THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Influence of Mentorship Programs on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya

Lewis Nimrod Mutwiri
Student, Department of Education Management & Curriculum Studies,
Mount Kenya University, Kenya
Mary Mugwe Chui
Lecturer, Department of Education Management & Curriculum Studies,
Mount Kenya University, Kenya

Abstract:
Management practices are an important ingredient in an organization. They offer a unique environment needed to attain set goals, create a good public image and build a productive relationship among the stakeholders. The main aim of this study was to determine the influence of teacher satisfaction on the academic performance of learners in public secondary schools in Imenti North sub-county, Meru County. The study was based on organizational theory, which was developed by Jaques in 1951. The study adopted a mixed methods methodology where both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The sampling unit consisted of public secondary schools where 6 principals were selected through purposive sampling from the top three and bottom three performing schools. Ten form three and form four students were also randomly selected from the top three and bottom three performing schools to obtain a sample size of 120 students. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of the statistical package for social scientists, version 26.0. A multiple Linear Regression model was used to model the relationship between the independent variable and the response variable (academic performance). The study concludes that mentorship programs have a significant positive effect on academic performance, as indicated by their p-values (P<0.05). The study recommends that schools should ensure that there are functional mentoring programs in schools, as they have been shown to positively influence academic performance. Such programs may provide guidance, support and career direction.

Keywords: Academic performance, mentorship programs, mentor, mentee, meaningful communication

1. Introduction

Management practices are an important ingredient in an organization in that they offer a unique environment needed to attain set goals, create a good public image, and build productive relationships among stakeholders. They involve various products such as behavior, customs, traditions, institutions, and attitudes resulting from interactions and relations among people living in the society.

Today, mentoring is regarded as a learning method that encourages a constructive relationship between the mentee and the mentor. Different studies reveal that mentoring programs grant mentors the ability to impact characteristics that have a significant influence on the mentee results, which directly influence academic performances (Raposa et al., 2019). Scholars hold that communication, academic performance and support are distinct but firmly interrelated constructs. For instance, for the mentors to effectively implement comfortable communication and avail enough aid, there were integral factors leading to positive mentee outcomes, in this case, academic performance. This was affirmed by the findings of a Canadian study carried out among 189 students, which noted that the ability of mentors to foster meaningful communication and give adequate support led to enhanced mentee academic outcomes (Kramers et al., 2023).

Research suggests that mentoring programs have shown positive results for the mentee, which is indicated by academic performance; mentors feel contented while the school records high completion rates coupled with reduced drop-out rates. Doherty (2021) reported a higher GPA among those learners who were under a mentorship program when compared to the non-mentee, coupled with more credits and lower drop-out incidences among mentees. The reviewed literature indicates that the outcomes of the mentoring programs depend not only on the aims of the activity but also heavily on the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. They categorize the mentoring relationship as either formal or informal (Scerri et al., 2020).

Formal mentoring is structured with specified goals where all the tasks are assigned by the mentee with an emphasis on career-geared mentoring and psychosocial mentoring activities. On the other hand, the informal mentoring

programs are spontaneous, and the interactions are not formal. In secondary schools, the absence of mentoring programs and unclear mentor roles pose significant challenges. Inadequate mentoring support further compounds the difficulties faced by teachers as they strive to establish themselves within the education system. The majority of the studies carried out in Imenti North have focused on change and improving the school, with a few addressing the influence of mentorship programs in improving the academic performance of learners.

1.1. Problem Statement

A positive principal's management practices firmly impact both the learner's academic achievement and the teacher's classroom delivery. Studies indicate that the school principal has an important role in strengthening and maintaining the set commitments for the smooth running of the school in line with the vision and mission of the institution. Instilling positive values in schools is pivotal in raising the willingness, pride, professional development and loyalty of teachers, which creates an effective performance of learners (Lee & Louis, 2019). This is evident from the findings of a cross-sectional survey research carried out in Hong Kong, which found that schools with positive and good management skills had a strong effectiveness with regards to flexibility, productivity and adaptability. The above studies conform to those of a study carried out in Mombasa, Kenya, which concluded that schools that posted impressive KCSE results had principals with good leadership management skills compared to those that performed poorly. The effectiveness of school management depicts high student success (Adams et al., 2019). Similarly, there was also a significant association between principal management strategies and academic performance in the findings of a study carried out in Imenti North as depicted by the p values ($p<0.0001$), an indication that management skills have a significant influence on the learners academic performance (Bagine, 2022).

The majority of the studies carried out in Imenti North have focused on change and improving the school, with a few addressing the effectiveness of mentorship programs in improving the academic performance of learners. Most of the schools in Imenti North Sub-County generally exhibit negative school management practices as they do not embrace cultural dimensions, which, in effect, impede the realization of good learning outcomes. This is evident in the recorded declining KCSE results, with mean grades of 2.56, 3.1, and 3.16 in 2021, 2020, and 2019, respectively (MOEST, 2021). The declining academic outcomes could be attributed to the absence of or ineffective mentorship programs within secondary schools, which denotes a gap this study seeks to address. In secondary schools, the absence of mentoring programs and unclear mentor roles pose significant challenges. Inadequate mentoring support further compounds the difficulties faced by teachers as they strive to establish themselves within the education system. In Meru County, there are few schools engaging in mentorship programs which negatively influence the academic performance of learners.

1.2. Research Objective

The main objective of the study was to determine the influence of mentorship programs on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-county, Meru County.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

A descriptive research design was preferred because it focuses on examining present phenomena such as conditions, practices, actions, beliefs, processes, relationships, or trends. The study utilized survey and observation methods for data collection. This approach was preferred as it accurately describes the population being studied (Bloomfield& Fisher, 2019).

2.2. Target Population

The target population was 17 secondary schools in Imenti Sub County, with a population of 17 principals and 2281 students.

2.3. Sample Size Determination

According to Mahrool (2020), a sample refers to a small subset of a larger target population that is selected to represent the entire population in a study. Sampling involves the process of choosing a specific number of individuals from a defined population to serve as representatives of that population. The researcher used different sampling techniques to identify the study sample. 6 principals were considered for the study and were selected through purposive sampling from the top three and bottom three performing schools. Ten form three and form four students were also randomly selected from the top three and bottom three performing schools to obtain a sample size of 120 students. This led to a sample size of 126 respondents.

This arrived at the sample size below:

Category	Total Population	Sample	Sample Size %
Principals	17	6	35%
Students	2281	120	5%
Total	2298	126	

Table 1: Sample Size
Source: Researcher (2020)

2.4. Data Collection Instruments
> The study employed instruments such as interviews and questionnaires to gather data.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedure
> The collected and coded data were analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSSs), Version 26.0. Data collected through questionnaires was analyzed through descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages. The relationship between the influence of mentorship programs and academic performance was assessed through a simple linear regression model:

$$Academic\ Performance = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ Mentorship\ programs + \varepsilon$$

Where:
β_0 is the regression constant
β_1 is the regression coefficient and
ε is the error term.
> Throughout the research process, the study ensured that all issues relating to ethics were addressed.

3. Results

3.1. Response Rate
> The study administered 120 questionnaires to teachers and 6 interview guides to school principals.
> A total of 120 questionnaires were administered to the respondents where a total of 90 questionnaires were duly filled and met the intended criteria of the study participants which translate to a response rate of 75%.

3.2. Demographic Characteristics
> The majority of the students interviewed were males (n=90, 56%), while females were 44%. Most of the students were aged 15-16 years (40%), 34.4% were aged 17-18 years, 15.6% were aged above 19 years, 8.9% were aged between 13 – 14 years with 1.1% being those aged less than 13 years.

Category		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	50	56.0
	Female	40	44.0
		31	100
Students Age in Years	Less Than 13 Year	1	1.1
	13-14 Years	8	8.9
	15-16 Years	36	40.0
	17-18 Years	31	34.4
	>19 Years	14	15.6
		90	100

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents
Source: Research Data (2024)

3.3. GPA Aggregate

	Students			Teachers		
Mean Grade	**F**	**%**	**$\bar{X}$**	**F**	**%**	**$\bar{X}$**
E	10	11.1		3	7.9%	
D-	38	42.2		14	36.8%	
D	25	27.8		17	44.7%	
D+	10	11.1		3	7.9%	
C-	3	3.3	2.711	1	2.6%	2.605
C	1	1.1		0	0%	
C+	2	2.2		0	0%	
B-	1	1.1		0	0%	
Total	90	100.0		38	100%	

Table 3: GPA Aggregate
Source: Field Data (2024)

> The study also assessed the Mean Grades for KCSE where the study found that most of the students had attained a mean grade of D- (42.2%), this was followed by those who had attained a mean grade of D (27.8%), this was followed by those who had attained a mean grade of E and D+ (11.1%), while 3.3% had attained a mean grade of C-, 2.2% had attained C+ with the least being those who had attained C and B- respectively (1.1%). The above KCSE means an incline to an average GPA score of 2.711.

3.4. Influence of Mentoring Programs on Academic Performance

Using the table containing an array of statements, the researcher sought to find out the relationship between mentoring programs and academic performance, and these were the responses when asked as in the table below:

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Mentoring instills confidence, which significantly impacts the learning process	26	28.9%	41	45.6%	10	11.1%	11	12.2%	2	2.2%
Mentoring leads to meaningful communication and gives adequate support	20	22.2%	38	42.2%	18	20.0%	10	11.1%	4	4.4%
Mentoring allows mentees to gain interest in learning, enabling the institution to raise school completion rates	32	35.6%	29	32.2%	13	14.4%	12	13.3%	4	4.4%
I feel mentoring leads to profiling among students, which negatively influences the learning outcomes	29	32.2%	37	41.1%	15	16.7%	6	6.7%	3	3.3%

Table 4: Likert Scale on the Influence of Mentoring Programs on
Academic Performance as Per the Student Perception
Source: Field Data (2024)

Based on table 4, the majority of the students disagreed that mentoring instills confidence, which significantly impacts the learning process (n=90, 74.5%), with 14.4% agreeing that mentoring instills confidence, which has a significant influence on the learning process. 64.4% disagreed that mentoring led to meaningful and adequate support within the school, while 15.5% agreed that mentoring indeed led to meaningful and adequate support within the school. Most of the students also disagreed that mentoring allowed the mentees to gain interest in learning, enabling the institution to increase the completion rates (67.8%), with 17.7% agreeing that mentoring did allow the mentees to gain interest in learning, enabling the institution to increase the completion rates within their schools. Most of the respondents disagreed that mentoring did lead to profiling among students, which negatively influenced the learning outcomes within the school (73.3%), with 10% agreeing that mentoring led to profiling among students, thus negatively influencing learning outcomes within the school.

3.5. Thematic Analysis

Regarding the influence of mentoring programs, they were found to have a significant influence on student's academic performance, with schools lacking mentoring programs performing dismally compared to those with mentorship programs. During the interviews, one of the principals stated:

Through consultations with the guidance and counselling department, we have a very vibrant mentoring program driven by peer counsellors. I believe that when students see their peers succeed, it serves as a powerful motivator, inspiring them to aim higher academically. Peer mentors act as role models, encouraging active participation in learning activities, which leads to better retention and understanding of the subject matter. This increased engagement translates into a more dynamic and effective learning experience (Principal 1)

To affirm this, another principal indicated:

I always advocate for academic mentoring due to its potential significance to students and learners. Mentors do not only provide career and planning support but also guide the learners on their talents, allowing them to make informed choices. They are also able to guide the students to the requirements that may guide them to specific career paths. However, what matters most is the functionality of the mentoring programs since they may exist, and people fail to put them to task (Principal 6).

The above findings denote a positive association between mentoring programs and academic performance. These findings are consistent with those of Dohetry (2021), who concluded that there were GPA means among those learners who were under a mentorship program compared to the non-mentee coupled with more credits and lower drop-out incidences among mentees.

3.6. Regression Modelling

Coefficients a					
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.725	.084		20.526	.000
Influence of mentoring programs	.376	.155	.276	2.421	.021

Table 5: Regression Coefficient between Mentorship Programs and Academic Performance
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance
Source: Field Data (2024)

The results showed that there was a positive association between mentoring programs and academic performance ($P<0.05$). Similarly, Raposa et al. (2019) revealed that mentoring programs grant mentors the ability to impact characteristics that have a significant influence on the mentee results, which directly influence academic performances.

From the regression coefficients in table 4, the p-values for both the constant and the regression coefficient are all less than 0.05. This means that the constant and the respective regression coefficient are significant. Therefore, mentoring programs are a significant predictor of Academic Performance in public secondary schools in Imenti North sub-county, Meru County. The regression coefficient is positive. This means that mentoring programs among students improve academic performance. The regression model for predicting job satisfaction from involvement in decision-making is, therefore, written as:

Academic Performance = 1.725 + 0.376 mentoring programs

4. Discussion

The above findings denote a positive association between mentoring programs and academic performance. These findings are consistent with those of Dohetry (2021), who concluded that there were GPA means among those learners who were under a mentorship program when compared to the non-mentee, coupled with more credits and lower drop-out incidences among mentees. The study emphasized the importance of a beneficial relationship between the mentee and the mentor. This was affirmed by the findings of a Canadian study carried out among 189 students, which noted that the ability of mentors to foster meaningful communication and give adequate support led to enhanced mentee academic outcomes (Kramers et al., 2023).

Different studies reveal that mentoring programs grant mentors the ability to impact characteristics that have a significant influence on the mentee results, which directly influence academic performances (Raposa et al., 2019). Scholars hold that communication, academic performance and support are distinct but firmly interrelated constructs. For instance, for the mentors to effectively implement comfortable communication and avail enough aid, there were integral factors leading to positive mentee outcomes, in this case, academic performance.

Based on the above findings, the study supports the implementation and active rollout of working mentoring programs, which may serve as a critical ingredient in improving academic performance. Effective mentoring encourages learners and leads to decisiveness, thus contributing to improved academic outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The research found a positive correlation between mentoring programs and academic performance. Schools that implemented mentorship initiatives demonstrated significantly better academic outcomes than those lacking such programs. Schools with mentoring programs had higher GPA aggregates than those that neither had the programs nor had non-functional programs. Thus, it can be concluded that a good mentoring approach in school may not only improve the student's academic performance but also aid them in appropriate career paths leading to informed career choices.

6. Recommendation

Schools should ensure that there are functional mentoring programs in schools, as they have been shown to positively influence academic performance. Such programs may provide guidance, support and career direction.

7. References

i. Adams, B. G., Wiium, N., & Abubakar, A. (2019, April). Developmental assets and academic performance of adolescents in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 48,* 207–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-019-09499-1
ii. Bagine, P. M. (2022). Principals' Management Strategies on Students' Academic Performance, in Public Secondary Schools in Imenti North Sub-County of Meru County (Doctoral dissertation, KeMU).
iii. Bloomfield, J., & Fisher, M. J. (2019). Quantitative research design. *Journal of the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses Association, 22*(2), 27–30. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ.2019.0302
iv. Doherty, L. (2021). Transnational long-term learners of Chinese as peer mentors: Language socialization, online learning, and identity (Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia).

v.   Jiang, Y., Li, P., Wang, J., & Li, H. (2019). Relationships between kindergarten teachers' empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational climate: A Chinese model. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 33*(2), 257–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2019.1589757

vi.   Kramers, S., Bean, C., Hummell, C., Allan, V., Johnson, A., & Turnnidge, J. (2023). Reflections on Improving Women's Experiences of Mentorship in Canadian Coaching. *International Sport Coaching Journal, 1*(aop), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2022-0182

vii. Lee, M., & Louis, K. S. (2019). Mapping a strong school culture and linking it to sustainable school improvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 81,* 84–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.02.013

viii. Mahrool, F. (2020). *Research Methodology. A Guide for a Literature Review: A Short Description.* Germany: GRIN Verlag.

ix.   Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2019). *MOEST.*

x.   Raposa, E. B., Rhodes, J., Stams, G. J. J., Card, N., Burton, S., Schwartz, S., ... & Hussain, S. (2019). The effects of youth mentoring programs: A meta-analysis of outcome studies. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 48,* 423–443. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01120-9

xi.   Scerri, M., Presbury, R., & Goh, E. (2020). An application of the mentoring framework to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring programs between industry mentors and student mentees in hospitality. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 45,* 143–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.01.011

xii. See, B. H., Morris, R., Gorard, S., Kokotsaki, D., & Abdi, S. (2020). Teacher recruitment and retention: A critical review of international evidence of most promising interventions. *Education Sciences, 10*(10), 262. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10100262

xiii. Wang, E., Jiang, W., & Mao, S. (2020). Job autonomy and turnover intention among social workers in China: Roles of work-to-family enrichment, job satisfaction and type of sector. *Journal of Social Service Research, 46*(6), 862–876. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2020.1718705