

**NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL EFFECT ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IMENTI  
NORTH SUB-COUNTY, MERU KENYA**

**Eze Joy Chiamaka**

Master of Arts in Counseling Degree of  
Kenya Methodist University. Phone: +2347015064918

**Dr. Monica Gitonga**

Student Counselor,  
Kenya Methodist University phone. +254725652345

**Mr. Eric Mwenda**

School of Education and Social Sciences  
Kenya Methodist University phone: +254721397046

**ABSTRACT**

Boy-girl relationships are expressions of adolescents' deep and strong emotional desires towards the opposite gender. They have been suggested as one of the factors influencing students' academic performance negatively. Poor academic performance has been associated with the emotional and cognitive impact of boy-girl relationships among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County Meru. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of boy-girl relationships among public secondary school students of Imenti North Sub-County, Meru, Kenya. The study was guided by the emotional effect of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students. The study anchored on the need to belong theory which unveils the motivation behind boy-girl relationships and how maintaining frequent and consistency in the relationship can result to emotional and cognitive issues among secondary school students; which in turn affect their academic performance negatively. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study consisted of 72 public secondary

schools; 144 teachers and 1,440 Form three students in North Imenti Sub-County. The findings of the study revealed that the emotional and cognitive effect of boy-girl relationships had adverse effect on the students' performance. Thus, guidance and counseling departments in secondary schools should take the high prevalence of students' past and current engagement into account when designing programs. The policy makers in the health and education sector should design policy of providing students with information about skills and attitudes on interpersonal relationships. Secondary school teachers should occasionally examine and give attention to students' level of concentrations in their respective classes. Parents, counselors, church leaders and teachers should maintain an approachable attitude for students to discuss their personal issues as it relates to boy-girl relationships. All these can aid to mitigate the negative impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students.

**Key words: Boy-Girl relationship, emotional desires, secondary school students.**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

A relationship is defined as when two or more people are connected, the state of being connected or close association between two or more people. According to Santrock (2015), Boy-girl relationships usually start when adolescents meet with the opposite gender and they develop attraction or feelings of likeness towards each other.

During adolescent developmental stage, most adolescents become interested and involved in dating because of the desire to belong with others. Baumeister and Leary (2005) argue that the need to belong is a fundamental human need to form and maintain at least a minimum amount of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships. In such case, academic performance can be negatively affected too. Santrock (2015) affirmed that love is highly satisfying and desirable only when it is mutual. However, the adolescent students who engage in boy-girl relationships are in school and need concentration in their studies. This study seeks to assess the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among adolescents and secondary school students.

Education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for economic growth and human development (Okumu, Nakajjo, & Isoke, 2012). Kapinga (2014) affirms that the primary focus of any secondary school student is to succeed academically; however, many get dragged by the

allure of being in boy-girl relationships which is one of the determinants of poor academic performance. Adell (2014) argued that the negative impact of boy-girl relationships among secondary school students during their pre-teen and early adolescent is a result of emotional and cognitive disorder. He stated that poor academic performance at high school is an international problem that has been linked to emotional and cognitive issues

Crissey (2016) observes that secondary school students cannot adequately manage their emotions, as they would sacrifice class attendance or study sessions to make their partners happy with their physical presence. Research conducted by Chung, Tracy and Bing (2013) indicated that young people who are into boy-girl relationships spend their time thinking, talking, and engaging in romantic activities; which in turn negatively affect the students' academic performance as a result of emotional and cognitive imbalance. Lucas and Curpuz (2016) implies that well handled boy-girl relationships can positively meet the emotional needs of the secondary school students and also increase their learning ability

Further, there is little available documented research on the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Kenya at large. Evidences from other countries may help to understand the existing relationship between boy-girl relationships and academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County, since studies in Imenti North has not dealt with the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among Secondary School Students. Ministry of Education advanced that guidance and counseling as the third force in education along with instruction is an integral part of the educational system (Republic of Kenya, 2015). Republic of Kenya (2015) further assets that guidance programs for secondary school students are designed to address the physical, emotional, social, vocational and academic difficulties of adolescent students. This helps complement learning in the classroom and also enhance academic performance/achievements of students. In view of this adolescents can be helped to negotiate their developmental, psychosocial and psychosexual stages effectively so as to mitigate the negative impact of boy-girl relationships on their academic performance through implementing psycho-educational interventions. This study seeks to assess the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

In secondary schools, adolescent students are expected to concentrate and focus on their studies in order to post positive performance in their academic pursuit. Academic performance among secondary school students can be affected by several factors. Among the factors advanced are cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and socio-economic factors. Boy-Girl relationships among adolescents have also been suggested as one of the factors influencing secondary school students' academic performance negatively. Early studies by Furman and Shaffer (2003) found that boy-girl relationships during high school were linked with lower GPA's or test scores. Some more recent studies by Rector (2014) also reported similar findings about emotional and cognitive effect of boy-girl relationships on secondary school students' academic performance. Poor academic performance has been associated with the emotional and cognitive effect of boy-girl relationships among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County Meru. Evidences from other countries may help to understand the existing relationship between boy-girl relationships and academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County, since studies in Imenti North has not dealt with the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among Secondary School Students. Boy-girl relationships may bring in stress and worry, social and non-social sacrifices, increased dependence on the partner, fights, and effort investment. These effects may also result to depression-related feelings, emotional disturbances and mismanagement of emotions among some of the students. Consequently, all these may also have an impact on the cognitive functioning of the students thus affecting their academic performance negatively. In view of this, the question to the impact of boy-girl relationships in relation to academic performance is pertinent. This study therefore, sought to assess the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among public secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County and to recommend an appropriate psycho-educational intervention to mitigate its negative impact on their academics.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of boy-girl relationships on the academic performance of public secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County Meru Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

To examine the emotional effect of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on heterosexual relationships among secondary schools students in public secondary schools within Imenti North Sub-County; and to assess how it affects their academic performance. The study mainly dealt with the boy-girl relationships of students in public secondary schools and therefore other factors like social upbringing, support structures, and the nature of the school attended (private, public, mixed or segregated schools), were not studied, though they may influence student boy-girl relationships. All these are wide areas of study that were not adequately captured and analyzed in the context of this study.

Form three students and their teachers were the respondents in the study. Form three students were chosen because they have stayed long in secondary school. Form four would have been included as respondent group but they are in their examination class. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in one sub - county namely Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County and the results were generalized to cover the whole County.

The study did not focus on the positive impact but on the negative impact of boy-girl relationships and how it affects the students' academic performance. This is to establish psycho-educational interventions to help these adolescent students to mitigate the negative impact of boy-girl relationships.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Impact of Boy-Girl Relationships on Academic Performance among Adolescent Students**

Boy-girl relationships have much to teach adolescents about communication, emotion, empathy, identity, and (for some couples) sex. While these lessons can often provide a valuable foundation for long-term relationships in adulthood, they are also important contributors to growth, resilience, and happiness in the teen years (Furman and Burhmester, 2014). Their research further explained that romantic partners are also a major source of support for many adolescents.

Among 10th grade students, only romantic partners provide more support (Furman & Burhmester, 2014). Furman (2010) pointed out that in adolescence, having a girlfriend or boyfriend can boost one's confidence. When relationships are characterized by intimacy and good communication, youths are happier with themselves. Young people value the support, trust, and closeness they experience in boy-girl relationships. Therefore, boy-girl relationship can have a positive influence if properly handled especially emotionally.

Aiello and Joanpere (2014) affirmed that relationships give adolescents the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, promote fun and thrill with the company and amusement of their partner. They pointed out that adolescents with no relationships tend to feel more lonely and unhappy and they usually show worse academic performance and lower self-esteem. As they grow older, they are more prone to drop out of school and engage in criminal activities. Aiello and Joanpere (2014) added that boy-girl relationships are as a result of their sex drive and the imitation of adult behavior. Most adolescents believe that sex should occur within the context of a romantic relationship, and while not all relationships are sexual, most sexually active youths have exclusive relationships (Aiello and Joanpere 2014). Boy-girl relationship has some positive consequences for the development of adolescent students, such as learning to interact with people of the opposite sex, having fun, hanging around with new people or experimenting new things. Boy-girl relationships may also affect other aspects of adolescents' development. For example, they have been hypothesized to contribute to the development of an identity, the transformation of family relationships, the development of close relationships with peers, the development of sexuality and scholastic achievement and career (Furman & Shomaker, 2010). According to Wahistrom, Dretze, Gordon, Peterson, Edwards, and Gdula (2014) stated that relationships help develop adolescents' personality. These researchers have theorized that romantic relationships are essential to the development of adolescents in different aspects such as transformation of family relationships, close relationships with peers, sexuality, and career planning. In counteract to that ideology, Luqman (2015) asserted that romantic relationships do not always affect the adolescents in a positive way. He pointed that there are instances in which romantic relationships may harm adolescents and, because of this, they need adults who will guide them in developing healthy relationships. According to Susan (2016), boy-girl relationships can sometimes lead to unhealthy outcomes. Young people can become too exclusive when they pair up, cutting themselves off from friendship and support networks in

ways that do not advance optimal development. Identity formation may be compromised if a teenager closes off developmental options through a partnership in which unhealthy living choices are made, or through early, unplanned parenthood (Susan, 2016). Silverman, Raj, Mucci and Hathaway (2015) affirm that boy-girl relationships are not however a simple “bed of roses.” One fifth of adolescents are victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse by a dating partner. Also, breakups are one of the strongest predictors of depression. Sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy are also major risks (Monroe, Rhoda, Seeley & Lewinson, 2013).

## **2.2 Emotional Effect of Boy-Girl Relationships on Academic Performance among Adolescent Students**

Connolly and Johnson (2014) assert that even though boy-girl relationships play an important role in the development of an adolescent, most boy-girl relationships in the adolescence stage last for only six months to one year. This situation implies frequent break-ups which cause emotional disturbances and depression among adolescents. Furman (2010) affirmed that breakups are mostly the cause of depression among adolescents, and also states that adolescents are mostly prone to problems in adjustment when they get involved in romantic relationships at an early stage of their adolescent life. Lowden (2012) reported that 19% of people agree that break-ups lead to heartbreak and heartbreak leads to depression. This in turn negatively affects their academic performance

Chen (2010) stated that boy-girl relationships have been associated with higher levels of depression, although their links with externalizing cognitive and emotional problems remain unclear. The study examined the impact of adolescent romantic relationships on depression and externalizing cognitive problems in a large sample of 10,509 Chinese secondary school students (ages 12-19, 54.5% female). The results showed that boy-girl relationships among secondary school students were associated with more emotional and cognitive problems (Chen, 2010).

According to Erikson (as cited by Feldman, Gowen and Fischer, 2008) people proceed through eight stages of psychosocial development across their lives. He suggested that each stage requires the resolution of a crises or conflict and may produce both positive and negative outcomes. During the identity-versus-role confusion period an adolescent feels pressure to identify what to do with his life. These pressures come at a time of major physical changes and adolescents find this period a difficult one, thus peer groups and close relationships become

increasingly important in clarifying their personal identities. Erikson (as cited by Feldman, Gowen and Fischer, 2008) added that the identity versus- role confusion stage marks a pivotal point in psychosocial development, paving the way for continued growth and the future development of personal relationships, and it is at this stage that if the adolescent does not cope sufficiently, they tend to become more isolated and less intimate which will have a lasting effect on the type of relationships they are in down the line (Feldman et al., 2008).

According to Cobb (2015), academic achievement and performance has degenerated in secondary schools as a result of emotional and psychological crises that result from boy-girl relationships among the students. Due to the fact that the students have not fully developed their emotional and psychological capacity, they find themselves ill prepared when they are faced with overwhelming emotional and psychological feelings that they cannot properly control (Suzan-Lori, 2015). In critic to this, students who are well instructed and guided in their relationships can as well handle depression-related feelings, emotional disturbances and able to manage emotional challenges; and also experience positive feelings that are associated with boy-girl relationships.

### **2.3 Cognitive Effect of Boy-Girl Relationships on Academic Performance among Adolescent Students**

According to Lucas and Curpuz (2016), quality personal relationships that provide stability, trust, and caring such as boy-girl relationships can increase learners' sense of belonging, self-respect and self-acceptance, and provide a positive climate for learning and thus increase academic performance. According to Santrock (2015) Theorists suggested that boy-girl relationships have a great role in the academic performance of adolescents. Vgotsky's theory stated that social interaction plays a very important role in the cognitive development of an individual and could not be understood without looking into the social and cultural context (Santrock, 2015). Furthermore, Vygotsky's ideas about cognitive development have become major influences in psychology and education today (Lucas &Corpuz, 2016). Parents, peers, and partners, on the other hand, cooperate, collaborate and enrich the learning experience. In this way, adolescents who are more knowledgeable can help in the cognitive development of their partners. Luqman (2015) affirmed that well handled boy-girl relationships can positively meet the emotional needs of the secondary school students and also increase their learning ability.

On the contrary, factors such as worrying about a relationship, disagreements, unmet promises, time and effort all take a toll on the adolescents, making the individual incapable of making competent decisions (Campbell & Oliver, 2014). Campbell and Oliver (2014) also pointed out some negative effects found in a boy-girl relationship such as; stress and worry about the relationship, social and non-social sacrifices, increased dependence on the partner, fights, time and effort investment. These effects cause anxiety and depression among some of the students' cognitive processes since Santrock (2015) stated that cognitive processes involve changes in the child's thinking, intelligence, and language. All these can result to low concentration tendency on the students cognitive process, thus affecting their academic performance negatively.

#### **2.4 The Need to Belong Theory**

The most influential version of the need to belong theory was proposed by Baumeister and Leary (2005), which put relationship need as one of the most important needs that human beings must fulfill. They compared satisfying the need to belong to securing necessities, such as food and shelter, which are needed to survive. According to Baumeister and Leary (2005), all human beings need a certain minimum quantity of regular, satisfying social interactions. Belongingness is such a fundamental human motivation that human beings feel severe consequences from not belonging. Because of this belongingness desire, secondary school students can be motivated to engage in boy-girl relationships; which reveals the prevalence of boy-girl relationships. Furthermore, Valsiner (2012) proposed that the aspect of the 'need to belong' theory includes people desiring a stable and enduring context of concern, caring and constant perspective of being cared for. He further stated that people engaging in a frequent interaction with the same person/group accomplish the state of full belongingness. But on the contrary, when there is unrequited love, it results to break-up which may lead to depression, emotional disturbances and mismanagement of emotional challenges while in school (Santrock 2015) This in turn affect the students' academic performance negatively.

Myers (2010) supported this theory by stating that people who find supportive persons, in whom they can confide in, feel accepted and prized. He added that this situation is associated with the arousal of irrepressible joy and happiness to the persons involved. Consequently, Baumeister and Leary (as cited in Gere and MacDonald, 2010) affirmed that individuals focus their attention on

their relationships and social connections, consuming cognitive and emotional/psychological resources, hence negatively impacting other domains including academics.

The study anchored on the need to belong theory which unveils the motivation behind boy-girl relationships and how maintaining frequent interaction in the relationship can result to emotional and cognitive effect on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County.

### **3.0 Research Design**

According to Helen (2013), research design is a blue print or plan specifically created to answer the research questions and to control variance. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive design describes systematically and accurately the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest. It helps to provide an accurate portrayal or account of characteristics of a particular individual, situation or group (Helen, 2013). In order to portray the characteristics of persons, situations or groups and the frequency with which certain phenomenon occur, descriptive design was adopted in this study. Descriptive design was the most appropriate for this study because the study aimed at obtaining descriptive, observations and self-reported data from the students and teachers. It helped to describe the state of affairs, as it exists at present and it was suitable because it allowed the researcher to administer questionnaires in order to gather data from the respondents. This design was also appropriate for the study since the researcher sought to make the information from the respondent confidential because the concept about boy-girl relationship among adolescent/secondary school students is a critical one.

### **3.1 Location of the Study**

This study was conducted in some public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru Kenya. Imenti North Sub-County is one of the administrative Sub-Counties of Meru County in Kenya consisting of 5 wards, namely; Ntima East, Ntima West, Nyaki East, Nyaki West and Municipality wards. According to County Education Office, (2014), there are a total of 285 public secondary schools within the county, with 72 of them found within Imenti North Sub-County.

### 3.2 Target Population

A population entails all the cases or individuals that fit specifically for being sources of data required in addressing a certain problem in a research. A target population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects that have common observable characteristics (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2015). The target population for this study was 72 public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Imenti North Sub-County was chosen for this study because there was no documented research on the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County. The researcher seeks to make a general survey on this aspect among secondary school students in Imenti North. Also, the Sub-County happens to be the only familiar location for the researcher. Data was collected from the target population of 1,440 Form three secondary students and 144 teachers which were drawn from the 72 public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru (County Education Office, 2014). It is from this target population that a sample was selected.

The students were of similar age range between ages 13 to 18 and above, they share other similar characteristics especially in their psychological and psycho-social development. The choice of Form three students was ideal because they have stayed long in secondary school. Form four would have been included as respondent group but they are in their examination class. More so, they were adolescent and had some idea about boy-girl relationships.

### 3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling means taking any portion of the target population as being representative of that population (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2015). Mugenda and Mugenda (2015) stated that random sampling technique is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. The researcher used simple random sampling to sample the schools, Form three students and teachers from the target population because every possible sample of a given size has the same chance of selection. Simple random sampling was considered appropriate for the study because it helped the researcher to make generalization about the sample and also helped to collect a wide range of specific participants with special characteristics since each sample has an equal probability of being chosen.

### **3.4 Sample size**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2015) recommend 10 to 30 percent of the population to represent the sample size. Ten percent was considered appropriate to sample the students and teachers from the selected seven schools. Therefore using the criteria of random sampling, the sample size for the students were 144 Form three students out of 1,440 students and 14 teachers out of 144 teachers. These were drawn from 7 public secondary schools out of 72 public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru. Only Form three was appropriate for this study because they are within the age range. Form four who would have fitted into the age range is an examination class. The respondents (teachers) were sampled from 144 teachers from 7 schools (out of 72 schools). The researcher took 10% of the teachers from all the 7 schools that were randomly selected.

Random sampling technique was also used to select the Form three students from the selected schools who were issued questionnaires. The researcher took 10% from the 1,440 form three students in the selected seven secondary schools.

## **4.0 Findings of the Study**

### **4.1 Emotional Effect of Boy-Girl relationships on Students' Academic Performance**

This section describes the emotional effect of boy-girl relationships on students' academic performance. This study revealed the students' response on the impact of depression-related feelings, emotional disturbances and mismanagement of emotional challenges on their test scores, completion of assignments and their personal studies.

#### **4.5.1 Impact of Depression-Related Feelings on Students' Test Scores**

**Table 1: Students’ Response on Impact of depression-related feelings on Test Scores**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.1
Disagree	22	22.4
Not sure	6	6.1
Agree	33	33.7
Strongly agree	32	32.7
Total	98	100.0

From the research findings, it was revealed that 33 (33.7%) respondents agreed that as a result of being into boy-girl relationships, depression had a negative impact on their test scores, 32 (32.7%) strongly agreed, 22 (22.4%) disagreed and 5 (5.1%) strongly disagreed while 6 (6.1%) of the respondents were not sure if depression affected their test scores. This result signifies that, in the opinion of the respondents, depression-related feelings arising from boy-girl relationships negatively influenced the students’ test scores, since nearly two thirds of the respondents upheld this view.

**4.2 Impact of Depression-Related Feelings on the Students’ Completion of Assignments**

**Table 2: Students’ Response on Impact of depression-related feelings on Completion of Assignments**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	6.1
Disagree	23	23.5
Not sure	7	7.1
Agree	27	27.6
Strongly agree	35	35.7
Total	98	100.0

The students were asked if completion of their assignments was interrupted by depression related feelings that result from boy-girl relationships. Slightly above a third of the respondents 35 (35.7%) strongly agreed, 27 (27.6%) agreed, 23 (23.5%) disagreed and 6 (6.1%) strongly disagreed while 7 (7.1%) were not sure if depression related feelings affected the completion of their assignments. This result suggests that, in the opinion of the respondents, depression related feelings affected the completion of the students’ assignments since only less than a third of the respondents held a divergent opinion.

### 4.3 Impact of Depression-Related Feelings on the Students’ Personal Studies

**Table 3 Students’ Response on Impact of Depression-Related Feelings on Personal Studies**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.1
Disagree	20	20.4
Not sure	13	13.3
Agree	27	27.6
Strongly agree	33	33.7
Total	98	100.0

The study established that a third 33 (33.7%) of the respondents firmly concurred that depression related feelings as a result of boy-girl relationships negatively influenced their personal studies. Also, 27 (27.6%) of the respondents agreed, 20 (20.4%) disagreed and 5 (5.1%) strongly disagreed while 13 (13.3%) were not sure if depression related feelings affected their personal studies. This result indicates that majority of the students were influenced by depression related feelings as a result of boy-girl relationships during their personal studies, since close to two third of the respondents believed so.

### 4.4 Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Students’ Test Scores

**Table 4: Students’ Response on Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Test Scores**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.1
Disagree	22	22.4
Not sure	4	4.1
Agree	30	30.6
Strongly agree	37	37.8
Total	98	100.0

The study revealed that 37 (37.8%) of the respondents who are into boy-girl relationships strongly agreed that emotional disturbances affected their test scores negatively, 30 (30.6%) agreed, 22 (22.4%) disagreed, and 5 (5.1%) strongly disagreed while 4 (4.1%) were not sure. This result suggests that majority of the students’ test scores were negatively influenced by emotional disturbances which arose from boy-girl relationships given that two third of the respondents accepted this view

**4.5 Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Students’ Completion of Assignments.**

**Table 5: Students’ Response on Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Completion of assignments**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	6.1
Disagree	28	28.6
Not sure	2	2.0
Agree	27	27.6
Strongly agree	35	35.7
Total	98	100.0

The study established that 35 (35.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that emotional disturbances adversely affected completion of their assignment, 28 (28.6%) disagreed, 27 (27.6%) agreed and 6 (6.1%) strongly disagreed, while 2 (2.0%) were not sure. This result indicates that students’ completion of assignments was affected by emotional disturbances since close to two thirds of the respondents consented to this opinion.

**4.6 Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Students’ Personal Studies.**

**Table 6: Students’ Response on Impact of Emotional Disturbances on Personal Studies**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.1
Disagree	24	24.5
Not sure	9	9.2
Agree	24	24.5
Strongly agree	36	36.7
Total	98	100.0

The study sought to establish the impact of emotional disturbances on personal studies of the students. Majority of the respondents 36 (36.7%) strongly agreed, 24 (24.5%) agreed, 24 (24.5%) disagreed, 9 (9.2%) were not sure and 5 (5.1%) strongly disagreed that emotional disturbances impacted on their personal studies. This result indicates that most of the students’ personal studies were affected by emotional disturbances from engagement in boy-girl relationships since nearly two thirds of the respondents upheld this view

#### 4.7 Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Students’ Test Scores

**Table 7: Students’ Response on Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Test Scores**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	8	8.2
Disagree	19	19.4
Not sure	6	6.1
Agree	28	28.6
Strongly agree	37	37.8
Total	98	100.0

#### 4.8 Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Students’ Completion of Assignment

**Table 8: Students’ Response on Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Completion of Assignments**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	5.1
Disagree	25	25.5
Not sure	5	5.1
Agree	24	24.5
Strongly agree	39	39.8
Total	98	100.0

Close to two fifths of the respondents 39 (39.8%) strongly agreed that mismanagement of emotional challenges had a negative impact on completion of their assignments, 25 (25.5%) disagreed, 24 (24.5%) agreed, 5 (5.1%) strongly disagreed, also 5 (5.1%) were not sure of the impact of mismanagement of emotional challenges on completion of their assignments. This result implies that mismanagement of emotional challenges which resulted from the students’

relationships negatively impacted on the completion of their assignments since nearly two third of the respondents agreed on this opinion.

#### 4.9 Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Students’ Personal Studies

**Table 9: Students’ Response on Impact of Mismanagement of Emotional Challenges on Personal Studies**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	4.1
Disagree	16	16.3
Not sure	23	23.5
Agree	25	25.5
Strongly agree	30	30.6
Total	98	100.0

The study sought to establish the negative impact of mismanagement of emotional challenges on the students’ personal studies. Majority of the respondents 30 (30.6%) strongly agreed that mismanagement of emotional challenges in their relationships had a negative impact on their personal studies, 25 (25.5%) agreed, 16 (16.3%) disagreed, and 23 (23.5%) were not sure; while 4 (4.1%) strongly disagreed. This result implies that the mismanagement of emotional challenges in the students’ relationships had a negative impact on their personal studies since more than half of the respondents upheld this view

#### 4.10 Discussions of the Findings: Emotional Effect of Boy-Girl relationships on Students’ Academic Performance

The study established that depression related feelings arising from boy-girl relationships negatively influenced the students’ test scores, completion of the students’ assignments and administration of the students’ personal studies. Besides, emotional disturbances arising from boy-girl relationships negatively influenced the students’ test scores, completion of the students’ assignments and administration of the students’ personal studies. It was further established that mismanagement of emotional challenges in the students’ relationships negatively influenced the

students' test scores, completion of the students' assignments and administration of the students' personal studies. Hence, the emotional impact of boy-girl relationships had adverse effect on the students' academic performance. This finding corresponds well with the findings of Cobb (2015) who asserted that academic achievement and performance had degenerated in secondary schools as a result of emotional and psychological crises that result from boy-girl relationships among the secondary school students. It is also in agreement with the finding of Suzan-Lori (2015) who argued that since students have not fully developed their emotional and psychological capacity, they find themselves ill prepared when they are faced with overwhelming emotional feelings such as depression, which they cannot properly control, consequently impacting negatively on their academic performance.

Therefore, secondary students should be guided with appropriate information about skills and attitudes that enhance their ability to negotiate difficult situations with the opposite gender and peers. Secondary school students need to be sensitive in handling their personal issues, sexual identity development and sexual orientation. All these can help the students scale through depressive moments, emotional disturbances and mismanagement of emotional challenges in their relationships; thus impacting positively on their academic performance.

### **5.0 Summary of the Findings**

Boy-girl relationships among adolescent students have been suggested as one of the factors influencing students' academic performance negatively. Poor academic performance was associated with the emotional and cognitive impact of boy-girl relationships among secondary school students in Imenti North sub-County Meru. To examine the emotional effect of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County,

A total of 144 students' questionnaires and 14 teachers' questionnaires were administered to the respondents. A total of 98 students' questionnaires were successfully completed as well as all the 14 teachers' questionnaire, hence a 70.9% return rate was achieved.

### **5.1 Emotional Effect of Boy-girl Relationships on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Imenti North**

The study sought to identify the emotional effect of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County. The study established that depression-related feelings arising from boy-girl relationships negatively influenced the students' academic performance. From the findings, depression-related feelings arising from boy-girl relationships negatively affected 65 (66.4%) of the students' test scores, 62 (63.3%) of the students' completion of the assignments and 60 (61.3%) of the students' personal studies. Emotional disturbances arising from boy-girl relationships negatively influenced 67 (68.4%) of the students' test scores, 62 (63.3%) of the students' completion of assignments and 59 (61.2%) of the students' personal studies. It was further established that mismanagement of emotional challenges in the students' relationships negatively influenced 65 (66.4%) of the students' test scores, 63 (64.3%) of the students' completion of assignments and 54 (56.1%) of the students' personal studies.

It was established that feelings of happiness in boy-girl relationships positively influenced 57 (58.2%) of the students' test scores, 51 (52.1%) of the students' completion of assignments and 58 (59.2%) of the students' personal studies. More so, the confidence derived from boy-girl relationships positively affected 49 (50%) of the students' test scores, 46 (47.9%) of the students' completion of assignments and 58 (59.2%) of the students' personal studies. It was further established that feelings of sense of belongingness had a positive influence on 53 (55.1%) of the students' test scores, 58.1% of completion of assignments and 61 (63.2%) of their personal studies.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

The study focused on assessing the impact of boy-girl relationships on academic performance among public secondary school students in Imenti North Sub-County. The study by use of questionnaires established that boy-girl relationships were predominant and widely spread among adolescent students, the emotional impact on boy-girl relationships had adverse effect on the students' academic performance, the cognitive impact on boy-girl relationships had adverse effect on the students' academic performance and that teachers played more significant role in mitigating negative impact of boy-girl relationships on students' academic performance.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The results from the study pointed out a number of opportunities for further research. The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. Relationship between boy-girl relationship and the developmental stages of adolescents.

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