Original Research Article

Strategies for Increasing Students' Self-motivation

ABSTRACT

Aim: To identify the strategies for increasing self-motivation for academic improvement among secondary school students in Kisumu County, Kenya

Sample: The study population was 113,314 students enrolled in secondary schools in Kisumu County. Convenient sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 224 students.

Study design: The study employed phenomenological design in the qualitative approach.

Place and Duration of Study: The place of the study was Kisumu County, Kenya, between September and October 2017.

Methodology: Focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data. Focus group discussion guide was piloted with students who did not participate in the study to establish validity and reliability. Data was collected verbally, transcribed verbatim, and summarized using thematic analysis to yield significant themes.

Results: The study revealed that students expected that when they are facilitated to have high levels of self-discipline, own and plan their own work and time with guidance and support from fellow students, parents and teachers then they would develop high levels of self-motivation.

Conclusions: Promoting self-discipline, goal orientation, integrated extrinsic motivation, time management and autonomy-supportive teaching and learning environment are strategies that might be effective strategies in increasing self-motivation.

Keywords: strategies; motivation; self-discipline; goals; extrinsic; time management; autonomy-support

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The present research focused on students' motivation to learn by investigating the strategies that might be used to enhance students' self-motivation. This was seen to be important because students' self-motivation affects students' performance. Therefore, enhancing students' self-motivation might improve students' academic performance in national examinations.

Motivation is a significant psychological concept in education because it drives and strengthens the students to learn and improve in their academic performance because of the connection with daily living [1, 2, 3, 4]. Motivation is essential to learning since some sort of motivation underlines everything students do, including students' motivation complete tasks that build knowledge [3]. Therefore, lack of motivation in students to learn was identified as a pressing educational problem by [5].

Students' self-motivation to learn is of great importance today probably more than ever before. One authority on motivating students, [6], starts the book *"Motivating students to learn*" with these alarming words,

> "School is inherently boring and frustrating. We require students to come, then try to teach them stuff that they do not see a need for and do not find meaningful. There is little support for academic achievement in the peer culture, and frequently in the home as well. A few students may be enthusiastic about learning, but most of them require the grading system and the carrots and sticks that we connect to it to pressure them to do at least enough to get by."

These words are an indictment on the level of self-motivation among students to learn and they are an indication of the challenge faced by practitioners in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, [7] found out that self-motivation is necessary among students because many of the tasks that educators want their students to perform are not inherently interesting or enjoyable. Therefore, the strategies for motivation should be wedded into the everyday teaching and learning process.

Motivation is a construct that explains goal-directed behavioral force to face tough and challenging circumstances characterized by initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior [5, 8]. Consequently, [9] posit that to be motivated means to be moved to do something, which in the case of the present study is to learn. Motives, on the other hand, are hypothetical constructs used to explain why people are doing what they are doing [6].

The opposite of motivation is amotivation, which was defined by [10] as the absence of intrinsic or extrinsic incentives for behavior and growth. An amotivated student's behavior lacks intentionality and personal causation because they do not value the behavior, do not feel competent at the behavior and not believing the behavior will yield the desired outcome [7; 11].

The observation that children are very motivated to learn when they are young but this motivation seems to dissipate as they go up the grades was confirmed in a study in Brazil by [5]. They presented an assessment of the quality of motivation of elementary school students using a questionnaire. The results revealed that lack of motivation increased as students advanced in grades. This makes one wonder what happens to the learners' self-concept as they proceed up the grades that make them lose self-motivation.

Several studies have considered the causes and effects of motivation [8, 10, 12, 13]. In China, [12] examined the relationship between students' academic self-concept and motivation in foreign language learning drawing samples from university and found that academic self-concept was positively and significantly correlated with learning motivation. Furthermore, from a study in Canada, [10] found that motivation precedes and predicts academic behavior and therefore, motivational orientation is a reliable and accurate predictor of academic success. In addition, a review of the motivation theories in learning by [8] found out that motivation and learning process are connected for educational success. Subsequently, [13] explored the effects of achievement motivation on academic achievement in the USA and reported positive correlations between achievement motivation and academic performance. However, these studies did not go ahead to identify how students' motivation might be increased.

The onus of increasing students' motivation to learn, however, falls squarely on teachers and educators. [9] in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) categorized motivation into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. They defined intrinsic motivation as referring to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable; and extrinsic motivation as referring to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. Therefore, [1] in Portugal investigated the relationship between students' motivation and perceived learning and found that intrinsic motivation positively and significantly influences perceived learning. In addition, [2] investigated extrinsic motivation in South Africa and identified verbal reinforcement, goal orientation, time management and reflective practice as effective strategies for increasing motivation among students.

Consequently, although teachers sometimes feel that they have no control over students' attitudes about learning, they actually do have an influence because generally students learn if their teachers expect and motivate them to learn [14]. Motivation to learn, therefore according to [15], can be increased by strategies that increase students' awareness of self-directed learning. Nevertheless, do teachers have the right ideas on the strategies that can effectively motivate the students?

Strategies are the methods used to achieve goals and thus to satisfy motives, such as the desire to learn [6]. That was the reason for the study by [16] in Saudi Arabia that examined teacher and student views about motivational strategies. The results indicated there was a discrepancy in the beliefs of teachers and students about how the students should be motivated. Teachers preferred strategies that help students to achieve desired academic outcomes while students preferred strategies that zeroed in on the learning process and promoted the social aspects of learning, such as participation and interaction.

Nevertheless, in Kenya, few studies have investigated student motivation and academic performance and little research has been on strategies to increase students' motivation. Consequently, [17] sought to determine if student motivation has any influence on academic performance in public secondary

schools in Nairobi, Kenya. The study revealed that self-motivation among students is a major factor in academic performance. In addition, the study identified giving of prizes to students as the most effective motivational technique to the students. However, the study did not identify general strategies that might be used to increase students' self-motivation to learn and thereby improve their academic performance. There was therefore need for the current study to identify the strategies for increasing self-motivation among secondary school students in Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.2 Problem Statement

One of the indicators of low student self-motivation is school dropout rates [18, 19]. Kisumu County has a secondary school a dropout rate of 33.6%, which is above the national average [20]. Consequently, only 25% of Kisumu County residents have a secondary level of education or above [20]. This means that the high dropout rates are excluding three out of four members of the county from secondary school education. However, education improves people's welfare because inequality declines as the average level of educational attainment increases, with secondary education producing the greatest benefits [20]. This might be the reason why those working for pay with a secondary level of education or above are only 32% of in Kisumu County, which is 17 points below the 49% found in Nairobi County, Kenya. Furthermore, the low employment rate from school dropout due to low self-motivation might contribute to the high poverty levels in Kisumu County, which is 47.8% [21]. For these reasons, self-motivation to learn among students is an important need with serious consequences for Kisumu County, Kenya. Hence, there was need for the present study on strategies of increasing the self-motivation among students in Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.3 Relevance of Study

The findings of the present study might be used to improve the academic performance of students because self-motivation is positively associated with academic performance [13, 10]. This makes the findings of the current study are of importance to teachers and other stakeholders in education.

In addition, these strategies might be helpful in preventing school dropout because self-motivation is negatively associated with dropout rates [18, 19]. Moreover, the findings might be useful in inculcating lifelong learning in the recipients because lifelong learning is positively associated with self-motivation [22].

Moreover, [9] argue that motivation is highly valued because of its consequences and is of preeminent concern to managers, teachers, religious leaders, health care providers, and parents. Therefore, the findings of the present study might be of benefit to not only teachers but also parents and education managers.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate self-motivation for improvement in academic performance among secondary school students. The objective of the study was to identify the strategies for increasing self-motivation among secondary school students in Kisumu County, Kenya

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of [9] guided the present study. Self-determination theory (SDT) is a theory of human motivation that focuses on types of motivation and pays attention to autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and amotivation as predictors of performance [23]. SDT posits that people can be motivated or amotivated due to the social conditions around them. Following from that premise, SDT-guided research focuses on facilitating self-motivation.

In addition, [9] posit that the arena of SDT is the investigation of the conditions that foster the positive processes of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. Consequently, the present study focused on strategies for increasing self-motivation among students, which according to [9] are factors that enhance intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being.

The SDT produced the concepts of self-regulation, causality orientation, types of motivation and psychological needs. From these concepts the present study explored time management and self-discipline from self-regulation, goal orientation from causality orientation, extrinsic motivation from types of motivation and autonomy-supportive teaching and learning from psychological needs.

3.2 Literature Review

The literature review for the present study was organized according to the themes that emerged from data analysis. In India, [24] investigated the relationship between teacher motivation and students' academic achievement at secondary school level. Survey technique was used to collect data through a questionnaire and analyzed using inferential statistics, which revealed that intrinsic motivation of teachers was having strong correlation with academic achievement of the students. Therefore, [24] recommended that in-service teacher training programs can be used to enhance teachers intrinsic motivation for the improvement of students' academic performance. However, the study was a quantitative study that only collected quantitative data that was limited in that the researchers could not delve in-depth into the meanings and feelings of the respondents. The present study filled this gap by using qualitative methods to collect data, which captured the meanings and feelings of the respondents.

Subsequently, [25] conducted an analysis of determinants and factors motivating students in higher education in Morocco with university students. The study pointed out the importance of self-motivation among the students by showing that motivation during orientation and learning process influenced positively the academic performance of learners. However, the study did not identify the strategies that might be used to increase self-motivation among the students.

3.2.1 Self-Discipline

A theme that emerged on how to increase self-motivation among students was the promotion and teaching of self-discipline among students. According to [26], self-control is the capacity to bring one's actions into line with one's self as it is embodied in what one takes oneself to have most reason to do. Therefore, in the current study, self-discipline is the capacity to control one's thoughts, speech and deeds to attain a desired achievement. The importance of self-discipline was captured by [27] who wrote a paper that showed that self-discipline in daily routine knowledge acquisition processes was key in improving learning outcomes.

SDT is an approach to human motivation that highlights humans' inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation [23]. Therefore, the present study drew self-discipline from the concept of self-regulation from SDT. Since, SDT highlights the importance of self-regulation, the present study explored self-discipline as a strategy for increasing students' self-motivation.

According to [28] discipline minimally influences self-motivation. The study by [28] investigated motivation, discipline and employee performance in Indonesia. The results showed a minimal influence of motivation and discipline that affect the performance. However, the study was conducted with employees and not students, as was the case in the present study. Therefore, [29] investigated the relationship of self-control, motivation and academic performance in Germany. Data was collected from a sample of tenth graders using a questionnaire. Results of regression analyses showed that self-control was a significant predictor of academic performance. However, the study did not consider the effect that self-discipline might have on students' motivation. Therefore, the present study filled this gap by investigating the effect of self-discipline on students' levels of self-motivation.

In addition, although [30] in USA posited that self-regulation of effort is a significant predictor of academic performance, the study only made finding that that academic self-discipline mediated the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance. Hence, the study did not examine the relationship between self-discipline and academic performance directly unlike in the present study. Moreover, [31] compared students' self-discipline and self-regulation measures and their prediction of academic achievement using a multi-source, multi-measure research design involving high school students and their teachers in USA. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that students' self-regulation was more predictive of students' academic performance than students' self-discipline. However, [32] who also studied self-control and academic performance in a university

set-up in the USA had contrary findings to [31]. Moreover, [32] found out that self-control affects academic performance among the university students.

The findings of [32] were further supported by those of [33] who investigated self-control and academic performance in engineering among college students in the USA. The results showed that self-control predicted the academic performance of students. However, these studies were done with university students whose levels of education are higher than those of students found in Kenyan secondary schools. Consequently, [34] conducted a longitudinal study with eighth-grade students on self-discipline measured by questionnaires in USA. The study revealed that self-discipline accounted for more than twice as much variance as Intelligence Quotient in academic performance. Nevertheless, the [34] study did not seek to identify the promotion of self-discipline as a means of increasing self-motivation among students. The present study filled these gaps in literature by examining strategies for increasing self-motivation among students in secondary schools.

On the other hand, [35] and [36] reported contrary findings in the relationship between self-discipline and academic performance. In Taiwan [36] sought to determine the effects of self-control and intelligence quotient on students' academic achievement and found that intelligence quotient predicted students' academic performance in the short term but not in the long term. This left the relationship between self-discipline and academic performance undetermined. Subsequently, [35] in Iran investigated the relationship between self-control and academic performance and found a negative correlation between self-control and academic achievement. However, the finding of [36] fell between those of [35] and [36]. In Germany [37] conducted a study of students and found that there were no effects of academic discipline on achievement over time. Therefore, whereas [36] found conflicting effect of self-discipline on academic performance between short-term and long-term durations, [36] found no effects of self-discipline on academic performance and [35] found negative correlation between self-discipline and academic performance. Nevertheless, none of these studies considered the effect of self-discipline on self-motivation and yet academic performance is a product of self-motivation. In addition, these studies were conducted in Asia and Europe with different cultural settings from African countries such as Kenya.

Therefore, [38] sought to determine the level of discipline and extent of impact of discipline on academic performance among grade eight in a descriptive study in Muhoroni Sub-County in Kisumu County, Kenya. Data analysis revealed that discipline related positively with, and accounted for 23% of variance in the pupils' academic performance. Therefore, the study recommended enhancement of discipline among the pupils for improvement of their academic performance. However, [38] did not examine the effect of self-discipline on students' self-motivation. The present study filled this gap in literature by seeking to elucidate the effect of self-discipline on self-motivation.

3.2.2 Goal Orientation

Goals are valued outcomes that people hope to attain when they engage in certain behaviors [11]. Furthermore, [23] posits that to guide their activities, people use long-term goals, which might be intrinsic aspirations such as personal development and extrinsic aspirations such as wealth and fame. This result in causality orientation to the way people orient themselves to their environment for regulation of behavior, and thus be self-determined to achieve what they believe they need [23]. Consequently, the present study explored goal orientation as a strategy of increasing self-motivation in students.

Goals are the drivers of behavior and the immediate objectives of particular sequences of behavior [6, 39]. Consequently, according to [2], motivation might be indicated by personal goal setting. Goal-orientation is therefore behavior that is energized by values, which refers to the desirability of the goal to the individual and expectancies, and beliefs about the attainability of goals [39]. According to [39], all else held equal, an individual will be more persistent in pursuing a goal when that goal is greatly valued and when the individual expects to be successful in attaining the goal. The persistence that is generated by goal orientation might be indicative of the relationship between goal orientation and self-motivation.

In addition, [40] identified the technique of goal-setting as a way of enhancing motivation in learners because higher standards tend to lead to higher performance. However, learner-set goals have a tendency to become lower, hence, teacher's role in helping learners maintain high standards by

monitoring the goals set and reinforcing high standards [40]. Therefore, [40] posited that learners might be taught to be self-motivated to learn through the practice of goal setting.

Subsequently, [41] investigated goal orientation and goal setting in South Korea by integrating four-factor goal orientation theory with goal setting theory and found that goals positively influenced performance. However, the study did not examine the influence of mastery and performance goals on academic performance. In addition, [42] examined the relationship between student goal orientation and academic achievement in Germany. Data collected from college students was analyzed to reveal that students pursuing both mastery and performance goals were more motivated and had higher academic performance than students who pursue a mastery orientation alone.

However, [43] argued that it was mastery goals, and not both mastery and performance goals, that produced self-motivation in students. In a paper, [43] discussed mastery and performance goals in a paper on motivation in education. The paper expounded that mastery goals were more likely to result in persistence over time and a focus on the intrinsic value of learning because mastery goals focused on individual improvement and the belief that increased effort is related to increased competency. On the other hand, competition and rewards foster a performance goal orientation in which ability and self-worth are linked in students' minds hence students avoid the possibility of failure by not attempting challenging tasks [43]. Nevertheless, [41], [42] and [43] did not examine the effect that goal orientation had on students' self-motivation to learn. The present study filled this gap in literature by seeking to elucidate whether goal orientation among students might increase their self-motivation to learn and improve in academic performance.

3.2.3 Extrinsic Motivation

In SDT, [7] posited that extrinsic motivation varies in its relative autonomy and thus can reflect either external control or true self-regulation. According to [7] and [23], autonomous motivation comprises of intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation such as introjection, identification and integration. Furthermore, [9] posited that integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. They argue that integration occurs when identified regulations are assimilated through evaluation and brought into congruence with one's inner values and needs.

Consequently, [14] reported that intrinsically motivated students earn higher grades and employ strategies that demand more effort than extrinsically motivated students do. Moreover, they are more likely to persist with and complete assigned tasks, retain information and concepts longer, and are more likely to be lifelong learners than extrinsically motivated learners are. In a word, intrinsically motivated students are expected to be having more self-motivation than extrinsically motivated students are. In New Zealand, [44] used a novel multidimensional instrument to investigate the relationship between motivation and academic achievement. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences for motivation and achievement. However, the study did not consider the effect of type of motivation on academic performance. Subsequently, [45] and [46] studied the influence of type of motivation on academic achievement. In the USA, [45] sought to determine whether type of motivation was predictive of how a student would perform in an exam and found that student performance in the exam was not significantly related with an intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, [46] studied type of motivation, student motivation, and achievement and found that students with intrinsic motivation achieved better academically, and were more persistent in their studies than students with extrinsic motivation did.

Nevertheless, the studies by [44], [45] and [46] were quantitative in nature and therefore could not probe the responses for deeper meanings, which is only possible with a qualitative study. Therefore, [47] in Australia conducted a qualitative case study on how motivation influences student engagement and found that intrinsic motivation assisted authentic student engagement in learning, and that extrinsic motivation served to develop ritual engagement for learning. However, the study by [47] did not consider whether teaching and training students to have any type of motivation of control would result in a higher level of self-motivation. The present study filled these gaps in literature by using the qualitative approach that captured the in-depth meanings of the respondents to investigate the relationship between type of motivation and self-motivation among students.

3.2.4 Time Management

SDT is an approach to human motivation that uses an organismic metatheory to emphasize humans' inner resources for behavioral self-regulation [23]. Since, SDT underlines the importance of self-regulation, the present study explored time management as a strategy within self-regulation for increasing students' self-motivation.

Time management is a set of principles, practices, skills, tools, and systems used to get more value out of a given amount of time with the aim of improving the quality of achieving a set goal [48]. Therefore, [49] posit that time management skills are essential for students' success and development of academic competence. Consequently, [50] investigated the relationship between various study skills and academic performance of university students in Iran. Data analysis revealed that the study skills scores for students with high academic performance were statistically higher than that of those students with low academic performance in time management and motivation. This finding indicated that time management influences students' academic performance but did not consider the self-motivation that makes students' to manage their time well. Nevertheless, when [51] in USA and [52] in Malaysia investigated motivation and time management they found that motivation and time management are significant predictors of academic success and performance respectively.

However, the studies by [50], [51] and [52] did not investigate the relationship of time management and self-motivation although time management affects performance. For that reason, [53] studied the impact of time management on performance among faculty members of universities India. Data was collected using closed-ended questionnaires from faculty members and students and analyzed inferentially to reveal that time management increases motivation. In addition, [54] studied the impact of time management on academic performance among college students in the USA and found out that there was a significant and positive correlation between time management and academic performance of the students. Nevertheless, the studies by [53] and [54] were on time management and performance, and not time management and motivation. Therefore, [49] sought to determine the relationship between time management skills and academic motivation of students in Iran. Data was collected using questionnaires from a sample that was selected using random stratified sampling and analyzed inferentially. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the students' time management scores and academic motivation scores. Therefore, the study concluded that it is necessary to plan for improving time management skills in order to enhance academic motivation among students.

The studies by [49], [53] and [54], though, were limited in that they were purely quantitative studies that could not capture the feelings and meanings of respondents to flesh up the findings. Consequently, [55] employed the qualitative approach to investigate the relationship between time management and motivation among teacher educators in institutions of higher learning in Pakistan. Data were collected using interview schedules and analyzed using narrative analysis to reveal that improvement in the skills of time management among teacher educators led to an increase in motivation. However, the study was conducted using students in institutions of higher learning whose time management skills might be different from those of secondary school students. Therefore, [29] investigated the relationship of time management and motivation with academic performance in Germany using tenth graders and found that time management characterized with procrastination was negatively related to school grades.

On the other hand, [56] explored how time management and the perception of control over time contribute to academic success of students in colleges in USA. The paper reviewed extant literature that suggested that college success does not rely solely on students' time management behavior, but more on their perception of control over time. This study raised the issue of the difference between time management and perception of control over time because a person who manages their time might be expected to have a perception that they are in control over their time.

However, several studies reported that time management affected academic performance among students and reported conflicting findings [57, 58, 59, 60]. The research by [57] and [59] sought to determine the relationship between the time management skills and academic achievement of the students in Kuwait and Oman respectively using descriptive research and found out that time management was significantly correlated with students' academic performance. Contrary to these findings, [58] and [60] explored the relationship between time management skills and the academic achievement in empirical studies and found that there was no statistically significant relationship between time management skills and the academic achievement of students. However, these studies

were done in countries that are not in Africa with the continents unique sense of time. There was therefore need for a study to investigate the influence of time management on self-motivation in an African country such as Kenya.

Therefore, [61] investigated the relationship between time management and academic performance among orphaned students of Kenya. The sample was drawn using saturation sampling technique and data collected using questionnaires analyzed using inferential statistics to reveal a high positive correlation between time management and academic achievement. Nevertheless, the study did not consider the influence of students' time-management and their levels of self-motivation although self-motivation mediates the relationship between time management and academic achievement. There was therefore need for the present study to investigate whether time management might be used to increase students' levels of self-motivation.

3.2.5 Autonomy-Supportive Teaching and Learning Environment

Autonomy-supportive teaching is teaching that results in autonomous motivation of the students. SDT postulates that humans have three innate psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which when satisfied result in enhanced self-motivation [11, 23]. Autonomy-supportive teachers catalyze in their students greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and the desire for challenge [7]. Subsequently, the present study explored autonomy-supportive teaching as a strategy for increasing students' self-motivation.

According to [14], strategies for increasing students' motivation include promoting mastery learning, creating a school culture that emphasizes the importance of academic achievement, involving parents in efforts to increase student motivation and consistent communication of academic purposes and expectations [14]. These techniques are envisaged to give the student the autonomy to explore and the safety of support and guidance as the student explores their environment. However, the methods to use in autonomy-supportive teaching remained to be explored.

Therefore, [62] in the Netherlands presented tips on how to engage in autonomy-supportive teaching behaviors that stimulates motivation in students. The teaching tips they presented included nurturing students' needs with emotional support, guided active participation in class with optimal challenges, and use of empowering language [62]. However, these tips left out parents and friends of the student who might be necessary in autonomy-supportive learning. This was important because [10] had found that relatedness with teachers, parents, and friends to offer unique complementary contribution to the academic pursuits with parents having a more important influence on students' academic values than teachers or friends do. Effective teachers therefore, might be expected to use supportive autonomy techniques to generate self-motivation in their students.

In addition, [63] investigated second language learners' motivation and the ways in which the teachers supported the students' motivation in Thailand. Data was collected using questionnaires and observation schedules. The study findings showed that while autonomy-controlling strategies were commonly used, autonomy-support strategies were found only in highly motivated and high performing classrooms. The findings suggested the use of strategies that initialize and nurture students' internal motivation in order to enhance sustainable learning. However, the study was a purely quantitative one that did not probe the respondents meanings as is found in the present qualitative study.

This is what [64] found out, when reporting that motivating teachers use far more supportive motivational practices than non-motivating teachers who use a preponderance of practices that undermine student motivation. In the study, [64] presented motivation strategies for academic achievement as extrinsic rewards, cooperative learning, social interactions, student autonomy and choice, situational interest, goal setting, competition, relevancy, meaning-making and real world connections. This suggests that study techniques involving group work and peer teaching might be successful in increasing students' self-motivation. However, this was left unexplored and hence the present study filled that gap in literature.

4. MATERIAL AND METHODS

4.1 Research Design

This study used the phenomenological design within the qualitative approach. Phenomenological design, according to [65], is a flexible method that is adapted to be suitable in explicating the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative research relates to understanding aspects of social life and generates words as data for analysis [66].

The phenomenological design within the qualitative approach was appropriate for the present study because [11] posits that SDT is a theory of human motivation that examines a wide range of phenomena across gender, culture, age, and socioeconomic status. The present study therefore investigated the strategies for increasing students' self-motivation as a phenomenon that is explicated from the respondents using explanation of feelings and meanings as data.

4.2 Study Participants

The study participants were students in secondary school in Kisumu County, Kenya. The population of the study was 113,314 secondary school students. A sample of 224 students was drawn from the population using convenient sampling technique. The sample was fairly small in relation to the population because, according to [66], samples in qualitative studies are usually small and not necessarily representative of the broader population. The sample was then divided into four focus groups of 56 students each from which qualitative data was collected using a focus group discussion guide. Focus groups were used to collect data because teenagers find it easier to express themselves in groups [67].

4.3 Demographic Information

Demographics information in research is important because it might highlight salient differences in the responses and cause better understanding of the results [68]. The present study had a sample that included 112 girls and 112 boys with an age bracket from 17 to 20 years old. A majority of the students came from low-income socioeconomic homes found in the slums of Kisumu County.

4.4 Research Instrument

The data collection instrument was focus group discussion guide using the method of data collection called focus group discussion from a focus group. According to [69], focus group is a planned, facilitated discussion designed to obtain perceptions on an issue in a permissive, non-threatening environment [69]. Focus groups are good for generating creative ideas by allowing participants to question each other and to elaborate upon their answers in a spontaneous give and take social interaction [69].

The focus group guide used in the present study was piloted for trustworthiness using students who did not participate in the final study. On trustworthiness of qualitative, which corresponds to reliability and validity in quantitative data, [70] posited that trustworthiness of a qualitative data is important to evaluating the worth of the qualitative research. In addition, [70] identified the conditions for trustworthiness as involving establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the interview schedule items and resultant findings. Therefore, that was the purpose and achievement of the piloting of the focus group guide in the present study.

4.5 Data Collection Procedures

The purpose and objective of the study were communicated to the participants before the time for data collection. The Focus Group members' selection was on a voluntary basis with guidance from the researcher who was also the facilitator of the discussion. Each focus group chose a secretary who was writing down what the participants were saying in summarized form while the researcher taped the discussions verbatim.

4.6 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis according to the steps of thematic analysis, which are familiarization with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up [71].

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was analyzed according to the objective of the study. The study findings revealed that there were strategies that might be effective in increasing students' self-motivation.

5.1 Self-Discipline

The first thematic area to emerge in data analysis was that of self-discipline. The respondents reported that practice of self-discipline would result in the students having the self-motivation to achieve academic success. One respondent said, *"I would advise fellow students to accept correction, be focused, avoid laziness and stop indiscipline,"* as another reported, *"Students should know that discipline, determination, teamwork and prayer leads to success."*

The finding that self-discipline is perceived to be able to increase students' self-motivation was similar to the findings of [30], [31], [36] and [38] who reported a positive association between self-discipline and self-motivation as captured in academic performance. The finding of the present study was however opposed to those of [28] who reported that discipline minimally influences self-motivation, [35] who reported a negative relationship between self-control and academic performance and [37] who reported no effects between self-discipline and self-motivation.

The theoretical framework for the present study, SDT, has been presented as seeking to understand human motivation by underscoring humans' inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation [23]. Therefore, the finding of the present study that self-discipline, which is a form of self-regulation, might be used as a strategy for increasing students' self-motivation, agreed with this postulate of SDT.

5.2 Goal Orientation

The second thematic area to emerge was that of goal orientation. The respondents expressed the belief that if students have goal orientation in their academic lives then they would be self-motivated to achieve academic success. A respondent captured this when he said, *"They should avoid saying that will not pass exams, be persistent, have a dream, have a goal to achieve and be ambitious."* In addition, another student expressed herself about the goal orientation when she said, *"Students should have plan and goals, have targets, think about their future and think big."*

The finding of the present study that goal orientation might be used to increase students' self-motivation for academic achievement was similar to [39], [40], [41] and [42] who had found that all types of goal orientation resulted in higher academic performance mediated by self-motivation. The finding of the present study was however opposed to that of [43] who had reported that only mastery goals motivated academic achievement.

In SDT, which formed the theoretical framework for the present study, [23] have posited that people use long-term goals to guide their activities to achieve intrinsic aspirations and extrinsic aspirations in causality orientation. Therefore, the finding of the present study that use of goals that is the product of goal orientation might be effective in increasing students' self-motivation agrees with the postulate of SDT on causality orientation.

5.3 Extrinsic Motivation

The third theme to emerge was the efficacy of extrinsic motivation to produce self-motivation. The respondents felt that extrinsic motivation would successfully result in the learners being self-motivated to achieve academic success. Concerning those who needed self-motivation, a respondent said, *"They should be advised to acquire new method of learning"* before another added, *"They should go back to the study tips they used to use. The student should look where the rain started beating you (African Proverb meaning, Look for your solutions where your problems started)*."

A third respondent said, "The *teachers should increase pressure (pressure is euphemism among the students for punishment) on the person so that they perform better academically."* Moreover, another student said, *"The student should look for a new method of studying."*

The finding of the present study that extrinsic motivation might be effective in building the students' self-motivation was similar to the findings of [44] and [45]. These studies had suggested that extrinsic motivation was effective in increasing the self-motivation among students.

On the other hand, the finding of the present study was contrary to the findings of [14], [46] and [47]. These studies had reported that self-motivation increased with intrinsic motivation and not extrinsic motivation.

In the theoretical framework of the present study, [7] and [23] had posited that extrinsic motivation might be effective in increasing self-motivation because of the more autonomous aspects of extrinsic motivation such as introjection, identification and integration. These more autonomous types of extrinsic motivation, [9] further posited, were almost as effective as intrinsic motivation because the motivated persons assimilated new values through evaluation, and brought the values into congruence with their inner values and needs. This construct of integrated extrinsic motivation explains why students in the present study reported that extrinsic motivation might be used to increase their self-motivation, which is an intrinsic motivation.

5.4 Time Management

The fourth theme to emerge from the findings of the present study was that time management was effective in increasing students' self-motivation. On how to increase the self-motivation among the students, one of the students responded by saying*, "They should be time conscious, have personal time table that they actually use, make good use of their time and avoid procrastination."* Another responded by saying, *"They should spend more time studying and stop wasting time with betting, chating, storytelling and walking up and down".*

The finding that time management leads to increase in self-motivation to learn among students was similar to a preponderance of studies [49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 61]. These studies had all reported that time management increased academic performance, which in the present study is mediated by self-motivation.

The findings of the present study were however contrary to those of [56] and [57]. In addition, it was contrary to findings by [59]. These studies had all reported that there was no relationship between time management and academic achievement.

The theoretical framework of the present study, SDT, approaches human motivation using an organismic metatheory that emphasizes humans' inner resources for behavioral self-regulation [23]. Therefore, the present study, which investigated time management within self-regulation, concurred with the postulate of SDT when it found out that time management might be used to increase students' self-motivation.

5.5 Autonomy-Supportive Teaching and Learning Environment

The fifth theme to emerge from the present study was the use of autonomy-supportive environment in increasing students' self-motivation. Asked on how to increase students' self-motivation, some respondents reported that, *"The members of the senior classes should act as role models"* as another student said, *"They could consult their peers, stop discouraging one another and hold group discussions."* In addition, a respondent said, "*They should have fellow students helping them not to miss anything ('guardian angels'), have good friends who don't mislead them into maladaptive behaviors and have a study partner,"* as yet another student reported, *"They should practice peer teaching, read about success stories, socialize with top students*."

The finding of the present study that autonomy-supportive teaching might be effective in increasing students' self-motivation was similar to studies by [63] and [64]. The finding of the present study was also similar to findings of studies by [14] and [62].

The theoretical framework of the present study, SDT postulated that humans have three innate psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which when satisfied result in enhanced self-motivation [23, 11]. Accordingly, autonomy-supportive teachers catalyze in their students greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and the desire for challenge [7]. Therefore, the finding of the present study that autonomy-supportive teaching and learning environment increased students

self-motivation was in concurrence with the postulate of SDT on psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. .

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study makes the following conclusions:

i. That there are strategies, which teachers, parents and educational managers and other stakeholders may use to increase students' self-motivation to learn.
ii. That these strategies include teaching and training students' in self-discipline, goal orientation, extrinsic motivation, time management and autonomy-supportive environment.

The present study recommends that students should be taught and trained using the strategies that increase self-motivation so that they are self-driven to achieve academic success and lifelong learning.

The study recommends that a longitudinal study should be conducted using action research on these strategies to determine if their effect would hold over time and in different parts of the world.

The study was limited by its use of convenient sampling technique which limited the generalizability of its findings.

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