



## East African Journal of Education Studies

eajes.eanso.org

Volume 7, Issue 4, 2024

Print ISSN: 2707-3939 | Online ISSN: 2707-3947

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-3947>

EANSO

EAST AFRICAN  
NATURE &  
SCIENCE  
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

### Self-Awareness as Part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda

Alexson Bukenyo Musinguzi<sup>1,2</sup>, Irene Aheisibwe<sup>1\*</sup> & Emmanuel Ahabwe<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Stuart University, P. O. Box 09, Mbarara, Uganda.

<sup>2</sup> Kyabugimbi Secondary School, P. O. Box 302, Bushenyi, Uganda.

\* Author for Correspondence Email: [iaheisibwe@feams.bsu.ac.ug](mailto:iaheisibwe@feams.bsu.ac.ug)

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208>

Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

13 September 2024

**Keywords:**

*Socio-emotional Learning,  
Self-Awareness,  
Academic Achievement,  
O-level Students,  
Secondary Schools,  
Kyabugimbi Sub County.*

**Introduction:** Academic achievement is one of the most important variables in determining educational outcomes and success outside of school. This study is about the relationship between self-awareness as part of socio-emotional learning and its implications on students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. **Objectives:** The study sought to examine the relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study design was used where data was collected at a single point in time. The study population comprised of 2,682 students in S1-S3 in six secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. The sample size comprised of 235 students. Data was collected using a self-administered close-ended questionnaire and analyzed by generating inferential statistics. **Findings:** The study findings show a strong positive significant relationship ( $r=0.681^{**}$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools. **Conclusions and recommendations:** The study concludes that self-awareness is one of the critical aspects for socio-emotional learning that play a significant role towards the students' academic achievement. The study recommends policymakers to prioritize self-awareness programs in schools, integrating self-awareness activities into the school curriculum, training teachers to help students develop self-awareness and educating parents on fostering the importance of self-awareness needs of their children at home.

#### APA CITATION

Musinguzi, A. B., Aheisibwe, I. & Ahabwe, E. (2024). Self-Awareness as part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 7(4), 30-43. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208>

#### CHICAGO CITATION

Musinguzi, Alexson Bukenyo, Irene Aheisibwe and Emmanuel Ahabwe. 2024. "Self-Awareness as part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 7 (4), 30-43. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208>

#### HARVARD CITATION

Musinguzi, A. B., Aheisibwe, I. & Ahabwe, E. (2024) "Self-Awareness as part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 7(4), pp. 30-43. doi: 10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208.

#### IEEE CITATION

A. B., Musinguzi, I., Aheisibwe & E., Ahabwe "Self-Awareness as part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda" *EAJES*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 30-43, Sep. 2024. doi: 10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208.

#### MLA CITATION

Musinguzi, Alexson Bukenyo, Irene Aheisibwe & Emmanuel Ahabwe. "Self-Awareness as part of Socio-Emotional Learning and its Implications on Academic Achievement among O-level Students in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, Uganda". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 7, no. 4, Sep. 2024, pp. 30-43, doi:10.37284/eajes.7.4.2208

## INTRODUCTION

Many nations around the world view academic achievement as crucial to their ability to prosper economically (Monroe & Lee, 2022; Steinmayr et al., 2015). However, many schools and academic institutions around the world continue to be concerned about helping students achieve academic success, particularly those in less developed nations (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). Around the world, the average rate of academic achievement is only 14.2%; only 26% of countries have reached this level, and 74% have not (Wisevoter, 2023). Worldwide, only three (3) nations—Singapore (71.4%), Hong Kong (66.7%), and Japan (58.0%)—have achieved a school academic achievement rate of greater than 50% (Wisevoter, 2023).

There are significant differences in educational attainment between African nations. According to data from the World Education Rankings, not a single African nation has reached the average global school achievement rate of 14.2%. Egypt (5.09%) has the highest school achievement rate in Africa, with Kenya (3.57%), South Africa (just 2.79%), Tunisia (2.56%), Zimbabwe (2.52%), Morocco (1.47%), and Madagascar (1.45%) following closely behind. The remaining countries have school achievement rates of less than 1% (Wisevoter, 2023).

Since gaining independence in 1962, the Ugandan government has been dedicated to developing the educational system to promote increased student participation and academic success (Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, 2023). Nonetheless, secondary school pupils continue to have a low academic achievement rate (Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, 2023). According to the United

Nations Development Program's education rankings, the nation is ranked 127<sup>th</sup> out of 163 countries, with an education index of 0.52 compared to the global average of 0.7, a literacy rate of 73.81% compared to the average of 85.8% worldwide, and a school achievement rate of 0.63% compared to the average of 14.2% worldwide (Wisevoter, 2023).

The socio-emotional learning (SEL) theory created by Goleman et al. (1994) served as the study's compass. In order to promote successful teaching and learning, this theory emphasizes the significance of comprehending and controlling emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in addition to establishing wholesome and productive relationships (Goleman et al., 1994). It places a focus on SEL skill development as a practical way to improve the teaching and learning process (Tarsono, 2018). According to Goleman et al. (1994), learning is seen as a social participation process in which people actively participate in activities and create identities in relation to social communities. The SEL theory has a significant bearing on secondary school academic achievement because it shows that fostering students' social and emotional competencies reduces emotional distress, improves academic achievement, and fosters resilience in learners (Vestad, 2022).

Developed in 1994, the term "socio-emotional learning" (SEL) primarily refers to explicit instruction and learning strategies that support students in developing knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in the five competency domains of relationships skills, self-awareness, self-management (self-regulation), social awareness, and responsible decision making. These are all

recognized as critical for both short- and long-term academic success as well as positive social and behavioral adjustment (Hayashi et al., 2022). Socio-emotional learning, according to Cristóvão et al. (2017), is the ability to identify and control emotions, find effective solutions to problems, and build strong interpersonal bonds. However, according to Anziom et al. (2021), socio-emotional learning is a set of skills that kids need to succeed and be accepted in society. The present study defined socio-emotional learning as the students' knowledge, skills, and abilities that help them identify who they are in order to succeed and be accepted members of society.

Marsay et al. (2021) define self-awareness as knowing one's own feelings, thoughts, values, and abilities as well as being conscious of how these things may impact one's relationships with others. The ability of a student to recognize his or her own feelings and perspective on the world, as well as their strengths, self-assurance, and problem-solving skills, is referred to in the current study as self-awareness. Academic achievement is defined in terms of academic outcomes which shows how well students have learned in relation to their grade point average from exams or ongoing assessments in the short term, or completion rates and successful progression from one level to another in the long term (Tophat, 2023). However, in this study, academic achievement was measured by a student's capacity to meet the majority of the learning competencies outlined in the recently implemented lower secondary school curriculum. As a result, academic achievement was evaluated using the current lower secondary school curriculum, which divides students' performance into three categories: outstanding, moderate, and basic.

Bushenyi District of Western Uganda lies the fourth-order administrative division known as Kyabugimbi Sub-County. The location is in the east constituency of Igara County, bordering the districts of Sheema, Buhweju, Kyeizooba, Ruhumuro, and Nyakabirizi to the north and west, south, and east, respectively. Kibona Secondary School, Nyakabanga Secondary School, Bushenyi High School, Mujuni Foundation School, Kajunju Blessed Secondary School, and Kyabugimbi

Secondary School are the six (6) secondary schools in the sub county. These institutions offer mixed-day and boarding programs at both ordinary (O) and advanced (A) levels. Low academic achievement among secondary school students in Kyabugimbi Sub County has a long history. In the past ten years, a significant portion of secondary school O-level candidates have failed, with over 50% of candidates receiving division three, division four, or division nine scores.

In contrast to the previous curriculum, which was theory-oriented, Uganda's lower secondary curriculum was redesigned in 2020 with an emphasis on enhancing socio-emotional learning competencies (The Independent News, 2022). Secondary school students now have the chance to learn in groups and engage with one another outside of the classroom through co-curricular activities as part of the new curriculum (Chemonges, 2022). Students' critical thinking, collaboration or teamwork, communication, information literacy, ICT, and flexibility all improve as a result of this interaction. These skills are crucial in helping students develop socio-emotional learning competencies like self-awareness, self-management, and interpersonal relationships (Chemonges, 2022). Being a new innovation in the school curriculum, it remains unknown whether socio-emotional learning can contribute positively towards students' academic achievement.

There has been a continuous fall in academic achievement in government-aided secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, despite the important short- and long-term effects of academic achievement especially in science subjects such as biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and English/literature. Low academic achievement has been a major source of concern for parents, students, school administrators, and policy makers in the majority of schools. Goal 4, which aims to provide high-quality education for all, will not be realized as quickly as planned if this issue is not resolved.

No study has been done yet in the study area to assess the relationship between self-awareness as part of socio-emotional learning and its implications on students' academic achievement. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the

relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement among students in Kyabugimbi Sub County secondary schools.

**Hypothesis of the Study**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no positive significant relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County

**Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. Kyabugimbi Sub-County is found in Bushenyi District of Western Uganda. The location is in the east constituency of Igara County, bordering the districts of Sheema, Buhweju, Kyeizooba, Ruhumuro, and Nyakabirizi to the north and west, south, and east, respectively. As of 2021, there were 20,600 people living in the sub-county (Bushenyi District Local Government, 2021). The sub-county has six (6) secondary schools including Kibona Secondary School, Nyakabanga Secondary School, Bushenyi High School, Mujuni Foundation School, Kajunju

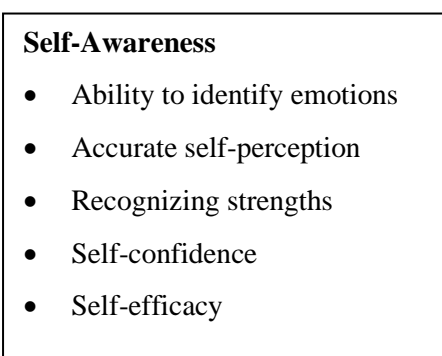
Blessed Secondary School, and Kyabugimbi Secondary School. This region was chosen due to its history of low academic achievement in secondary education.

**Significance of the Study**

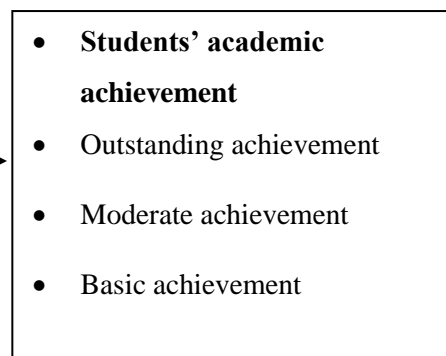
The results of this study hold importance for various parties involved in education, such as educators, head teachers, students, and education officials within the Ministry of Education and Sports. The results may be used by the Ministry of Education and Sports to identify the need of adding programs for improving students' socio-emotional learning to the school curriculum in order to raise academic achievement. They would help head teachers and school administration to comprehend the significance of socio-emotional learning for academic success. This understanding will enable them to implement programs aimed at enhancing socio-emotional learning competencies. They can be used by educators to implement new and creative teaching strategies that will help students learn more socio-emotionally and achieve better academically. Finally, by carefully examining the relationship between socio-emotional learning and student achievement, the study contributed to the body of knowledge already available on the factors influencing student achievement.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Independent Variable:**



**Dependent variable:**



**Source:** Adopted from the literature (CASEL, 2017) and modified by the researcher

The conceptual framework above depicts the relationship between the students' academic achievement as a dependent variable and self-awareness as the independent variable. Self-awareness was operationalized into identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing

strengths, self-confidence and self-efficacy (CASEL, 2019). These skills are believed to improve students' social skills, academic achievement, and interpersonal relationships while they are in school; they also lessen behavioral issues and psychological discomfort and help to prepare

young people for success in the workplace, in college, with their families, and in society at large. Conversely, the operationalization of students' academic achievement was based on the average percentage of students' passing grades in O-level required subjects, such as English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, and History.

## Literature review

### Theoretical Review

The socio-emotional learning (SEL) theory, which was created by Goleman et al. (1994), provided support for the study. In order to promote successful teaching and learning, the socio-emotional learning theory emphasizes the significance of comprehending and controlling emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in addition to establishing wholesome and productive relationships (Goleman et al., 1994). It places a strong emphasis on the growth of socio-emotional abilities like resilience, self-assurance, empathy, and handling challenging circumstances. The theory acknowledges the usefulness of socio-emotional competencies in improving the process of teaching and learning. Additionally, it recognizes how cognitive elements—like expectations, beliefs, and interpretations—affect behavior and learning (Tarsono, 2018). According to the theory, learning is a social participation process in which people create identities in connection to their social communities by actively participating in activities (Goleman et al., 1994).

The socio-emotional learning theory has a lot to do with secondary school academic achievement. Studies have indicated that the adoption of social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula in secondary education results in enhanced student conduct, improved learning outcomes, and improved academic performance (Thomas & Asha, 2022). According to a study conducted in China, self-efficacy and the relationships between teachers and students acted as mediators in the relationship between students' academic performance and their socio-emotional skills (Huang & Zeng, 2023). A social emotional model for coping with learning was found to improve learning outcomes for both teachers and students in another Tanzanian study,

demonstrating the efficacy of SEL in raising academic achievement (Sospeter et al., 2021). Furthermore, social and emotional factors had a direct impact on students' perceived cognitive competence and academic performance, according to a study done in a large school district in Alberta. This finding highlights the significance of social and emotional skill development for academic success (Hachem et al., 2022). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that fostering students' social and emotional competencies reduces emotional distress, supports academic achievement, and increases resilience in learners (Vestad, 2022).

However, there are certain drawbacks to the social and emotional learning (SEL) theory. Despite the benefits of SEL programs and their potential to raise teachers' emotional intelligence, one drawback is the dearth of training for educators in the social and emotional components of their jobs (Johnson & Bradbury, 2015). The theory's applicability to corporate and state criminality is further limited by its emphasis on self-report studies of teenagers and college students (Bradshaw, 2011). Furthermore, the inconsistent results of communication skills training on relationship outcomes suggest that the theory may not offer a strong basis for relationship-sustaining interventions (Tošić-Radev & Pesikan, 2017). Moreover, the family theory literature does not provide a thorough discussion of social learning theory, despite the fact that it has been developed in the context of families with adolescents (Wosidlo & Kunkel, 2017). These drawbacks emphasize the need for additional study and the inclusion of various approaches to improve the SEL theory's applicability and comprehensiveness.

### Empirical Literature Review

Students' academic performance in senior secondary schools was found to be positively correlated with their level of self-awareness, according to research conducted by Obilor & Briggs (2021) on the relationship between students' academic achievement and self-awareness in secondary schools in Nigeria. However, the setting in which this study was carried out—Nigeria—may have different academic achievement levels than Uganda. Additionally, because accounting is not

taught in Uganda, the study was restricted to academic achievement in that subject. It's possible that this means the findings cannot be applied to Uganda.

The study conducted by David & Ukpong (2016) investigated the relationship between business education students' academic performance and self-awareness at Federal Universities. The results indicated that self-awareness had a noteworthy impact on students' academic performance. However, this study was carried out in Nigeria, where academic achievement may not be as high as it is in Uganda. Additionally, the study was restricted to academic achievement in accounting, a subject that is not taught in Uganda. As a result, it's possible that the findings cannot be applied to Uganda. The study's focus was on business education students at Federal Universities, and its findings might not apply as much in a secondary school setting.

Amalu, (2018) looked at the relationship between students' achievement in secondary school and their level of self-awareness. The results showed that students' academic performance was significantly impacted by their level of self-awareness. However, this study was carried out in Nigeria, where academic achievement may not be as high as it is in Uganda.

According to an investigation by Shuib et al. (2018) into students' achievement in Malaysian primary schools and their level of self-awareness, students' academic achievement is strongly correlated with their level of self-awareness. The study was carried out in Malaysia, whose secondary school academic performance is measured differently than Uganda's. Furthermore, it's possible that the findings cannot be applied to Uganda. Additionally, primary school students—a class of elementary school children—were included in the study. Self-awareness concept among primary school pupils differs from those in secondary school context hence need for the study.

In their investigation of the relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement in Indonesian secondary schools, Soeprijanto et al. (2022) found a direct correlation between the two. However, this study was carried out in Indonesia,

where academic achievement may not be as high as it is in Uganda. The study was also done with vocational teacher education students, whose concept of self-awareness and degree of accomplishment is different from secondary school students', so the findings cannot be applied to a secondary school setting.

According to Dost et al. (2017), self-awareness education improved Iranian students' academic performance. However, this study was carried out in Iran, where grading and academic achievement levels may not be the same as in Uganda. The study, which was also carried out among Iranian pre-university students, was limited to examining their performance in the English language, so it cannot be applied to other subjects like the current study. The pre-university level in Iran is comparable to Uganda's advanced level, so although the previous study concentrated on students at higher secondary school levels, the current study concentrates on students at lower secondary school levels.

Pitlik (2021) investigated the relationship between students' accomplishments in upper secondary schools and their self-awareness as a social emotional learning competency. The results showed that students' self-awareness increases their likelihood of succeeding academically. The study was carried out in Iowa with college students whose academic achievement metrics and curricula were different from those used in secondary schools.

The literature review suggests that there is a positive and significant relationship between students' academic achievement and self-awareness in the majority of studies (Amalu, 2018; David & Ukpong, 2016; Dost et al., 2017; Obilor & Briggs, 2021; Obilor & Ndugbu, 2022; Pitlik, 2021; Shuib et al., 2018; Soeprijanto et al., 2022). The majority of research, however, has been carried out in other nations, including Nigeria (Amalu, 2018; David & Ukpong, 2016; Obilor & Briggs, 2021; Obilor & Ndugbu, 2022), Iran (Dost et al., 2017), the United States (Pitlik, 2021), Malaysia (Shuib et al., 2018), and Indonesia (Soeprijanto et al., 2022). The results of these studies might not be applicable in Uganda because curricula vary from nation to nation. Other research may not apply in a secondary school setting because it was conducted in a primary school (Shuib

et al., 2018) or a higher education setting (David & Ukpong, 2016; Soeprijanto et al., 2022). The study is required because of the aforementioned research gaps in the Ugandan setting and secondary school context, which must be filled with additional research on SEL and academic achievement.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The research employed a cross-sectional design, which aims to gather data from the population at a single point in time. The study adopted a quantitative approach where inferential statistics were generated to describe the characteristics of the population and understand the correlations between variables respectively.

### Study Population and Sampling

The study population included O-level students enrolled in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County, grades S1 through S3. According to reports derived from interviews with specific school head teachers, Kyabugimbi Sub County has 2682 secondary school students. The sample size included 235 students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. This was determined using Krejcie and Morgan tables. Simple random sampling was used in the study to choose O-level students from Kyabugimbi Sub County's S1, S2, and S3 secondary schools where each student had an independent and equal chance of taking part in the research. This provided an appropriate blend of student feedback on self-awareness and students' academic achievement with various socioeconomic backgrounds.

### Data Collection

Data was gathered using a questionnaire approach, in which a series of statements-based questions was created, each with a 5-point response scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to help the respondent answer. The questionnaire was self-administered by the respondent and consisted of closed-ended questions meant to elicit all the data required to address particular goals. The self-awareness scale used was adopted by (Coelho et al., 2016; Coryn et al., 2009; Ülvey & Ozkul, 2018;

Zych et al., 2018). The current new lower secondary curriculum uses a 3-point grading scale to determine student achievement, so student achievement was determined in accordance with that system. These ranges are: 0.9-1.5 for basic level, 1.6-2.5 for moderate achievement, and 2.6-3.0 for outstanding achievement. The method was also suitable because the respondent completed it at their convenience and with a high degree of secrecy.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics particularly frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the biodata of the respondents. Inferential analysis was used in analyzing specific objectives where Pearson correlation coefficients were employed to generate relationships between variables and regression analysis used to determine the predictive power of different SEL dimensions on academic achievement.

### Ethical Considerations

Prior to beginning data collection, the researcher secured Bishop Stuart University's (BSU) ethical clearance. The study was explained to every student, and each participant who was above 18 years old signed a consent form. Students who were below 18 years were consented to by their teachers on behalf. Every student had the option to discontinue participation at any time, and participation was entirely voluntary. Nowhere in this report are the names or identities of the respondents disclosed, protecting confidentiality. In order to avoid being identified, students were also permitted to respond to questionnaires whenever and wherever was most convenient for them.

## Results

### Biodata of the respondents

The biodata of the respondents in Table 1 show that majority (56.6%) of the O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County are females while 43.4% are males. The gender distribution may reflect the actual student population in the schools where the population of females tend to be higher than the male population. The results in Table 1 also show that majority

(96.2%) of the O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County are still young below 18 years of age with a mean age of  $17 \pm 2$  years. Students at this age are generally in adolescence, a critical period for self-awareness and general socioemotional development. Given that these students are in a sensitive developmental stage, self-awareness programs targeted at this age group could be particularly impactful in supporting their emotional and social development, which is crucial at this stage of life. Further, the results in Table 1 also show that majority (36.2%) of the O-

level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County were in form one, 29.4% were in form 2 while 34.5% were in form 3. The decreasing percentage from Form 1 to Form 3 may suggest that some students are not advancing to higher forms, possibly due to dropout rates or academic challenges. Students who struggle to progress might experience feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem, impacting their socioemotional well-being. Those who drop out may miss out on important social skills and emotional awareness developed in school.

**Table 1: Respondents' biodata**

|   | Respondents' biodata | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender  | Male                 | 102       | 43.4           |
|   | Female               | 133       | 56.6           |
|   | Total                | 235       | 100.0          |
| Age ( <i>Mean age=17 years, Std.Dev.= 2 years</i> ) | 13 years             | 3         | 1.3            |
|   | 14 years             | 14        | 6.0            |
|   | 15 years             | 38        | 16.2           |
|   | 16 years             | 53        | 22.6           |
|   | 17 years             | 73        | 31.1           |
|   | 18 years             | 33        | 14.0           |
|   | 19 years             | 12        | 5.1            |
|   | 20 years             | 6         | 2.6            |
|   | 22 years             | 3         | 1.3            |
|   | Total                | 235       | 100.0          |
| Class   | S1                   | 85        | 36.2           |
|   | S2                   | 69        | 29.4           |
|   | S3                   | 81        | 34.5           |
|   | Total                | 235       | 100.0          |
| Boarding Status                                     | Boarding             | 164       | 69.8           |
|   | Day scholar          | 71        | 30.2           |
|   | Total                | 235       | 100.0          |

**Source: Primary data, 2024**

The results in table 1 also show that majority (69.8%) of the O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County were in boarding status while only 30.2% were day scholars. With the majority of students in boarding schools, students might have greater access to support systems, such as counselors, teachers, and peers, who are consistently available. This constant support can be beneficial for their self-awareness development, especially in times of stress or personal challenges. Boarding school students often

develop a stronger sense of independence and responsibility due to being away from home. This environment can foster self-awareness skills which are crucial components of SEL.

### **Descriptive Results**

#### ***Levels of Self-Awareness among students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County***

The descriptive results on students' self-awareness are presented in table 2 below.



**Table 2: Descriptive Results**

| Self-awareness   | N   | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Dev |
|--|-----|-----|-----|------|----------|
| I know how to label my emotions  | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.57 | .652     |
| I understand situations and thoughts that cause me to feel happy, sad, angry, or frustrated. | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.44 | .531     |
| I can express my emotions without getting mad, excited, or yelling.                          | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.42 | .651     |
| I understand how my family, school, and community can support my success in school.          | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.50 | .776     |
| I can explain what I need to do to reach a goal  | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.52 | .616     |
| I keep track of my progress toward a goal  | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.49 | .629     |
| I differentiate one emotion from another   | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.43 | .626     |
| I know how my emotions influence what I do   | 235 | 1   | 4   | 2.44 | .620     |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 235 |     |     |      |          |

**Source:** Primary data, 2024

According to the results in Table 2, most of the students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi sub county had neutral response on their knowledge on how to label their emotions (Mean=2.57;Std.Dev.=.652), their understand on how their families, schools, and community can support their success in school (Mean=2.50;Std.Dev.=.776) and ability to explain what they need to do to reach a goal (Mean=2.52;Std.Dev.=.616).

However, majority of the students disagreed about their understanding of situations and thoughts that cause them to feel happy, sad, angry, or frustrated (Mean=2.44; Std.Dev.=.531), their ability to express their emotions without getting mad, excited, or yelling (Mean=2.42; Std.Dev.=.651), their ability

to keep track of their progress toward a goal (Mean=2.49; Std. Dev.=.629), ability to differentiate one emotion from another (Mean=2.43; Std. Dev.=.626) and knowledge on how their emotions influence what they do (Mean=2.44; Std. Dev.=.620).

In general, the results indicate that majority of the students had low levels of self-awareness about their emotions, self-perception, their strengths, self-confidence and self-efficacy.

#### *Levels of Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County*

The descriptive results on students' students' academic achievement are presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Descriptive Results on Students' Academic Achievement**

| Academic Achievement | N   | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----------|
| English              | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.51 | .595      |
| Mathematics          | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.47 | .615      |
| Physics              | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.36 | .592      |
| Chemistry            | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.38 | .597      |
| Biology              | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.40 | .621      |
| Geography            | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.49 | .587      |
| History              | 235 | 1   | 3   | 2.51 | .616      |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 235 |     |     |      |           |

**Source:** Primary data, 2024

The results in Table 3 above indicate that majority of the respondents had moderate level of achievement (1.6-2.5) in all subjects taught at O' level.

#### **Correlation Analysis Results on the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County**

A Pearson correlation analysis was done to determine magnitude and the direction of the

relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in

secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. The results are presented in table 4.

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis Results**

| Pearson Correlation Results    |                     | Self-Awareness | Students' Academic Achievement |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Self-Awareness                 | Pearson Correlation | 1              |                                |
|                                | Sig. (1-tailed)     |                |                                |
|                                | N                   | 235            |                                |
| Students' Academic Achievement | Pearson Correlation | .681**         | 1                              |
|                                | Sig. (1-tailed)     | .000           |                                |
|                                | N                   | 235            | 235                            |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Primary data, 2024

The study findings in table 4 show a moderate positive significant relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement ( $r=0.681^{**}$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The results imply that proper self-awareness is associated with an increase in students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. Basing on the results, the study rejects the null hypothesis  $H_0$  which states that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County.

**Discussion**

The results indicate that majority of the students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi sub county had low levels of self-awareness about their emotions, self-perception, their strengths, self-confidence and self-efficacy. The results also indicate that majority of the respondents had moderate level of achievement (1.6-2.5) in all subjects taught at O' level. Where the level of awareness was compared with the students' academic achievement, the study results reveal a strong and positive significant relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. This indicates that a positive change in self-awareness is associated with an increase in students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. This means that students who are more self-aware tend to perform better academically. This could be because

self-aware students are more likely to understand their strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals, and take responsibility for their learning. They may also be better at managing their time, emotions, and stress, all of which contribute to academic achievement. This indicates that schools and educators might benefit from integrating emotional and self-awareness training into the curriculum to improve students' overall academic outcomes. Given this relationship, interventions aimed at enhancing students' self-awareness could potentially lead to improvements in their academic performance. Programs or activities that encourage students to reflect on their learning processes, understand their emotional states, and develop self-management skills could be beneficial. These findings underscore the importance of fostering environments that support the development of self-awareness. The relationship highlights the need for a holistic approach to education that goes beyond traditional academic subjects to include the development of personal and social competencies, which are crucial for students' overall success.

The findings are in agreement with Obilor & Briggs (2021) whose findings in Nigeria revealed that students' academic performance in senior secondary schools is positively correlated with their level of self-awareness. The findings are also in line with the results of David & Ukpong (2016) from Federal Universities in Nigeria where it was revealed that self-awareness had a noteworthy impact on students' academic performance. Further, the findings are in line with Amalu (2018) whose results from Nigeria showed that students' academic

performance in secondary schools was significantly impacted by their level of self-awareness. The study further agrees with Shuib et al. (2018) whose study in Malaysian primary schools revealed that students' academic achievement is strongly correlated with their level of self-awareness. The results are also supported by Soeprijanto et al. (2022) whose results from Indonesian secondary schools found a direct correlation between self-awareness and student achievement. Dost et al. (2017) also supports the findings since their study in China revealed that self-awareness education improved Chinese students' academic performance. Lastly, the findings agree with Pitlik (2021) whose results showed that students' self-awareness increases their likelihood of succeeding academically in secondary schools in Iowa state, United States. Since the results agree with almost all the studies in other countries, they clearly indicate that self-awareness is a general concept and a key factor that positively improves academic achievement in not only Uganda but also in other countries whether developed, developing or underdeveloped.

### Conclusions

The study concluded that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. The findings suggest that self-awareness is a critical factor in academic achievement. Students who develop strong self-awareness are likely to continue to achieve academically and professionally, as they are better equipped to manage their learning processes, set realistic goals, and overcome challenges. By focusing on enhancing self-awareness, schools can potentially improve student outcomes, leading to a more effective and holistic educational experience.

The study concludes that there is moderate and positive significant relationship between self-awareness and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. The study's findings suggest that enhancing students' self-awareness skills could lead to improved academic outcomes, necessitating a multi-faceted approach involving

curriculum changes, policy development, parental involvement, and continued research. These implications highlight the critical role of self-awareness in student success and the potential benefits of integrating this focus into educational practices in Kyabugimbi Sub County and beyond.

The study concludes that there is moderate and positive significant relationship between interpersonal relations and students' academic achievement among O-level students in secondary schools in Kyabugimbi Sub County. The results suggest that fostering positive interpersonal relationships among students is crucial for their academic achievement. Schools, parents, and communities need to work together to create environments that support and enhance these relationships.

### Recommendations

Policymakers might consider developing and implementing policies that prioritize self-awareness programs in schools. This could involve creating guidelines for schools to follow or providing resources for the development of self-awareness programs at school.

The findings suggest that integrating self-awareness training into the curriculum could enhance academic performance. Schools might consider incorporating self-awareness exercises, reflective practices, and activities that promote emotional intelligence into the education curricula.

The findings support the creation of interventions aimed at improving students' self-awareness abilities, which could lead to enhanced academic achievement. Such interventions could be in the form of workshops, counseling sessions, or extracurricular activities. Schools need to develop mentorship programs that can help students better understand their strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, which could lead to improved academic performance.

Teachers could be trained to help students develop self-awareness, which in turn could improve academic outcomes. This may involve professional development on how to create a classroom environment that fosters self-reflection. Teachers

could consider tailoring educational support and teaching to individual students based on their self-awareness abilities. Students who struggle with self-awareness might benefit from additional resources, such as mentorship programs or peer support systems.

The findings could be used to educate parents on the importance of fostering self-awareness in their children. Parents could be encouraged to engage in activities at home that promote self-reflection, goal setting, and self-assessment. A focus on self-awareness might lead to the promotion of supportive home environments where students feel safe to express themselves and reflect on their experiences, contributing positively to their academic performance.

### Policy Implications

The results could influence educational policymakers to prioritize the development of self-awareness as part of the national education agenda. Policies might be developed to ensure that self-awareness is a key component of the educational system. Traditional methods of evaluating student performance might evolve to include assessments of self-awareness thereby encouraging students to develop these skills alongside academic knowledge to improve their academic achievement.

### Study Limitations and Suggested areas for Further Study

This study adopted a cross-sectional design where data was collected within a short period of time. This could have ignored a longitudinal trend in achievement and how it was affected by changes in socioemotional learning. Further study needs to be done using a longitudinal study design.

The study exploited a quantitative approach where only quantifiable data were collected. However, such approach ignores a detailed explanation by students on self-awareness and how it can influence academic achievement. There is need for a similar study to be done using a qualitative approach such that views and opinions of students are covered.

### Suggested areas for further studies

The researcher encourages further research to explore the relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement in different contexts, such as in other regions, age groups, or educational levels. This could lead to a broader understanding of how self-awareness impact Students' Academic Achievement. Other socioemotional learning competences such as self-management and social awareness need to be integrated within the scope of socioemotional learning.

Future studies might focus on testing specific interventions designed to enhance self-awareness and measure their direct impact on academic achievement, providing more concrete evidence for educational practices.

### REFERENCES

- Al-Zoubi, S. M., & Younes, M. A. B. (2015). Low Academic Achievement: Causes and Results. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(11), 2262. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0511.09>
- Amalu, M. (2018). Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 11(1), 63–70. <http://www.ij sre.com>
- Anziom, B., Strader, S., Sanou, A. S., & Chew, P. (2021). Without Assumptions: Development of a Socio-Emotional Learning Framework That Reflects Community Values in Cameroon. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9, 200. <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPUBH.2021.602546/BIBTEX>
- Bradshaw, E. A. (2011). *A rose by any other name: state criminality and the limits of social learning theory*. <https://typeset.io/papers/a-rose-by-any-other-name-state-criminality-and-the-limits-of-4vakotu65o>
- CASEL. (2017). *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies*. <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CASEL-Competencies.pdf>

- CASEL. (2019). *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Student Benefits: Implications for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Core Elements*.
- Chemonges, T. (2022). *Ugan-da's new cur-ricu-lum for Lower Sec-ondary: Will it meet learn-ers' skill needs? – Parliament Watch*. <https://parliamentwatch.ug/blogs/ugandas-new-curriculum-for-lower-secondary-will-it-meet-learners-skill-needs/>
- Coelho, V. A., Sousa, V., & Marchante, M. (2016). Social and Emotional Competencies Evaluation Questionnaire—Teacher's Version. *Psychological Reports*, 119(1), 221–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116656617>
- Coryn, C. L. S., Spybrook, J. K., Evergreen, S. D. H., & Blinkiewicz, M. (2009). Development and evaluation of the social-emotional learning scale. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 27(4), 283–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282908328619>
- Cristóvão, A. M., Candeias, A. A., & Verdasca, J. (2017). Social and emotional learning and academic achievement in Portuguese schools: A bibliometric study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01913>
- David, U. S., & Ukpong, O. U. (2016). Influence of Self and Social Awareness on Business Education Students' Academic Performance in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 4(6), 1–8.
- Dost, E. N., Hashemifardnya, A., & Jalali, V. (2017). Emotional Intelligence in High School: The Effects of Self-Awareness Instruction on Iranian Pre-university Students' Academic Achievement. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering Research and Science*, 2(4), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijaers.4.6.11>
- Goleman, D., Greenberg, M. T., Growald, E. R., Lantieri, L., Shriver, T. P., Sluyter, D. J., & Weissberg, R. P. (1994). Emotional Intelligence. *CASEL*.
- Hachem, M., Gorgun, G., Chu, M. W., & Bulut, O. (2022). Social and Emotional Variables as Predictors of Students' Perceived Cognitive Competence and Academic Performance. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 37(4), 362–384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735221118474>
- Hayashi, A., Liew, J., Aguilar, S. D., Nyanamba, J. M., & Zhao, Y. (2022). Embodied and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Early Childhood: Situating Culturally Relevant SEL in Asian, African, and North American Contexts. *Early Education and Development*, 33(5), 746–763. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2021.2024062>
- Huang, C., & Zeng, X. (2023). Social and emotional development of disadvantaged students and its relationship with academic performance: evidence from China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1170656/PDF>
- Johnson, M. D., & Bradbury, T. N. (2015). Contributions of Social Learning Theory to the Promotion of Healthy Relationships: Asset or Liability? *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 7(1), 13–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/JFTR.12057>
- Marsay, G., Atitsogbe, K. A., Ouedraogo, A., Nsubuga, H., Pari, P., Kossi, E. Y., Park, C. M., Scott, V., Solberg, H., Ki-Zerbo, J., Faso, B., & Solberg, V. S. (2021). The importance of social emotional learning skills in assisting youth to successfully transition into the professional world. *African Journal of Career Development*, 3(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.4102/AJCD.V3I1.37>
- Monroe, S., & Lee, M. (2022). Achievement growth modeling. *International Encyclopedia of Education: Fourth Edition*, 381–389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818630-5.10047-8>
- Obilor, E. I., & Briggs, Y. (2021). Evaluation of the nexus between self-Concept, self-awareness, self-motivation and students' academic performance in accounting in senior secondary

- schools in Rivers state. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development*, 9(2), 159–169.
- Pitlik, K. (2021). *Social-Emotional-Learning and the Impact on Student Achievement*. [https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/education\\_masters](https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/education_masters)
- Shuib, N. H., Ishak, N. M., Amat, S., & Ahmad, I. (2018). Emotional intelligence and academic achievement of primary school students in Malaysia. *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 2(9), 594–601.
- Soeprijanto, S., Diamah, A., & Rusmono, R. (2022). The Effect of Digital Literacy, Self-Awareness, and Career Planning on Engineering and Vocational Teacher Education Students' Learning Achievement. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 12(1), 172–190. <https://doi.org/10.3926/JOTSE.1434>
- Sospeter, M., Shavega, T. J., & Mnyanyi, C. (2021). Social emotional model for coping with learning among adolescent secondary school students. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 19(2), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.4314/GJEDR.V19I2.6>
- Steinmayr, R., Meißner, A., Weidinger, A. F., & Wirthwein, L. (2015). Academic Achievement. *Oxford Bibliographies*, February 2022, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199756810>
- Tarsono, T. (2018). Implications of Albert Bandura's social learning theory in guidance and counseling. *Psymphatic: Scientific Journal of Psychology*, 3(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.15575/PSY.V3I1.2174>
- The Independent News. (2022, March 6). *Gov't to inspect schools for implementation of lower secondary curriculum*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/govt-to-inspect-schools-for-implementation-of-lower-secondary-curriculum/>
- Thomas, J. P., & Asha, K. (2022). Integrating mental health and social-emotional learning into secondary curriculum. *International Journal of Health Sciences (IJHS)*, 6(S1), 1907–1916. <https://doi.org/10.53730/IJHS.V6NS1.4954>
- Tophat. (2023). *Academic Achievement Definition and Meaning | Top Hat*. <https://tophat.com/glossary/a/academic-achievement/>
- Tošić-Radev, M. N., & Pesikan, A. (2017). “The missing piece” in the educational process: Social and emotional learning. *Nastava i Vaspitanje*, 66(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.5937/NASVAS1701037T>
- Uganda Child Rights NGO Network. (2023). *How successful has Uganda been in achieving her education targets?* <http://ucrnn.net/index.php/resource-center/blog/16-how-successful-has-uganda-been-in-achieving-her-education-targets>
- Ülvay, G. F., & Ozkul, A. E. (2018). Social-emotional learning competencies scale of secondary school students. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 14(4), 1295–1304. <https://doi.org/10.29333/EJMSTE/82938>
- Vestad, L. (2022). *The Role of Social and Emotional Competencies in Academic Efficacy Beliefs, Emotional Distress, and Academic Stress: A Study Among Lower Secondary School Students*. <https://doi.org/10.31265/USPS.169>
- Wisevoter. (2023). *Education Rankings by Country 2023 - Wisevoter*. <https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/education-rankings-by-country/#uganda>
- Woszidlo, A., & Kunkel, A. (2017). Social Learning Theory: An Emphasis on Modeling in Parent-Child Relationships. *Engaging Theories in Family Communication*, 290–299. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315204321-26>
- Zych, I., Ortega-Ruiz, R., Muñoz-Morales, R., & Llorent, V. J. (2018). Dimensions and psychometric properties of the social and emotional competencies questionnaire (SEC-Q) in youth and adolescents. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 50(2), 98–106. <https://doi.org/10.14349/RLP.2018.V50.N2.3>