

**THE INFLUENCE OF RECIPROCAL INTERACTIONS IN THE FAMILY ON SEX-
ROLE SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Sex-role self-concept is a psychological construct that defines people's thoughts about maleness and femaleness dictated by societal expectations. It influences the motivation and ability to perform tasks including academic performance. The family provides the immediate socialization environment with the parents and siblings as powerful socialization agents. The study used correlational research design and pragmatic research philosophy to investigate the influence of reciprocal interactions in the family on students' sex-role self-concepts and academic performance in Siaya District. The study was based on Structural Theory of Family Functioning, Social Learning Theory and Gender Schema Theory. The variables investigated were reciprocal interactions in the family as independent variable, students' sex-role self-concept as mediator variable, and academic performance as dependent variable. Data was collected from 25 public coeducational secondary schools and pretest of the instruments was done in one of the schools in the district. Students were selected through stratified random sampling and Krejcie and Morgan sample size table and Raosoft sample size calculator were used to determine representative sample size of 243 students while purposive sampling was used to sample 20 parents. Questionnaires were administered to students and interview schedules were conducted with parents. Cronbach alpha test was used to estimate the internal consistency of the items and in all the scales, the reliability coefficients were more than $\alpha = .8$ and percent variance were above 50% supporting unidimensionality of the measurement scales. The validity of the questionnaires and interview schedule was ascertained through triangulation. Baron and Kenny (1986) Four Causal Steps Approach for Mediation and One Way ANOVA (**F-test**) $p < .05$ were used in data analysis. The results revealed the existence of healthy, average healthy, and unhealthy reciprocal interactions in the family. The linear regression indicated that reciprocal interactions in the family significantly predicted academic scores of students and explained a significant proportion of variance in academic scores $\beta = .87$, $t(241) = 27.28$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .76$, $F(1, 241) = 744.12$, $p < .05$. Reciprocal interactions in the family significantly predicted masculinity and explained a significant proportion of variance in masculinity $\beta = .91$, $t(241) = 34.5$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .83$, $F(1, 241) = 1190.26$, $p < .05$. Reciprocal interactions in the family predicted femininity and explained a significant proportion of the variance in femininity $\beta = .66$, $t(241) = 13.7$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .44$, $F(1, 241) = 187.56$, $p < .05$. Sex-role self-concept significantly predicted and explained significant proportion of students' academic scores, $\beta = .81$, $t(241) = 21.55$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .66$, $F(1, 241) = 464.52$, $p < .05$. The influence of reciprocal interactions in the family on academic performance mediated via sex-role self-concept was statistically significant $z = -3.9$, $p < .05$. There was significant difference in academic performance of students from families with healthy, average healthy and unhealthy interactions in the family, $F(2, 240) = 121.62$, $p < .05$, masculinity scores of students from healthy, average healthy, and unhealthy reciprocal interactions $F(2, 240) = 207.44$, $p < .05$ and femininity score $F(2, 240) = 30.25$, $p < .05$. The mean scores on academic performance of androgynous, masculine, feminine and undifferentiated students were significantly different $F(3, 239) = 135.29$, $p < .05$. The study recommends that policy makers must address the contributions of family interactions in constructing sex-role self-concepts of family members and improve academic performance of students.