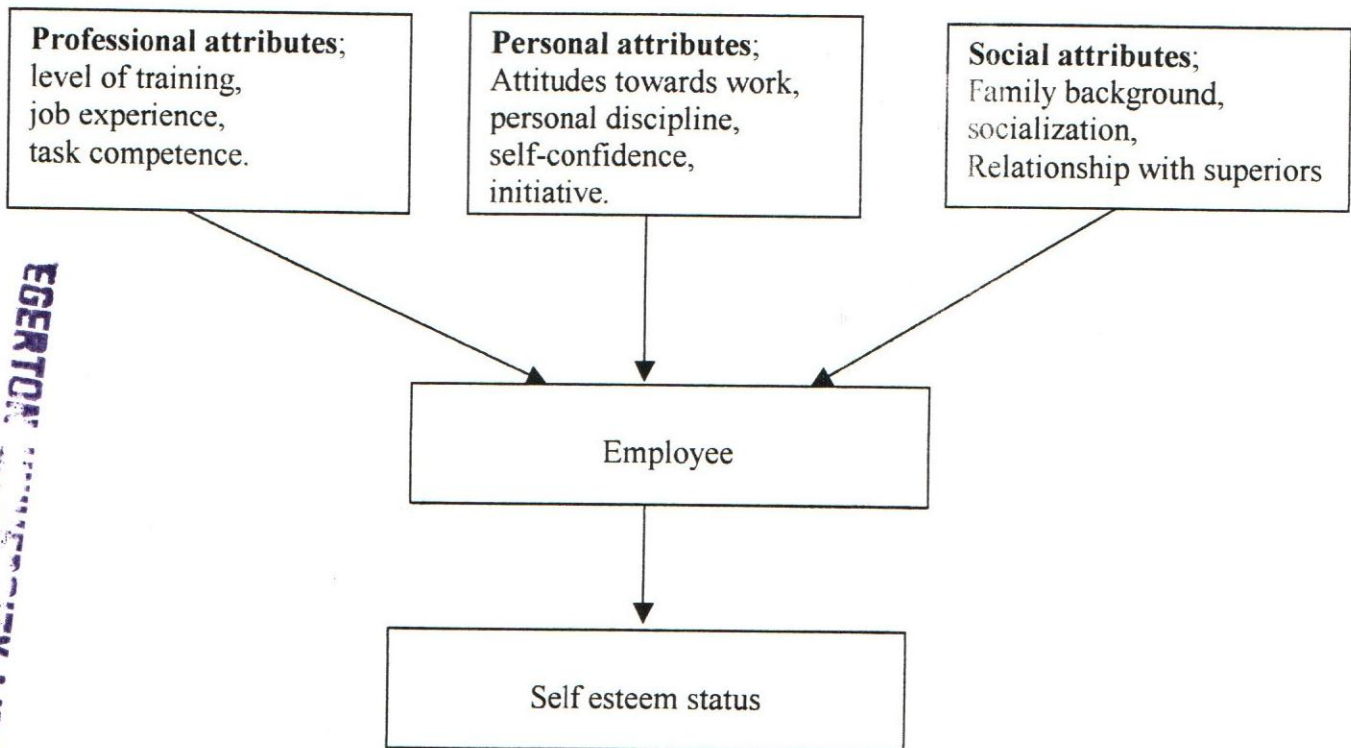


Fig 2.1. Attributes that determine self esteem status of an employee.

The factors listed above come into play within the employee's life impacting on his/her self-esteem either positively or negatively. The status of the self-esteem cultivated is subsequently manifested in the way the employee performs his/her tasks and socializes with others at the place of work.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The research design, which was used for this study was ex post facto since there was no treatment given to the respondents prior to the interview. This study was a descriptive survey aimed at establishing the self-esteem status of employees at Egerton University and its effects on their interpersonal relationship. It also sought to explore the level of interaction among the employees in various cadre of job grades.

3.2 Location of the study

This study was conducted at Njoro campus of Egerton University. The location was chosen because it is the largest among the campuses of the University. Thus it has more members of staff than other campuses hence the ability to offer a good representative sample.

3.3 Population

The study targeted the 2,603 employees from 42 departments of Egerton University, Njoro Campus.

There are two major classification of the employees at the University namely; teaching and non-teaching staff. Senior Staff, who are mainly in teaching departments, consist of 604 male and 429 female employees while middle and junior staff who consist of 912 male and 658 female employees are distributed to both teaching and non-teaching departments. The summary is shown in the table below.

Table 3.1 Population distribution by gender.

Position (Grade)	GENDER		
	Male	Female	Total
Senior Staff (Lecture Grade and Above)	604	429	1033
Middle Level Staff (Grade A- F)	511	342	853
Junior Staff (Grade I- IV)	401	316	717
TOTAL	1516	1087	2603

Source: Staff register, Personnel Department Egerton University (2003).

3.4 Sampling

The sample size was derived using the formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan in (1970) as quoted by Kathuri and Pals (1993). Using the formula, the sample size was determined to be 1204 respondents. Due to the nature of the study, the number of respondents was broken down proportionately thus giving a figure of 335 respondents. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents for the interview. This sample (335 respondents) was considered for interview although only 305 of them responded to questionnaire administration positively while 30 of them did not fill out their questionnaires. To account for homogeneity the employees were stratified into junior staff, middle level staff and senior staff. Under the above stratification, the staff members were further classified by gender. The table below shows the sample size distribution.

Table: 3.2 Sample size distribution.

GENDER				Total	
Male		Female			
Actual	Proportion	Actual	Proportion	Actual	Proportion
234	65	201	56	435	121
217	60	181	50	398	110
196	55	175	49	371	104
647	180	557	155	1204	335

3.5 Instrumentation

A questionnaire with three sections was prepared and used to collect information from the respondents. The items in section A were used to assess the self-esteem status of the respondents which was classified as high or low level. The items in Section B were used to determine the personality type of respondents while those of section C were used in establishing the level of interaction in the University.

3.6 Data collection

The researcher organized for appointments and visited respondents at their convenience in offices. He administered the questionnaire and clarified issues or queries raised by respondents during the interview.

3.7 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, mainly percentages were used to analyze the data

Computer programme known as Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was engaged to generate analyzed data online.

3.3 Summary of data analysis.

	Research Question	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Statistics
1.	What is the self-esteem status of the employees at Egerton University?	Employees	Self-esteem status	Percentage
2.	Does the job position (grade) influence the level of self-esteem of the employees at Egerton University?	An employee's position (grade)	Self-esteem level	Percentage
3.	How does self-esteem affect the process of interaction among employees of Egerton University?	Personality type	Self-esteem Level	Percentage Frequency
4.	What is the level of interaction between the three cadres of employees at Egerton University?	Cadre of employees	Level of interaction	Percentage

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of the research findings and their interpretation. It further deals with answering of various research questions, which were formulated, for the study. The presentation of results follows the same numerical order in which the four questions area arranged.

4.2 Results of research question No 1: What is the self-esteem status of employees at Egerton University?

Results

The table below shows the classification by gender of the 305 respondents.

Table 4.1 Classification of Employees by gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	164	53.8
Female	141	46.2
Total	305	100

From table 4.1 above, out of the total 305 respondents, 98 are from grade i – iv, 122 from grade A – F, 84 from Lecturer grade and above while one of them did not indicate his / her grade.

The following table further shows how the self-esteem levels vary among the interviewed employees as rated in the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale. According to the scale, respondents who obtained between 1 – 15 scores are classified as having low self-esteem while those scoring between 16 – 30 are classified as having high self-esteem.

Table 4.2 Scores on Rosenberg Scale

Score	Frequency	Percentage
12	1	0.3
17	6	2.0
18	8	2.6
19	3	1.0
20	14	4.6
21	22	7.2
22	53	17.4
23	30	9.8
24	41	13.4
25	29	9.5
26	22	7.2
27	21	6.9
28	15	4.9
29	18	5.9
30	22	7.2
Total	305	100

KEY

SCORES

1 – 15 – low Self Esteem

16 – 30 – High Self Esteem

Discussion

From table 4.2 above, it is clear that out of 305 employees, only one person who represents 0.3% has low self-esteem while 304 of them representing 99.7% have high self-esteem. This being the case therefore, it is evidently clear that majority of the employees of Egerton University possess high self-esteem. Thus the self-esteem status does not vary significantly from one employee to another at Egerton University, as most of them fall in one category of having high self-esteem status.

4.3 Results of research question No.2: Does the job position (grade) influence the level of self-esteem of employees of the university?

Results

To answer the question, a cross tabulation between job position (grade) and the self-esteem level of employees in various grades was carried out.

The table below shows the relationship between various grades and the self-esteem levels of the employees in those stated grades.

Table 4.3. Self-esteem level versus grade cross-tabulation.

Self-esteem Level	Grade				Total
	I - IV	A - F	Lecturer Level & Above	Unspecified Grade	
High	98	121	84	1	304
Low	0	1	0	0	1
Total	98	122	84	1	305

Table 4.3 indicates that across the grades the 304 employees who were interviewed proved to have high levels of self-esteem with only one having low self-esteem.

Out of 304 employees with high self-esteem 98 of them fall under grade i – iv (Junior staff), 121 under grade A- F (Middle Level staff), 84 from lecturer level (senior staff) while one of them had unspecified grade.

Discussion

The study revealed that majority of employees with high self-esteem falls under middle level staff, followed by those in junior positions and then those in senior positions respectively.

Surprisingly, the one employee who proved to have low self-esteem is in middle level of staff, which has the bulky of people having a high self-esteem in the university.

This implies that the job position does not have significant influence on the self-esteem status of the employees.

4.4 Results of research question No. 3; How does self-esteem affect the process of interaction among employees of Egerton University?

This question aimed at finding out whether the self-esteem status has any influence in the way employees interact with each other. Specifically the question intended to establish whether

self-esteem has anything to do with the personality type adopted by individual employees, which is crucial in determining the level at which the individual interacts and socializes with others. To achieve this, SerebriaKoff personality test was administered. According to this test whose scale ranges between 0-20, whoever scores between 0-5 is classified as introvert, 5-15 as ambivert and 15-20 as extrovert.

The table below shows how the respondents scored in the test administered.

Table 4.4. Serebriakoff Personality type scale scores.

Score	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	0.3
3	10	3.3
4	4	1.3
5	18	5.9
6	9	3.0
7	19	6.2
8	22	7.
9	48	15.7
10	41	13.4
11	52	17.0
12	20	6.6
13	39	12.8
14	20	6.6
19	1	0.3
Missing Score	1	0.3
Total	305	100

Results

The table below shows the summary of personality types found at Egerton University as rated in SerebriaKoff personality test scale.

Table 4.5. Personality types at Egerton University.

Personality Type	Frequency	Percentage
Extrovert	86	28.2
Ambivert	142	46.6
Introvert	76	24.9
Unspecified	1	0.3
Total	305	100

The table above shows that the majority of employees at Egerton University are ambiverts, while extroverts and introverts are separated by a very small margin (3.3%). This scenario is critical in determining how the employees interact with each other.

The study established that the majority (99.7%) of employees at Egerton University have high self-esteem. The results of the table 4.4 above, indicates that almost half (46.6%) of the employees are at the middle of extreme levels of personality types in the society.

Discussion

In terms of socialization, extroverts socialize more, followed by ambiverts and introverts who are less outgoing. If the number of introverts were higher vis-à-vis the number of extroverts and ambiverts the level of interaction (socialization) would be expected to be low among the employees. The case being as it is, self-esteem has been found to have a considerable effect on the process of interaction among employees of Egerton University since both self-esteem and interaction level appear to be considerably high among the employees at Egerton University.

4.5 Results of research question No. 4; what is the level of interaction between the three cadres of employees at Egerton University?

This question sought to establish whether there is a healthy interaction between employees regardless of their positions.

Results

The following table shows the interaction status among employees.

Table 4.6. Interaction with Senior Staff.

Level of Interaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	121	39.7
Often	91	29.8
Rarely	93	30.5
Total	305	100

Table 4.7 Interaction with Middle Level staff.

Level of Interaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	151	49.5
Often	150	49.2
Rarely	4	1.3
Total	305	100

Table 4.8 Interaction with Junior Staff

Level of Interaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	126	41.3
Often	50	16.4
Rarely	129	42.3
Total	305	100

The results of table 4.6 clearly show that the interaction level of employees with senior staff is fairly low. This is because the gap between those who interact with senior staff very oftenly (39.7%) and those who rarely interact with them (30.5%) is very narrow with only a difference of 9.2%.

Discussion

The interaction level of employees with middle level staff is very high. Considering the results in table 4.7, it is evident that 49.5% of employees interact oftenly. Only a negligible percentage (1.3 %) of the employees rarely interact.

A fairly high percentage of employees (42.3%) interact rarely with junior staff. However a substantial percentage of employees (41.3%), though not the majority, interact very oftenly with them.

Thus the overall interaction level with junior staff in the university can justifiably be classified as being moderately low. Perhaps the low level of interaction in this case can be attributed to large number of introverts in the university. All in all the interaction level among the employees of the university need to be improved.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was a survey aimed at establishing the self-esteem status and its impact on interpersonal relationship among the employees at Egerton University. It also endeavored to find out how the employees interact with each other in course of their duty.

The study adopted an ex post facto design as no treatment was effected to the respondents prior to the interview. It covered Njoro Campus of Egerton University where 305 employees from the 42 departments were interviewed. The results of the study will go a long way in assisting the University in making policy decision on staff welfare and support programme for enhanced productivity.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the results of the study outlined in the previous chapter.

- (i) A strong majority of employees at Egerton University possess high self-esteem and only a small percentage has low self-esteem.
- (ii) The grade or job position has been found to have no significant influence on the self-esteem status of employees.
- (iii) Generally, the study has shown that the interaction level among the employees at the university is high. Specifically however, the interaction among the employees at senior level (lecturer level and above) and junior level (grade i-iv) is fairly low with considerably high percentage of employees who rarely interact.
- (iv) Employees at the middle level of the university administrative hierarchy (grade A-F) were found to have high degree of interaction. Perhaps it is due to their official proximity to both their senior and junior colleagues.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the research findings stipulated in the previous chapter, the following recommendations have been suggested.

- (i) The university should provide the resources and on job training required to maintain the current status of self-esteem among the employees.
- (ii) Since most employees were found to be slightly above the marginal line between low and high self-esteem, the university management should consider establishing a staff support centre and equip it with resources and trained personnel in counseling.
- (iii) Common rooms should be established where employees can get an opportunity to interact freely during free time for the purposes of sharing experiences and socialization.
- (iv) Frequent opportunities for interaction such as all inclusive departmental get together parties, annual university parties and cocktails should be created to enable all the employees of the university to informally intermingle, interact and share ideas.
- (v) Organized in service training should be conducted to equip members of staff with life coping and social skills in order to develop a disciplined work force devoid of anti social behavior and delinquency.
- (vi) There should be a deliberate move to impart attitudinal change in order to cultivate and enhance mutual respect, where employees would respect each other as human beings and colleagues and yet observing official etiquettes.
- (vii) The university should conduct frequent professional staff performance appraisals with a view to rewarding best performing employees and strengthening the weaker ones through appropriate training. This will ensure that the self-esteem of employees remains at good levels.
- (viii) The university should remunerate and motivate its employees accordingly so that they can measure to the standards of their counterparts both nationally and internationally.

- (ix) Finally the researcher recommends that further studies be conducted on self-esteem and its impact on staff performance at Egerton University.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

*This questionnaire is meant for research purpose.
Please fill in as honestly as possible*

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Grade Position: Grade I-IV Grade A-F Lecturer Level & Above

SECTION A

3. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you **strongly agree**, circle **SA**. If you **agree** with the statement, circle **A**. If you **disagree**, circle **D**. If you **strongly disagree** circle **SD**.

		1. STRONGLY AGREE	2. AGREE	3. DISAGREE	4. STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude towards myself	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times I think I am no good at all	SA	A	D	SD

SECTION B

4. Please answer the questions below, quickly and spontaneously. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions. Circle your answer as A or B
- i) Would you prefer to be a research scientist in lab (A) or Senator (B)? A or B
 - ii) Do you feel that many professions or occupations that are considered honest do more harm to the country (A) than good (B)? A or B
 - iii) Which is more important in literary critic, to be tolerant and encouraging (A) or discriminating (B)? A or B
 - iv) If you had the choice of working as a receptionist (B) or being your own boss (A), which would you choose? A or B
 - v) Should a doctor put personal feelings aside while determining the treatment of patients (A), or should feelings be one of his or her main guides (B)? A or B
 - vi) Do you find it easy (B) or hard (A) to adapt your behavior according to the company you are in? A or B
 - vii) While vacation do you prefer to spend most of your time reading (A) or meeting people (B)? A or B
 - viii) Would being a hermit come easily (A) or with difficulty to you (B)? A or B
 - ix) Would you prefer to marry a person who is (A) a thoughtful companion or (B) very sociable? A or B
 - x) Are most people likely (B) or unlikely (A) to be trustworthy? A or B
 - xi) Do you like (A) or dislike (B) throwing parties? A or B
 - xii) Would you prefer to be a traveling salesperson (B) or a book-keeper in an office (A) A or B
 - xiii) Would you describe yourself as an optimist (B) or a pessimist (A)? A or B
 - xiv) Would you prefer to be high civil servant (A) or a senator (B)? A or B
 - xv) Do you usually enjoy (B) or not enjoy (A) big, noisy parties? A or B
 - xvi) Would you find it difficult (A) or easy (B) to make public a speech? A or B
 - xvii) In a dramatic production, would you be happier working backstage (A) or as a leading actor (B)? A or B
 - xix) Are you very quick (B) or rather slow (A) at making a witty reply in most conversations? A or B

Now count your A's and B's. Write down your score.

Total score: A _____ B _____

SECTION C

Please indicate in the table below the frequency of your interaction with your fellow colleagues at the University.

GRADE	LEVEL OF INTERACTION		
	Very Often	Often	Rarely
Lecturer grade and above (senior staff)			
Grade A – F (middle level staff)			
Grade I – IV (Junior Staff)			

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