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**EFFECTS OF ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS PERFORMANCE IN  
MATHEMATICS AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN TESO DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY**

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**ANNE N. WASIKE  
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## ABSTRACT

Studies from diverse fields continue to search for clues underlying the disparity between interest and achievement of male and female students in Mathematics. In Western countries, psychologists have focused on factors such as attitudes and motives when studying females' Mathematics achievements. Relatively little attention has been placed on women in sub-Saharan countries. This study seeks to determine the influence of attitude and perceptions of female students on the performance of the Mathematics within secondary schools in Teso District. The main objectives were: to determine the effect of attitudes of female students on the performance in Mathematics in secondary schools, to determine the effect of type of school on the attitudes of female students towards mathematics performance, to establish the effect of perception of female students on performance in mathematics in secondary schools, and to establish the effect of type of school on the perception of female students on the performance in mathematics. This study was guided by constructivism analytical framework (1992) of gender performance. The study sample involved a selection of 240 females selected by stratified random sampling method from secondary schools within Teso District to complete an inventory of Mathematics attitudes (The Fennema-Sherman Mathematics Attitudes Scale, 1976), and a background questionnaire. The main instruments of data collection were the questionnaire designed to have attitudinal scale first developed by Fennema-Sherman (1976). Data collection was done from May to June 2009 during the regular school sessions. Analysis of the data was done using descriptive statistics. Analysis of data from the questionnaire responses revealed a significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) effect of attitudes and perception towards performance in Mathematics among the students. Female students had negative attitudes and perception towards Mathematics. Most of the female students with negative attitudes performed poorly in Mathematics. Students in female students' boarding schools were established to have more positive attitudes and perceptions towards Mathematics and therefore performed better in the subject than students from co-educational schools. This indicates that performance of Mathematics can be improved through enhancing positive attitudes and perception towards Mathematics. It is argued that student attitudes towards Mathematics be addressed to improve student achievement in Mathematics. Further, the Ministry of Education should devise methods of improving the attitudes of female students towards Mathematics, to unlock their ability in performance.