

# A critical Analysis on Effects of Labelling on the Self Esteem of Learners in Primary Schools in Kenya.

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## ABSTRACT

It is something that is highly worth to note that the generation that is learning now will be the generation that will be of great use to the nation in the days to come. For this generation to be protected this article tried to evaluate the effects of labeling to the self- esteem of pupils in primary schools.

Data was analyzed using qualitative analysis method to arrive at results which were to be interpreted to give meaning to the study .A stratified and random sampling techniques were applied along with this pilot study. From the study was evident that labeling students can have consequences and through their identification,teachers could come in and give support when alarming issues were noted. The study found out that despite the government's highly remarkable efforts in protecting and safeguarding child rights the efforts had turned out fruitless.

Major recommendations included: parents and guardians of pupils who have been labeled to be sensitized on the management of labeling. This could be done through short courses, seminars, workshops and counseling. Assessment should be done for early identification and intervention to prevent more harm to the pupils.

**Key words:** Labeling, Self Esteem, Stigmatization, Peer Interactions, Social Interactions, Deviant,Dyslexia, Special needs, Intercede.

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

Labeling has undergone various types of research especially in education so that people especially teachers and other stakeholders can understand certain behavior that pupils have whether they can be based on labels that these pupils get. Why do labels carry such significance in behavior and self esteem of pupils in primary schools in Kenya?In any case can,t labels be used as methods of classification in the class to better help the teacher in giving a comfortable environment to learners?

This classification or grouping can help teachers of weak or indisciplined pupils so that they can identify these pupils and give them the help they require . The study also aims at educating teachers on the use of other methods in reaching or describing their pupils other than labeling. The researcher will also want to determine whether the trend concerning labeling has taken a step forward into accepting weak pupils or disabled pupils with unacceptable behavior as equal participants in the society and whether these pupils who have been labeled attend school despite their various challenges.

## **2.0. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Labeling of pupils may have both positive and negative effects to them. However most of the teachers end up labeling their pupils for their own reasons for example, if a teacher labels a child as “learning disabled” they are able to give them extra attention but the learner may end up suffering from stigma. Lack of proper knowledge on how to handle these pupils may end up harming them more.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how children who have been labeled were affected socially, physically emotionally and psychologically. It is also to establish whether most of the pupils who have been labeled go to school and what barriers hinder those who do not,also to find out whether parents of these children who have been labeled get advice from professionals on the management of labeling and self-esteem. Through this the researcher was provoked to carry out a critical analysis to establish whether there is an alarming need to put some guidance and counseling centers or departments in schools whereby pupils can benefit from and identify whether children who have been labeled want to mix with other pupils or not. It would also investigate what relationship pupils and teachers have and what needs to be done to come up with a learning environment which accommodates all learners and is quite comfortable for them.

## **3.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.**

The purpose of the study was to critically analyze the effects of labeling on learners self-esteem in public primary schools in Kenya.

#### **4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.**

The researcher depended on the following objectives:

- i. To find out the effects of stigma to the self-esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya.
- ii. To determine whether indignity affects the self-esteem of learners in Kenya.
- iii. To find out whether deviance affects the self-esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya.
- iv. To investigate the effects of shame to the self-esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya.
- v. To investigate how dishonour may affect the self-esteem of pupils in primary schools in Kenya.

#### **5.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.**

- i. To what extent does stigma affect the self-esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya?
- ii. How does indignity affect the self-esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya?
- iii. What are the effects of shame have any effects to the pupils self esteem in primary schools in Kenya?
- iv. Does deviance affect the self-esteem of learners in Kenya?
- v. How does dishonor affect the self-esteem of pupils in primary schools in Kenya?

#### **6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

The study employed qualitative analysis methodology with critical analysis design whereby the researcher used content analysis to come up with recommendations on what should be done to ensure that labeling of students is not carried out in primary school in Kenya.

#### **7.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.**

The study was expected to create awareness on problems and possible solutions associated with labeling. It provided useful information to education stake holders which could be used to change teacher's perception of learners with low academic ability and different social backgrounds in primary schools so that that they can improve on their self-esteem. The findings of the study may be

used in an attempt to enhance self-esteem on labeled learners through counseling, provide insight to teachers on how to deal with labeled learners and adjust their teaching methods as every individual is a separate entity.

School head teachers would be sensitized and adjust to the curriculum to effectively deliver to widest possible range of students by means of supplementary teaching and timetable constructions. This study would help the ministry of education in Kenya in coming up with new ideas or policies that can boost the self-esteem of learners who have been labeled.

The study will also form a basis for formulating strategies to enhance early identification, assessment and enhance early identification, assessment and counseling of pupils who have been labeled.

## **8.0 LITERATURE REVIEW CRITIQUE.**

### ***8.1 A critical analysis on how stigma affects the self esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya***

Pupils who have self problems are likely to feel out of place when in public and when labeled with certain issues concerning their appearance or ability at school, they suffer from stigma associated issues. Pupils who have stigma might not pursue their goals at school. This is because of the diminished self esteem and self efficacy. Due to this stigma a pupil in class may not want to associate with other pupils for example who can perform better than him or when teachers give assignments such stigmatized pupils would end up not joining certain groups because they would say “why join “ or “why try” while I cannot perform after all.

These pupils internalize in them that they are weak and cannot do it. They may find whatever they are being labeled for is their own disorder. In Kenya for example teachers do not take into consideration the stigma that pupils suffer from when they are labeled. The teachers subject these pupils to more discrimination. A teacher can enter a class and group pupils according to social and economic status. The pupils from poor families wouldn't want to mix with those from rich families because of the stigma that is brought about by the economic gap. They end up frustrated

and distant themselves from other pupils.

According to Official Journal of the world psychiatric association(WPA)stigma may lead to certain behavioral feeling of instability. The pupil may feel not being worthy and some even end up dropping out of school. They say after all why should “I being a pupil add any extra activities to my learning and am not worthy”

### ***8.2 A critical analysis on how indignity affect self esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya***

For a child to have good social traits and to have good citizenship ,the school plays a very important role .Learning in a school environment is very valuable to a child. when the child is well directed well advised ,and above all encouraged he pursues his education very well. ED Mains- Journal of Advanced Nursing (1994)”To achieve dignity one must suffer indignities”according to Kenyan schools this is true .There might be conflicts of interests among teachers and learners but the core thing is teachers do not value the dignity of the learners at all.

Teachers at times do not respect the pupils privacy and at times a pupil may want to seek some advice from a teacher. This teacher may end up discussing that information with colleagues and other learners .This really affect the pupil. The old saying that teachers are born noble is no longer to the truth .This is because these teachers are expected to give these pupils opportunities to make their own choices,for example with regards to their different talents .Teachers at times force pupils to do what they want not what the pupils desire. They do not engage these pupils into conversations at all and as a result pupils dignity is not respected.

### ***8.3 A critical analysis of how shame affects the self esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya***

When a pupil at school suffers from shame ,this is a very painful social emotion. It comes about when a pupil compares himself or herself with the self standards. According to Alen J Salerian, M.D a medical director of the Washington DC that “shame is not necessarily a symptom of illness and its abnormal if we do not experience it” pupils should not be subjected to have shame because it is not a must. A pupil who suffers shame internalizes that he/she is very unworthy and

others may not be aware of this. The situation in Kenyan schools is not any different. This situation devalues the pupil and can lead to depression. Some behaviors of some pupils in Kenya are triggered by shame for example lying at school, cheating in exams, and stealing to try to cope with the social status at schools. This is according to Keltner & Buswell ((1996), Tangney (1992)

#### ***8.4 A critical analysis on how deviance affects the self esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya***

A pupil in a certain school in Kenya may have a behaviour that differs from the normal and this behavior may be disapproved by many. Teachers and other pupils may give this pupil a label and this label may become dominant. For example a pupil may decide to be left in class studying after the others have gone home. But because the pupil might have been labeled a “thief”, pupils and teachers may think that he/she wants to steal from offices or from other pupils. This might lead to more deviance and that pupil may end up being a thief he has been labeled.

According to Paul Willis, those pupils who are labeled with a certain behavior by teachers lived out of the label. At times pupils are unable to shake off the bad behavior but end up living with that label forever. A teenage boy may be labeled a “bull” by other pupils because he is known to love many girls and even seduce many. The impact of this label is that this label may continue even in his later days and he might end up being a rapist and a person who would sexually assault others in future.

#### ***8.5 A critical analysis on how dishonor affects the self esteem of learners in primary schools in Kenya***

While roles and responsibilities of teachers are well stipulated in the Teachers Service Commission Code of Regulations for teachers (2013), not many teachers are conversant with them. Every new teacher must be given adequate time to learn the mode of operation. This is not the case on ground unfortunately. Once the new appointed teachers are sent to schools no formal orientation is given to mould them to cope with the young children and teenagers. Since this does not happen many pupils suffer. When a pupil is insulted his/her ego is bruised, he/she feels humiliated and foolish. This can result to revenge. Sex scandals are common among teachers and pupils. According

to Sexual Offences Act, (2006) in Kenya children who face sexual assault, unless they are properly counseled they have permanent emotional scars. These pupils who suffer the ordeal are traumatized. It is against background that the sexual offences Act was mooted and eventually passed in parliament. According to section 145(1) of the Penal Code any person who unlawfully and carnally knew a girl under age of 14 years is guilty of felony and can be imprisoned with hard labour together with corporal punishment. For this reason pupils should not be handled as vessels of dishonour.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Learners need not be afraid of stigma and they should seek treatment for example seeking guidance and counseling. They should not isolate themselves because even family members can give support. Teachers should accommodate all pupils of different abilities and different social background. Teachers should try and encourage pupils to develop their abilities and have a sense of belonging and purpose.
- ii. If a school has disabled pupils learning with pupils who are not disabled, teachers should ensure that every pupil participates fully in education and can enjoy the benefits of education in an environment which values human rights. In case a school is admitting new students there should be clear guidelines and rules laid out to prevent bullying. Pupils bullying others either by beating them, calling them names or segregating them according to tribe, cultures or abilities should face the suspension or expulsion so that there is good rapport between pupils and teachers. Parents should take an important role in assisting teachers and administration in keeping and enforcing discipline among learners.
- iii. Pupils have to feel that they don't have to worry of shame but they should feel that they are loved. They should not let shame prevent them from achieving their goals and hinder their potential. According to Linda M. Hartling, PhD, pupils should not move from others either by keeping quiet or joining bad company instead pupils should realize that peers, teachers and parents are there to support them as stated by Joan E. Mullinax. Pupils should also look for confidants in case they have problems that need to be shared bearing in mind that a problem shared is half solved.

iv. Teachers should understand that they have a big impact on the pupils development .They should motivate their learners. The family should play a very important role in molding pupils because interactions among family members determine behavior of a child (Corey,P,412,2009) Teachers can also take their time and learn about the pupils background and family systems(Christian,2006)since the school and family form the base of learners behavior.

v. Once teachers are employed they should be given instructions so as to enlighten them on the Teachers Service Commission code of regulations for (2013)so that they are conversant with issues of how to handle pupils pupils .They should understand that some pupils may be born introverts .The thoughts of those pupils are always on themselves .Teachers should have love,sympathy and console them. They should respect the diverse cultures of pupils and their self dignity Teachers should also be selfless ,cooperative and tolerate anything at school level. These values should be cultivated to promote healthy relationship among teachers and pupils.

## 10.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Government of Kenya came up with the Teachers Service Commission code of Regulations for teachers (2013) and the Child's Right Act(2013) and it clearly s pelt out role and responsibilities of teachers and pupils .The government has also promoted free and compulsory education for pupils to ensure that Kenya brings up an Elite group to improve the economy of the country. This research was aimed at critically analyzing the effect of labeling to the self esteem of learners .Teachers and parents should be exposed to adequate information with regards to bringing up their children their various responsibilities .

The research concludes that well trained teachers should be posted to different schools in all parts of the country to have an enlightenment of the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners .The Government should take up the responsibility of ensuring school equipment and resources are adequate to help pupils achieve their goals .The new system of education might of great help to both learners and teachers in preparation for the future success.



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