

Academic Psychological Capital As Predictor Of Academic Achievement Among Form Three Students In Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract

Academic achievement is the main pathway to formal employment all over the world. However, in Kenya poor academic achievement by students nationally has been of great concern to the teachers, parents and all educational stakeholders. More specifically, most secondary school students in Kitui County have been performing below average in national examinations. This poor performance has been attributed to the school environmental factors, teacher factors and little has been done on individual psychological factors, which may contribute to the students' below average performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate how academic psychological capital predicts academic achievement among form three students in Kitui County. The objective of this study was to examine the extent to which academic psychological capital predicts academic achievement. The study was anchored on Broaden-and-build theory by Fredrickson (2004). Explanatory sequential mixed method design was used. The study targeted 427 form three sub-county secondary school students in Kitui County in the year 2023. Purposive, stratified, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling was used to select the schools and the participants. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data. Finally, pro forma summary was used to collect academic achievement data. A pilot study involving 30 students was conducted to establish the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and multiple regression while the qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement ($r=.65, p < 0.01$). From the multiple regression analysis, it was revealed The best predictor of academic achievement from the sub-scales of academic psychological capital was resilience ($\beta=.525$). The qualitative data was analyzed thematically and the findings concurred with the quantitative results. As a result, the findings of this study may be used to inform the teachers, parents and all education stake holders on the importance of academic psychological capital among secondary school students.

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I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In many countries around the world, success in education is mostly measured by the good grades obtained by the students. Therefore, these students are always under pressure from the parents and teachers to attain the good grades. In addition, parents, teachers and the education stakeholders have always believed that, going to the university and acquiring a formal employment is the only way one can secure a bright future. Now, owing to the fact that academic achievement is the main pathway to formal employment, efforts have been made to improve its quality around the world. However, low quality academic achievement among students in developing countries and also in developed countries is of great concern. It has been reported that less than 10% of the countries in the world have acquired enough learning resources, the required technology and achievement in education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 2021). Even though it was reported that this challenge cuts across developing and developed countries, it was found that this problem is more pronounced in developing countries.

Alhadabi and Karpinski (2019), reported that most of the students in Midwestern University in USA performed poorly in their examinations. The researchers argued that academic performance of the students was of great concern to the university academic staff. They reported that some of the reasons that lead to the poor

performance was lack of self-efficacy, grit and academic goal orientation. Socio-demographic factors, health behaviors and mental health were also correlated to the poor performance of the students.

In Indonesia, the same challenge is experienced; Mauliya et al. (2020) observed that below average performance in academics in Indonesia was attributed to failure of the stakeholders to motivate both parents and the students. The same challenge has also been reported in Iran where TIMSS Workshop Report (2015) indicated that the achievement of learners in TIMSS was below the average score of 500 points. Majority of the learners who were involved in the assessment scored below average in mathematics and science. A study by Abdullah and Bhatti (2018) also showed that poor academic achievement in Pakistan was an issue of great concern. Majority of the students performed below average in academics.

In China, Wu and Xin, (2019) indicated that most of the college students in Xi'an were performing dismally in academics. The researchers argued that academic achievement of the students was an issue of great concern. The researchers investigated the reasons why students performed poorly and reported that lack of self-efficacy and proper planning to succeed was one of the reasons. Poor parental care, poor family relationship, financial challenges, poor teaching and poor management among the school administrators also contributed to this problem.

In South Africa, Anand et al. (2021) revealed that the quality of students' grades in most schools failed to meet the minimum threshold of being classified as achievers as their scores were below standard. This challenge was attributed to inequality in access to learning opportunities. The researchers reported that a significant number of students did not have access to equal learning opportunities which contributed to poor academic achievement in the region. A study in Ethiopia by Seyoum et al. (2019) associated the high prevalence of poor academic achievement to high poverty levels. The researchers raised concern on the quality of education in Ethiopia owing to the high prevalence of low-quality academic achievement.

In Uganda, a study by Hassan et al. (2020) reported that a significant number of secondary school students in Uganda perform below standard in academic achievement. This challenge was attributed to absenteeism, high poverty levels, students' inability to understand the language used to teach, lack of adequate support from the school management and teacher's attitude. Similarly, Adams et al. (2018) reported that there was a huge discrepancy in the school learning assets, teaching aids and achievement in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa with Kenya having the largest number of teaching assets followed by South Africa. The Ghanaian students were reported to perform poorly in academics because of their limited access to learning resources.

The prevalence of registering low achievement scores among secondary school students in Kenya is also high. Sang (2018) in his study in Kipkelion East Sub- County, reported that there has been a decrease in the mean score obtained by secondary school students in examinations. According to the study, in 2014 the mean score for the sub- county schools was 5.52 but in 2016 the mean score obtained dropped to 4.13. Onderi et al. (2019) also observed consistency of dismal performance in KCSE examinations and the situation persisted without changing year in year out.

In Kitui County, majority of secondary school students attain below average grades in KCSE examinations with sub-county secondary schools being the worst affected. Compared to the other neighboring counties, for example, Embu, Machakos and Makueni, Kitui county has the highest number of students who scored D+ and below in the sub-county secondary schools in in KCSE in the period running from 2017 to 2021, (Eastern Regional Education Office, 2022). Nationally, the percentages of the students who scored grade D+ and below from 2017 to 2021 were 63%, 49%, 53%, 51% and 53% respectively, (Ministry of Education, Kenya). In Kitui county, the percentages of those who scored grade D+ and below during the same period were 68%, 52%, 61%, 55% and 56% respectively, (Kitui County Education Office, 2021). Researchers have attempted to establish the factors associated with this poor academic achievement. Some researchers have associated this problem with student's psychological variables such as academic motivation, self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy, personal traits, teacher factors and school factors (Masud et al., 2019; Makondo 2020; Niromand et al., 2020; Olefumi et al., 2018).

Based on the knowledge obtained from the previous researches, this study came up with academic psychological capital as a correlate of academic achievement. Although the existing studies have however studied this variable, there is a dearth of information of how the construct predicts academic achievement among secondary students. As a result, the current study looked at how academic psychological capital predicts academic achievement among form three students in sub-county secondary schools in Kitui County.

Academic psychological capital is a combination of positive psychological traits which encompass hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Carmona-Halty *et al.*, 2019). Self-efficacy is characterized by a person's beliefs in one's capabilities to accomplish a task and realize success whereas hope empowers and encourages individuals to search for will and way powers. Will power helps individuals to work towards achieving goals while way power enables one to set strategies which would guarantee realization of the set goals. According to (Carmona-Halty *et al.*, 2019), hope creates positive emotions which help one to have expectations of achieving the goals and objectives which one is pursuing. Optimism is a virtue of being sure and confident that success

would be attained in a given situation while resilience is a characteristic of an individual of being able to bounce back accordingly after being faced with challenges and adversities in a certain situation.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate how academic psychological capital and academic engagement predicts academic achievement among form three students in Kitui County.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The study examined the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement.

The following hypothesis guided the study;

H_{a2}: There is a significant relationship between the students' academic psychological capital and their academic achievement.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This study was guided by Broaden- and- build theory by (Fredrickson, 2004).The theory is used to explain a person's positive psychological state of development. According to Fredrickson (2004), this theory refers to a set of resources a person can use to help improve their performance on the job and their success. The theory outlines the components of the psychological capital as hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience. According to this theory, these components of psychological capital are intertwined and each component supports the other with the outcome outweighing the contribution of a single component if it stands on its own (Fredrickson, 2004). The theory explains hope as the process of setting goals and following through them while optimism is explained as having a positive thought pattern. Resilience is explained as the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences and by flexible adaptation to the changing demands of stressful experiences. Self-efficacy is explained as a person's believe in his or her ability to perform behaviors that leads to specific performance attainments. The theory further explains how these combined components leads to the increased performance and one's likelihood to achieve one's long term goals. This theory was used to expound on how psychological capital relates to the students' academic achievement. Based on this theory's explanation, firstly, students are supposed to set well defined learning goals and then each learner is supposed to push him/herself beyond the comfort zone. Thirdly, students are supposed to be ready to bounce back whenever they do not succeed in achieving their educational set goals and finally they should have a positive thought pattern while executing their learning activities (Abbas & Raja, 2019). This theory therefore suggests that psychological capital has a significant influence on academic achievement among students (Adil & Ghayas, 2020). In their study, Siu et al., (2014) reported that Broaden-and-build Theory is appropriate for explaining how academic psychological capital enhances students' success in education.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A number of studies conducted have correlated psychological capital and academic achievement. In Pakistan, Adil et al. (2020) investigated how psychological capital was associated with academic achievement among 300 university students. Perceived self-efficacy subscale, orientation towards life test, hope in academics and resilience in academic scales were used to measure academic psychological capital components. The previous semester's average grades obtained by the students measured their achievement in academics. The structural equations model revealed a significant association between academic psychological capital and academic accomplishment. Academic Psychological capital also had a parallel mediation between flow and self-handicapping behaviors and average grades. Academic psychological capital reduced self-handicapping behaviors and enhanced the flow experience which in turn improved academic accomplishment. It was found that, learners who scored highly on the psychological capital scale performed better while those who scored lowly on the psychological capital scale, were found to be low achievers. This study was conducted in Pakistan among undergraduate students and the findings' generalization to Kenya may have limitations because university learning environment, academic demands and expected learning outcomes differ from those in secondary schools. Such experiences may make the students to adopt different psychological capital orientations to achieve their academic goals. The proposed study focused on psychological capital and academic achievement of secondary school students to fill the knowledge gap.

In Vietnam, a study done by Du and Chen (2021) investigated the relationship between positive academic emotions and academic achievement: the role of academic psychological capital. The target population was 1020 university students and the sample size was 613 university students. The study used a pre-designed questionnaire to collect the data on the relationship between the positive academic emotions, psychological capital and academic achievement. The study found out that psychological capital and the academic achievement of the university students had a positive and a significant relationship. While the study by Du and Chen (2021) focused on the

university students who may be having different educational experiences, the current study focused on the form three secondary school students in order to bridge this knowledge gap.

Carmona-Halty et al. (2021) did a study that investigated the relationship between psychological capital and academic achievement of adolescents. The study used descriptive survey method and sample comprised of 86 students (46 boys and 40 girls) from both government and private junior schools of Ghaziabad district in Uttar Pradesh by using simple random sampling. The data was collected using questionnaires and the data analysis was done using hierarchical linear modeling. The study findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the students' psychological capital and academic achievement. Given that the sample size was drawn from both government and private schools the sample size might be too small to make generalizations about diverse population. The current study used Yumane (1967) formula to obtain the appropriate minimum sample size for the targeted population.

Ferreira, et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between the students' psychological capital and academic performance. The sample size comprised of 1670 university students from four different universities in the city of Makassar in Indonesia. The female participants were (73.7%) with ages between 17 years to 24 years while the male participants were (26.3%). Correlational research design method was used to analyze the data and the results showed that psychological capital was related to the students' academic performance. This study used the psychological theory in human capital development that focuses on how an individual is changing while the current study used Broaden-and-Build Theory which explains an individual's positive psychological state of development to bridge the theoretical gap.

In Bahrain, Fati et al. (2019) sought to determine if psychological capital mediated the relations between academic stress and student engagement. To collect data, 371 undergraduate students were sampled from private universities in Bahrain. The study established that psychological capital significantly mediated the link that was evident in student engagement and academic stress. According to this study, the way students perceive teachers' demands and instructions combined with motivation to put forth their best efforts can all play a crucial role in fostering students' engagement with academics in general and perspectives on their own learning. This study focused on teachers' efforts in building psychological capital of the student. Furthermore, psychological capital was examined as a mediator variable. The proposed research aimed at looking at the psychological capital as a predictor of academic achievement of secondary school students in Kenya to bridge the knowledge gap.

In Ghana, a related study by Abukari (2018), examined the academic experiences of Ghanaian college students within the framework of resilience. A total of 30 college students were interviewed to yield data for the research. The focus was on the educational experiences of young people in Ghana who, in spite of numerous obstacles, managed to finish high school and enroll in college. The risk factors that were identified as having a negative impact on academic outcomes include socioeconomic and academic adversity resulting from spatial inequality and unfavorable cultural practices. Similar to social support systems, future orientation, and the personal trait of "not giving up" appeared as protective characteristics that have been shown to boost academic resilience. The reviewed study focused on university students and focused on one aspect of psychological capital. The current research aimed at establishing the extent to which psychological capital is related to academic achievement for more conclusive findings in the Kenyan context.

Onivehu, et al. (2020) studied the relationship between psychological capital and academic performance of social work students in University of Ilorin in Nigeria. The target population was all 215 third and fourth year students. The sample size consisted of 180 aged between 19 years and 22 years both third and fourth year students selected by simple random sampling. The instrument of data collection that was used was a self developed questionnaire. The study used descriptive survey research method of correlational type. The results indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and academic performance of the social work students. The sample size was drawn from a university and this limits generalization of the findings due to the schooling level. The current study was done in Kenya and among secondary school students in order to compare the findings between different schooling levels and bridge this knowledge gap.

In Kenya, Baluku et al. (2021) examined the relationship between psychological capital and School-To-Work Transition (STWT). Specifically, the study was on the mechanisms by which psychological capital affects students' readiness for STWT and how it helps to evaluate their success in careers. The study used 516 undergraduates learning in the last semester in Ugandan and Kenyan universities. The study established that the transition process heavily depends on one's capacity for swift adjustment. Those who struggle to make a smooth STWT face additional difficulties as they try to grow their careers. It was further established that psychological capital significantly affected perceptions of employability, preparation for STWT, and career satisfaction. Given that the population under focus was undergraduates, a question arises whether similar results may be obtained if learners were of a different level. The current study involved secondary school students in Kenya focusing on academic achievement to bridge the knowledge gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used explanatory sequential mixed method research design. According to (Clark, 2011) and (Creswell, 2018), this design involves first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The purpose of this embedded design is to collect quantitative and qualitative data sequentially, and to have one form of data playing a supportive role to the other form of data. The researcher first collected and analyzed the quantitative data and then qualitative data was collected in the second phase of the study. Thus, qualitative data was used in the subsequent interpretation and clarification of the results from the quantitative data analysis. According to Creswell, (2018), this research design, helps the researcher to seek elaboration and clarification of the results. In this study therefore, this design helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between academic adaptability and academic achievement.

LOCALE OF THE STUDY

This study was done among ten sub-county secondary schools in Kitui county. The KCSE performance in Kitui county has been consistently low Compared to the other neighboring counties, for example, Embu, Machakos and Makueni. Kitui county has the highest number of students who scored D+ and below in the sub-county secondary schools in in KCSE in the period running from 2017 to 2021. This necessitated the choice of the location of this study so as to establish whether academic adaptability which influences academic achievement is evident in the learners in this county. The target population for this study was 10080 (5130 boys and 4950 girls) form three sub-county secondary school students.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study was conducted in Kitui County which was selected using purposive sampling technique. The county was purposively selected because cases of below average performance among sub-county secondary school students have been on the rise in the county (Munyithya, 2019). The schools to be involved in the study were selected using purposive sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one stream in schools with more than one stream. Stratified random sampling was used to categorize the schools into boys boarding, girls boarding, coeducational boarding and coeducational day secondary schools. Form three students in the county were selected using purposive sampling because they are assumed to have shown a registered level of academic adaptability, academic psychological capital and academic engagement. The students to be involved in the study from each school category were selected using proportionate sampling technique.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

A questionnaire, interview schedule and a pro forma summary of students' academic results were used to collect data.

a) QUESTIONNAIRE

The first tool was a questionnaire which was used to collect data and it contained two sections. Section A contained instructions and the respondents' background information which consists of the respondents' gender, age, type of the school and the school category. Section B is the adapted scale on the academic psychological capital. The full description of the scale is given below.

ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALE

This scale was developed by Lorenz et al. (2016) to measure psychological capital of students. The authors reported a reliability coefficient of .83. The scale comprises of 12 questions that measure psychological capital on a five point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree*). It consists of four sub -scales namely; Self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience and the authors reported reliability coefficients of .85, .82, .86 and .73 respectively. Scoring involved calculating the sum of the scores. The expected maximum score was 60 while the minimum score was 12. A score between 48 and 60 implied high level of psychological capital while a score below 48 implied low level of psychological capital. This research instrument was free for use and the source has been referenced according to the APA 7th edition.

b) Interview Schedule

The researcher used a semi structured interview schedule to collect qualitative data on the students' academic adaptability. The qualitative data helped the researcher in understanding of the better meaning of the quantitative data obtained in the first phase. The interviews were conducted on 40 participants where, the first 20 participants were the ones who rated themselves highly on academic adaptability. The other group of 20 participants were the ones who rated themselves lowly on academic adaptability scale. The interview schedule was divided into two parts; section A and B. Section A was used to collect background information of the students

which included school code, gender, age and school category while Section B was used to collect data on Academic adaptability.

c) Pro Forma Summary of Students’ Examination

To measure the students’ academic achievement, the researcher examined the achievement records of the form three students in the sub-county secondary schools. The total marks for the form three end of term one exams and the term two opener exams year 2023 were obtained. The average score for every student was tabulated on the two examinations. The mean scores were transformed into Z scores and then into T-scores so as to make them comparable among the students in different schools.

DATA COLLECTION.

The researcher obtained research authorization letter from Kenyatta University’s Graduate school. The authorization letter was used to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Once the research permit was obtained, the researcher reported to the Kitui County Director of Education and county commissioner for authorization to carry out the study in the county. The researcher assembled all the requirements for data collection. The research instruments were printed and counter checked to ensure all the questions have been printed. The schools to be involved in the study were identified and then appointments were booked with the principals for data collection.

11 Data Analysis

This study collected quantitative and qualitative data. The Statistical Program for Social Science program (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Procedures for descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics while mean and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of the participants. The degree of relationship that exists between academic adaptability and academic achievement were measured using Pearson’s product moment correlation (r). Multiple regression was used to test the predictive weight of the domains of academic adaptability, on academic achievement.

IV. FINDINGS

GENERAL INFORMATION

In this section, general information on the questionnaire’s return rate is presented. The data is presented in Table 1

Table 1
Return Rate

Type of school Schools	Sample size	Students		Return rate Students	
		Boys	Girls	boys	girls
	Boys Boarding 3	63(14.8)	-	60 (95)	-
	Girls Boarding 2	-	50(11.7)	-	48 (96)
	Coeducational 2	48(11.2)	45(10.5)	47(98)	42(93)
	Boarding Coeducational Day S. 3	107(25)	114(26.8)	105(98)	113(99)
Sub-total		218(51)	209(49)	212(97)	203(97)
Total 10		427(100)		415 (97)	

Note. N=415, () percentage

From Table 1, it is observed that the sampled schools were 10 public sub-county secondary schools and the number of the respondents who participated in the study were 427 (218 boys, 209 girls). However, from the same Table 1, it is observed that the return rate for the questionnaire was 97%, which represents a total of 415 questionnaires (212 girls, 203 boys). All the 427 questionnaires were administered and collected but during data coding and cleaning, it was discovered that 8 questionnaires were not fully filled up and so they were discarded. The statistics in the same table show that majority of the participants were drawn from the coeducational day schools (51.8) while the least figure was drawn from the girls boarding (11.7). The second largest number of participants was drawn from the Coeducational boarding (21.7). Male respondents in this study were the majority representing 51% of the total participants while the female respondents represented 49% of the total participants. According to a criterion by Creswell, (2014), a return rate of 70% and above is excellent for a survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In this section, the researcher looked at the descriptions of the participants age, cross tabulations of their age and gender, age and the school type and lastly gender and school type.

a) Age of the Participants

Table 1
Description of the Participants Age in Years

Age	Frequency	
		Percent
14-18	382	92
19-25	32	7.8
26 &above	1	0.2
Total	415	100

Note. N=415, () =percent

From the above Table 2, participants who were aged between 14-18 were 382 and formed the largest percentage of (92) while those that were aged between 19-25 were 32 and formed a percentage of (7.8). Only one participant was aged 26 years and above and formed a percentage of (.2)

b) Participants Age and Gender

A cross tabulation of the participants age and gender was done and the results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptions of the Participants Age and Gender

		Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	
Age	14-18	188 (45)	194(46.7)	382(92)
	19-25	23 (6)	9 (2.2)	32(7.8)
	26 and above	1 (0.2)	-	1(0.2)
Total		212(51.2)	203(48.9)	415(100)

Note. N=415, () percentage.

According to Table 3, it is observed that female respondents aged between 14-18 were 194 and formed the majority with (46.7%) while the male participants in the same age bracket formed less than half of the total participants (45%). Male participants whose age ranged between 19-25 formed less than a quarter of the total participants (6%) while their female counterparts in the same age bracket were the least (2%). There was only one male participant who was aged 26 and above.

c) Participants Age and School Category

The students' age and school category was cross-tabulated and the results were presented in Table 4

Table 4
Descriptions of Participants Age and School Category

	Age	Type of school				Total
		BB	G B	CB	CDS	
	14-18	51(12.3)	44(10.6)	82(19.8)	205(49.4)	382(92.1)
	19-25	9(2.2)	4(0.96)	6(1.5)	13(3.1)	32(7.7)
	26 &A	0	0	1(0.2)	0	1(0.2)
	Total	60(14.5)	48(11.56)	89(21.5)	218(52.5)	415(100)

Note. N=415, BB=boys boarding, GB=girls boarding, CB=coeducational boarding, CDS=coeducational day school, ()=percentage.

As given in Table 4, majority of the participants' (49.4%) aged between 14-18 were found in coeducational day schools. In the same age bracket, those who were in coeducational boarding schools were (19.8) and the least percentage of (10.6) in the same age bracket were enrolled in girls boarding. On the other hand, the largest percentage of the participants aged between 19-25 was found in coeducational day school (3.1) followed

by those in co-educational boarding (1.5) while the least percentage (0.96) was found in the girls boarding schools. Participants aged 26 and above had the least percentage (0.2) and was only found in coeducational boarding.

d) Participants’ Gender and School Category

The students’ gender and school category was cross-tabulated and the results were presented in Table 5 below.

Table 2
Descriptions of Participants Gender and School Category

	Type of school				Total
	BB	G B	CB	CDS	
Gender Male	60(14.5)	0	47(11.3)	105(25.3)	212(51.1)
Female	0	48(11.6)	42(10.1)	113(27.2)	203(48.9)
Total	60(14.5)	48(11.6)	89(21.4)	218(53)	415(100)

Note: N=415, BB=boys boarding, GB=girls boarding, CB=coeducational boarding, CDS=coeducational day secondary, () =percentage.

As shown in the Table 5, there were more girls (27.2) than boys (25.3) in the coeducational day secondary school. On the other hand, there were more boys (11.3) than girls (10.1) in the coeducational boarding schools. In the boys boarding, there were more participants (14.5) than in the girls (11.6) boarding schools.

V. RESULTS AS PER THE STUDY OBJECTIVE

The findings of this study were presented according to the stated objective. The relevant descriptive statistics for the objective was given followed by the specific inferential statistics used to test the null hypothesis. Finally, a discussion of the findings was given.

a) DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

The participants’ academic psychological capital was analyzed based on the academic psychological capital score. The analysis aim was to get the score’s mean, range and standard deviation. The findings were presented in Table 6

Table 3
Description of Academic Psychological Capital Scores

	N	Range	Min	Max	M	SD	SK	Kur
APC	415	33.00	12.00	45.00	30.5	6.2	-.37	-.24
Valid N	415							

Note. N=415, APC=academic psychological capital, MIN=minimum, MAX=maximum, SD=Standard deviation, SK=Skewness, Kur=Kurtosis

As shown in Table 6, the range for the academic psychological capital was 33 while the minimum and maximum scores were 12 and 45 respectively. The mean of the academic psychological capital scores was 30.5(SD=6.2) and the coefficient of skewness was -.37 implying that the participants rated themselves highly on the academic psychological capital scale. The kurtosis was -.24 implying that the distribution was platykurtic indicating that the scores were spread out from the mean. Further analysis was done to determine the descriptive statistics of academic psychological capital by gender in order to compare the mean of the boys and the girls in this study and the results were presented in Table 7.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Academic Psychological Capital by Gender

Gender	N	Min	Max	Range	Mean	SD	Kur	Sk
Boys	212	12.00	45.00	33.00	30.00	6.04	.31	-.27
Girls	203	12.00	45.00	33.00	31.00	6.30	.80	-.48
Total	415	12.00	45.00	33.00	30.5	6.18	.505	-.365

Note. N=415, MIN=Minimum, MAX=Maximum, SD=Standard deviation, Kur=Kurtosis, SK=Skewness

From Table 7, the range for both the boys and the girls’ participants was 33 with the minimum and the maximum scores being 12 and 45 respectively. On the other hand, the boys mean was 30 (SD=6.04) while the girls’ mean was 31(SD=6.30) and so the girls were found to have the highest mean. As observed also, the boys’

kurtosis was .31 which gave the implication that the distribution was leptokurtic meaning that more scores were concentrated around the mean. The boys' negative skewness of -.27 meant that majority of the boys rated themselves highly on the academic psychological capital scale. The girls Kurtosis was .80 meaning that the distribution was leptokurtic with more scores concentrating around the mean. The girls' skewness was -4.8 which meant that more girls just like the boys, rated themselves highly on the academic psychological capital scale. The levels of the academic psychological capital were analyzed and the participants were classified as low, moderate or high. The findings were presented in Table 8

Table 5
Levels of Academic Psychological Capital

	Frequency	Percent
Low	332	80.0
Moderate	83	20.0
Total	415	100.0

Note. N=415

As shown in Table 8, all the participants rated themselves into only two levels. Majority, of the participants rated themselves within the low level of academic psychological capital (80%). It can also be observed that, less than half of the total participants were categorized as having moderate level of academic psychological capital (20%). None of the participants were found to have high levels of academic psychological capital. This finding could be used to explain the problem of low academic achievement among the sub-county secondary school students' in Kitui County. Further descriptive statistics of the subscales of the academic psychological capital which includes; self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism were done so as to determine the participants' statistical measures on each of the four sub-scales. The results were presented in Table 9

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of the Sub-scales of Academic Psychological Capital

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	SK	Kur
Self-efficacy	415	12.00	3.00	15.00	10.06	2.65	-.21	-.50
Resilience	415	12.00	3.00	15.00	11.63	2.08	-.73	.74
Hope	415	12.00	3.00	15.00	11.70	2.11	.71	.69
Optimism	415	12.00	3.00	15.00	11.91	2.29	-1.1	1.62

Note. N =415. Min=minimum; Max= Maximum, SD=Standard deviation, SK=Skewness, Kur =Kurtosis

The data in Table 9 reveals that the range, the minimum and the maximum scores were the same for the four sub-scales. The highest mean score of 11.91 was observed on the Optimism scale with a standard deviation of 2.29 while the lowest mean score of 10.06 was observed on the self-efficacy scale with a standard deviation of 2.65. The coefficient of skewness was negative for all the sub-scales with the highest negative value of (-.73) being observed on the resilience scale. The findings on the coefficient of skewness implied that the participants rated themselves highly on the Optimism scale than the other three scales. Further analysis was done by cross tabulating the of levels of academic psychological capital and levels of academic achievement in order to compare the levels. The findings were presented in Table 10

Table 7
Levels of Academic Psychological Capital across Levels of Academic Achievement Means

		Levels of Academic Achievement			Psychological	Total
Low	Moderate	High	Total	Low	22(5.3)	
233(56.1)	6(1.5)	261(62.9)				
capital	Moderate	7(1.7)	137(33)	10(2.4)	154(37.1)	
levels						
Total	29(7)	370(89.1)	16(3.9)	415(100)		

Note. N=415, ()=percent

As shown from Table 10 (5.3) of the total participants were found to have low levels of academic achievement and academic psychological capital. Those that were found to have moderate levels of academic achievement (56.1) were also found to have low levels of academic psychological capital. In addition, (1.5) of the participants who were found to have high levels of academic achievement were also found to have low levels of academic psychological capital. On the other hand, Participants (33) who were found to have moderate levels of

academic psychological capital were also found to have moderate levels of academic achievement. Lastly, participants (2.4) who were found to have high levels of academic achievement were also found to have moderate level of academic achievement. Further analysis was done through cross tabulation of the levels of academic psychological capital and academic achievement scores in order to determine which level of academic psychological capital had the highest mean. The findings were presented in Table 11

Table 8
Levels of Academic Psychological Capital across Academic Achievement Means.

Levels of Academic Psychological Capital		N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Low	academic achievement	332	24.65	75.61	47.39	7.98
Moderate	academic achievement	83	26.11	78.52	60.45	10.44

Note. N=415, MIN=minimum, MAX=maximum, SD=standard deviation

From the statistics given in Table 11 the maximum and the minimum score for those participants who were found to have moderate level of academic psychological capital was 78.52 and 26.11 respectively while for those who were found to have low level of academic psychological capital was 75.61 and 24.65 respectively. On the other hand, the participants who were classified as having moderate level of academic psychological capital were found to have the highest mean 60.45(SD=10.44) than the participants who were found to have low level of academic psychological capital 47.39(SD=7.98). The implication of this finding is that, those students who had moderate level of academic psychological capital performed better in academics than their counterparts who were found to have low levels of academic psychological capital.

b) HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Following the study objective which was to examine the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement, the following null hypothesis was advanced:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement.

To test this hypothesis, a bivariate correlation analysis was performed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The results were presented in Table 12

Table 9
Correlation between Academic Psychological Capital and Academic Achievement

		Academic Achievement	
academic psychological capital	Pearson Correlation	1	.65**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00

Note. N=415.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings in Table 12 shows that there is a significant and a positive relationship between the students' academic psychological capital and academic achievement ($r(415) = 0.65, p < 0.05$). It is also observed that the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement was strong. As a result, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected meaning that the academic psychological capital was significantly correlated to academic achievement.

Further analysis was done to determine the correlation between the sub-scales of academic psychological capital and academic achievement. The findings were presented in the Table 13.

Table 10
Correlations between the Sub-scales of Academic Psychological Capital and Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement	Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation		.57**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
Hope		Pearson Correlation	.61**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
Resilience		Pearson Correlation	.68**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
Optimism		Pearson Correlation		.62
		Sig. (2-tailed)		

Correlation is significance at 0.05level

It is observed from Table 13 that, all the sub-scales of academic psychological capital had a significant and a positive correlation with academic achievement. Among the four sub-scales, resilience, optimism and hope were found to have a strong relationship with academic achievement while self-efficacy was found to have a moderate relationship with academic achievement. The highest correlation was found between the sub-scale of resilience and academic achievement ($r(415) = .68, p < .05$). This was followed by the correlation between optimism and academic achievement ($r(415) = .62, p < .05$). The correlation between hope and academic achievement was ($r(415) = .61, p < .05$) while the least correlation was found between self-efficacy and academic achievement ($r(415) = .57, p < .05$). These findings indicated that the participants who scored highly on the sub-scale of resilience performed better compared to those on the other three sub-scales. Further analysis was done to establish the proportion of variation that the sub-scales of academic psychological capital have, that explains the total variance in students' academic achievement. The data was subjected to a multiple regression and the findings were presented in Table 14

Table 11
Model summary of the sub-scales of Academic Psychological capital

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.68a	.47	.47	7.3

a Predictors: (Constant), Optimism, Self-efficacy, Resilience, Hope

Table 4.27 indicates that the R square value ($R^2=0.47$) explains the variance of the dependent variable from the four sub-scales of academic psychological capital. In this case, it is observed that 47% of the students' academic achievement is explained by the sub-scales of the academic psychological capital. The R value measures the strength of the relationship between the model and the criterion variable which is the students' academic achievement in this study. As a result, the R value (0.68) shows that the relationship between the model and the criterion variable is very strong. The implications of this finding may be that, the students' academic achievement in the sub-county secondary schools in Kitui County was predictable from the four sub-scales of academic psychological capital.

Further analysis was done in order to determine whether there was a significant mean difference between those participants who were found to have self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism. The findings were presented in Table 15

Table 12
ANOVA for the Regression Model of the Sub-scales of Academic Psychological Capital

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19550.27	4	4887.57	91.71	.00b
Residual	21849.73	410	53.29		
Total	41400.00ss		414		

Note. N=414

a Dependent Variable: Standardized scores of academic achievement

b Predictors: (Constant), Optimism, Self-efficacy, Resilience, Hope

As shown in Table 15, there was a statistically significant mean difference between the four sub-scales of academic psychological capital as determined by the one way ANOVA ($F(1, 410) = (91.71), P = .00$). These findings meant that there was a significant difference in the means between those participants who were found to have self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism. The implication of this finding could be due to the fact that those participants who were found to have high correlation in resilience and optimism were also found to have highest correlation with academic achievement. This finding could be true because resilience has to do with the ability to overcome academic setbacks, stress and study pressure associated with the school factors (Mwangi, 2015). The researcher went further to determine which of the four sub-scales of academic psychological capital is a better predictor of academic achievement. The findings are summarized in the following Table 16

Table 13
Beta Coefficients for the Domains of Academic Psychological Capital

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	B				
(Constant)	10.27	2.38	-	4.31	.000
Self-efficacy	-.19	.31	-.055	-.61	.542

Resilience	2.52	.44	.525	5.79	.000
Hope	.43	.44	.090	.97	.333
Optimism	.62	.31	.142	2.01	.045

a Dependent Variable: Standardized scores of academic achievement

From Table 16, the prediction equation that was developed using the coefficients was as follows;

$$\hat{y} = 10.27 + 0.525R + 0.142OP + 0.90H - 0.055SE$$

As shown from Table 16, resilience ($\beta = 0.525$), optimism ($\beta = .142$), and hope ($\beta = .090$) were found to have a positive predictive index while self-efficacy was found to have a negative predictive index of ($\beta = -.055$). This finding implied that an increase in the resilience, optimism and hope scores may lead to an increase in academic achievement score. While on the other hand, the negative predictive index may imply that an increase in the self-efficacy score may lead to a decrease in academic achievement score and vice versa. The best predictor of academic achievement from the sub-scales of academic psychological capital was resilience ($\beta = .525$), the second best predictor was optimism ($\beta = .142$) and the third was hope ($\beta = 0.09$) while the least prediction was found in self-efficacy ($\beta = -.055$). These findings agreed with the findings in Table 13, where the highest correlation between the sub-scales of academic psychological capital and academic achievement was found in resilience ($r = 0.68, p < 0.05$). The second highest correlation was found in optimism ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$) and the third was found in the hope sub-scale ($r = 0.61, p < 0.05$) while the least was found in self-efficacy ($r = 0.57, p < 0.05$).

c) Discussion of the Results

The second objective was to examine the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement. The study's findings established that there was a positive and significant relationship between the students psychological capital and academic achievement ($r(415) = 0.65, p < 0.05$). More specifically, the findings of this study revealed that the highest correlation was found between the sub-scale of resilience and academic achievement ($r(415) = .68, p < .05$) followed by the correlation between optimism and academic achievement ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$). The correlation between hope and academic achievement was ($r(415) = .61, p < .05$) while the least correlation was found between self-efficacy and academic achievement ($r(415) = .57, p < 0.05$). The implications of these findings may be that students who scored highly on the sub-scale of resilience and optimism were better performers than those who scored highly on the sub-scale of hope and self-efficacy.

The current study findings are in line with the findings of a study done by Adil et al. (2020) on how psychological capital correlates with academic achievement among university students. These findings indicated that, there was a significant association between academic psychological capital and academic achievement. The study also revealed that, learners who scored highly on psychological capital scale performed better. On the other hand, students who were found to have low scores on the academic psychological capital scale were low achievers. The sample used in the previous study was drawn among the university students while the sample for the current study was drawn from high school. These findings could be used to explain that despite the level of schooling and the study location, academic psychological capital was a positive and a significant correlate of academic achievement. A study done by Du and Chen (2021) reported that academic psychological capital and academic achievement were correlates and this finding supported the findings of the current study.

The current study's findings also supported the findings of another study done by Ferreira et al. (2019) which revealed that the students' psychological capital and academic performance were significantly related. The study used psychological theory in human capital development that focusses on how an individual is changing while the current study used Broaden-and-Build Theory which explains on individual's positive psychological state of development. Despite the two studies using different theories to form the theoretical frame work of the two studies, the two variables were found to be significantly related. Another study by Carmona-Halty et al (2021), reported similar findings with the current study that the student's psychological capital was positively and significantly related to their academic achievement. Although the study used a sample of 86 participants which may have been very small, the findings agreed with the findings of the current study.

The findings also supported those of another earlier study done by Fati et al. (2019) which revealed that psychological capital mediated the relations between academic achievement and student engagement. The results revealed that, there was a significant and a positive relationship, between the students' academic psychological capital and the students' academic achievement. From the four sub-scales of the psychological capital, resilience had the highest correlation with the students' academic achievement. The fact that resilience was highly correlated with the students' academic achievement in the previous study and also in the current study, this meant that students who were able to overcome academic set backs, academic stress and academic pressures were likely to be high achievers.

In Ghana, similar findings by Abukari (2018) reported that students' academic resilience had a significant and positive relationship with the students' performance. This finding was supported by the current study which reported the highest correlation between resilience which is a sub-scale of academic psychological and the

academic achievement. Although the earlier study was done among the university students' and in Ghana, the current study was done among secondary school students and in Kenya and the results were similar. This could mean that the correlation between psychological capital and academic achievement was not affected by the level of schooling, study locations or even the cross-cultural differences.

The findings of the current study also concurred with the findings of a previous study by Onivehu et al. (2020) in Nigeria, which reported a positive and a significant relationship between psychological capital and academic performance of social work students among university students. On the other hand, the current study's sample was drawn among high school students. Now, although the two studies differed in terms of the study samples, level of schooling and also in their culture, the results indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and academic performance of students irrespective of their educational background and also their cultural differences.

In Kenya, similar findings were reported by Baluku et al. (2021), whose study examined the relationship between psychological capital and School- To-Work Transition among Ugandan and Kenyan Universities. It was established that there was a positive relationship, between the psychological capital and STWT. It was also found out that for the students to transit smoothly they required psychological capital. Therefore, from the above findings the problem of below average performance among the sub-county secondary school students in Kitui county could be associated with their levels of academic psychological capital.

The theory of Broaden-and-Build by (Fredrickson, 2004) can be used to explain the findings of this study. The theory talks about a set of personal resources that a person can use to help improve their performance and their success. Siu et al. (2014) reported that Broaden-and-build theory can be used to explain how academic psychological capital enhances students' success in education. According to this theory, a student whose psychological capital is rated high has many ways of ensuring that they achieve their set educational goals.

VI. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to find out how academic psychological capital relates to academic achievement. An empirical evidence of a significant and positive relationship between the students, academic psychological capital and their academic achievement was found. Further analysis revealed that there was a significant and a positive relationship between the sub-scales of academic psychological capital and academic achievement. The study's findings established that there was a positive and significant relationship between the students psychological capital and academic achievement ($r(415)=0.65, p<0.05$). More specifically, the findings of this study revealed that the highest correlation was found between the sub-scale of resilience and academic achievement ($r(415)=.68, p<.05$) followed by the correlation between optimism and academic achievement ($r=0.62, p< 0.05$). The correlation between hope and academic achievement was ($r(415)=.61, p<.05$) while the least correlation was found between self-efficacy and academic achievement ($r(415)=.57, p<0.05$). The implications of these findings may be that students who scored highly on the sub-scale of resilience and optimism were better performers than those who scored highly on the sub-scale of hope and self-efficacy.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for policy and further research were made based on the findings of this study.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Now that in this study academic psychological capital was found to have a positive and a significant influence on the students' academic achievement, teachers, parents and all the education stakeholders should work hand in hand in order to provide the right environment for fostering the development of this construct among the students.
- ii. Capacity building for teachers should be introduced and enhanced in order to help them develop the necessary skills for helping the students to develop the right academic psychological capital.
- iii. Counselling and Adaptive skills programs should be introduced in secondary schools in order to help the learners realize the right levels of academic psychological capital.
- iv. Curriculum developers should come up with school programs which can help the learners in boosting their levels of this construct in order to excel in their academics.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER

- i. This research was done on sub-county secondary schools and in Kitui county, considering that learning experiences differ from one school category to another and also from one county to another, there is need for a replication of the study involving students in other school categories and other counties.
- ii. Since this study found out that academic psychological capital has a positive and a significant relationship with the students' academic achievement, there is need to carry out a further study and establish the specific factors which influence the development of this construct.

- iii. In this study, data analysis was based on correlation and regression analysis, which established the relationship between the variables without proving any causal link. As a result, further research may consider using experimental designs to test the actual causes of the study variable among the students.
- iv. Based on the fact that the findings of this study were from secondary school students, further research should be done to give more insight on the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement of students at the primary school level and also at the tertiary level.
- v. This study investigated the relationship between academic psychological capital and academic achievement. Further study should investigate the relationship between this construct and the specific subject areas like Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics.

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