

The effect of the presence of others on task performance among Tanzanian primary school pupils

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An experimental instigation was conducted to assess the effect of the presence of others on task performance among Tanzania primary school pupils. The experiment used the within-subjects repeated measures design for grade VI pupils. The sample of 42 pupils was obtained through stratified random sampling technique. 21 boys and 21 girls were subjected to do simple and complex tasks under three conditions namely alone, in the presence of others who were similarly engaged on the same tasks and in the presence of passive others. All of the pupils were repeatedly tested on both the simple and complex tasks under all the three experimental conditions. The results revealed that the pupils performed significantly better on both the simple and the complex tasks in the presence of others who were similarly engaged on the same tasks than in the presence of the passive on-lookers, $p < .05$. further, the pupils performed significantly better on both the simple and the complex tasks in the presence of on-lookers than when alone, $p < .05$. however, the analysis found no significant interaction effect between the factors of task complexity and that of the presence of others towards their effects on the pupils' task performance, $p < .05$. The study concluded that the presence of similarly engaged others and the presence of passive on-lookers significantly improve performance of pupils on both simple and complex tasks. This went party contrary to Zajonc's (1965) drive theory of social influence which predicted the pupils performance on the complex task would on-lookers than when alone. Two major implications were drawn from the observations of this study first, there is a need for the research replications aiming at rectifications and confirmation of identified theories in this area. Second, the results provided support for the use of the collaborative and cooperative teaching and learning methods and, generally the results supported arrangements of school tasks whereby, pupils are subjected to do the given tasks along-side others, especially similarly engaged on the same tasks.