

ABSTRACT

Academic achievement is a function of many variables, including pedagogical styles. However, pedagogical styles elicit a lot of controversy in research. Their influence on academic achievement, including in Kiswahili, has not been established conclusively. Kakamega North Sub-County (KNSC) in Western Kenya has continuously underperformed in Kiswahili in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations. Between the years 2010 and 2014, KNSC registered the lowest mean score of 4.85 compared to a mean score of 6.88 of the top performing sub-county in Kakamega County. There are efforts to improve teaching and learning, but given that teaching and learning styles vary, the crucial question for research is “what teaching styles would be appropriate for what kind of learners?” The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of pedagogical styles on students’ academic achievement in Kiswahili in KNSC. The objectives of the study were to: determine the influence of environmental dimension of pedagogical styles on academic achievement; establish the influence of sociological dimension of pedagogical styles on academic achievement; determine the influence of emotional dimension of pedagogical styles on academic achievement; establish the influence of physical dimension of pedagogical styles on academic achievement and determine the influence of psychological dimension of pedagogical styles on academic achievement in Kiswahili. The study was anchored on Dunn and Dunn’s (1992) theory of learning styles from which a conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the relationship between pedagogical styles and students’ academic achievement. The study was based on descriptive survey and correlational designs. The target population was 2,520 form four students and 42 form four Kiswahili teachers. Yamane’s (1967) formula was used to derive a sample size of 345 students who were selected by means of simple random sampling technique. Saturated sampling technique was used to select 38 Kiswahili teachers. Data was collected by use of questionnaire, observation schedule and document analysis guide. Face, content and construct validity of the instruments were ascertained through expert judgment and revision. A pilot study was carried out and, using test-retest method, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire stood at .72 for teachers, and .76 for students, while .81 for the lesson observation schedule through inter-rater reliability. These were within the acceptable range. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, independent samples t-test, Pearson’s correlation, simple linear regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Qualitative data was categorized into themes and reported in form of verbatim excerpts. The findings revealed that dimensions of pedagogical styles: physical $r = .276$ (27.6%), psychological $r = .252$ (25.2%), environmental $r = .229$ (22.9%), sociological $r = .173$ (17.3%), and emotional $r = .039$ (3.9%) influenced academic achievement in Kiswahili. Further, learning styles: motivation and use of varied activities under sociological; responsibility under emotional; kinesthetic and visual styles under physical; analytic and reflective styles under psychological dimensions were significantly associated with better students’ academic achievement ($p < .05$). This implies that teaching styles of Kiswahili should focus on motivation, varied activities, responsibility, motion and manipulation of objects, pictorial presentations, sequential and innovative thinking. The findings may be useful to teacher trainers, teachers and instructional designers in making informed instructional decisions by considering teaching and learning styles as an important variable in instruction.