Girls Mentorship Strategies on Completion Rates in Public Primary Schools in Loima Sub-County, Turkana County, Kenya

Looniyo Sarah, Simon Kipkenei, Nelly Andiema

Kibabii University, Bungoma, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The study investigated how mentorship strategies influence girls' completion rate in Loima Sub- County, Turkana County. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in public primary schools in Loima Sub County involving head teachers, teachers and pupils as respondents. The sample for the study included involves 14 head teachers, 110 teachers and 112 girls. The head teachers and teachers were selected using simple random sampling method while girls were selected through purposive sampling method. Data was collected through interviews with head teachers, administration of questionnaire to teachers and conduction of focus group discussions with 8 girls (14 discussions groups). The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability before they were administered to the field. Data was analyzed using the frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation and Pearson correlation statistical tool. The study concluded that guidance and counselling was the most preferred mentorship strategies that were used for girls, and this improved their completion rate in schools. Due to inadequacy of female teachers, it was impossible for the teachers available in schools to provide one on one mentorship to girls in the schools. Correlation statistics showed that there existed a significant positive effect between school-based mentorship activities and girls' completion rate in public primary schools in Loima Sub County.

KEYWORDS: Completion Rates, Girls, Mentorship Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

The strategy of mentoring has been around for centuries and it has been associated with improvement in the attendance of chronically absent students (Hilbert, 2020). In the United States, Schnautz 2014) examined the effectiveness of the ISAGE program which a school based mentoring programme developed to facilitate the achievement of junior high school students who were deemed "at-risk." Participants consisted of 72 junior high school students from two separate junior high schools, grades 7 and 8. Results indicated that the programme had significant effects in the number of learners discipline referrals along with the TAKS Math scale scores. The research concluded school based mentoring programs had a positive influence on students who are placed at-risk of dropping out of school. The research was experimental while this study will be non-experimental research.

Hilbert (2020) examined attendance and chronic absenteeism rates of students in two urban high school academies who participated in mentoring programmes as compared to students who did not. The study utilised quantitative methods to examine 54 students at 1 academy and 96 students in the other. Results showed that participation in a mentoring programme predicted learner attendance and chronic absenteeism for high school students although results showed a decrease in student attendance after programme implementation for both academies. The gap created in this study is that they focused on daily attendance whereas the study focused how mentoring strategies contributed to completion of girls in primary schools.

In a developing country studies; Kober (2016) conducted an analysis of the relationship between education and empowerment through focusing on five

innovative non-governmental formal and non-formal educational programmes in Bangladesh Guatemala, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Program websites were reviewed and additional information was received via personal communication. Results showed that programmes being implemented in those three countries have helped girls actualize the empowerment process through innovative pedagogy, well researched and creative curriculum, the development of leadership skills, provision of experiential education, and cultivation of agency. It was found that reaching girls at an optimal time in their life would enhance the benefits of education, mentoring, and leadership development. The study used secondary data while this study collected primary data.

Waithira, Kiumi and Ngugi (2015) assessed the influence of selected school based factors on girls' participation rate in public day secondary schools in Naivasha Sub-County, Kenya. *Ex-post facto* research design was used in the study. A total of 130 respondents (constituting 26 principals and 104 teachers) from 26 schools were randomly sampled for the study. The study found that three school-level risk factors that had the most negative impact on girls rate of participation in public day secondary schools in the sub-county were: low sense of belonging among girls to their schools, inadequate counseling of girls in schools and low academic performance.

Kinyajui (2016) explored if and how mentoring programs played a role in helping girls stay in school. The study area included counties of Marsabit, Mandera, Tana River, Samburu, Wajir, West Pokot, Turkana, Garissa, Isiolo, Kwale, and Narok counties. Within these 11 counties, the study sampled the schools that had retention rates for both boys and girls that were higher than the national average (82.8 percent): This group totalled 68 primary schools, out of 1,799. Results showed that indicate that the programs vary greatly, mainly due to the government's lack of policies and models. The most

popular include motivational talks, guidance, and counselling sessions by teachers to individual students or groups, peer-to-peer mentoring, leadership training, and spiritual guidance (schools invite religious leaders to talk to pupils). Most mentors are also teachers, but a few schools use community leaders and school alumni.

Somani (2017) research was to better understand the importance and impact of educating girls and increase awareness. This qualitative research uses primary data from 38 respondents comprising 29 interviewees and nine participants in a focus group. Participants included 16 experts and leaders in academia and development, 13 educators, four students, three development professionals, and two parents. The proposed strategies include: mentorship programs, summer projects, community service initiatives, training of educators, community engagement, and context-specific media campaign including effective use of social media. Mentorship programs may also be helpful, in which educated girls support other girls within the community to develop their potential and provide inspiration and encouragement.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
2.1. Effects of Girls Mentorship Strategies and Girls Completion Rate in Primary School

Girls are at risk of not benefiting from basic education in Loima Sub County if appropriate interventions by the government, community, schools and other concerned stakeholders are not affected. The objective of the study intended to determine the various mentorships strategies that existed in schools and their effect on completion rates. To get more information, the study relied on questionnaire, interviews and conduction of FGDs. Firstly, the teaches through seven statements that were on a Likert scale of five: the scale used was; Never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5) were asked to provide how these mentorship activities happened in their institutions. Their responses are provided in Table 1

Table 1 Mentorship Activities for Girls Pupils in Schools

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD
Every girl in school has a female mentor teacher	11 (10.3%)	15 (14.0%)	49 (45.8%)	9 (8.4%)	23 (21.5%)	3.1682	1.2169
Guidance and counselling sessions are held for girls in the school	9 (84%)		30 (28.0%)	30 (28.0%)	38 (35.5%)	3.8224	1.1721
Invitation of former girls to come and mentor girls in schools	21 (19.6%)	41 (38.3%)	32 (29.9%)	8 (7.5%)	5 (4.7%)	2.3925	1.0348
Training of prospective and existing girls mentors in schools	22 (20.6%)	18 (16.8%)	38 (35.5%)	16 (15.0%)	13 (12.1%)	2.8131	1.2674

Established programme for girls mentoring	15 (14.0%)	22 (20.6%)	36 (33.3%)	22 (20.6%)	12 (11.2%)	2.9439	1.1962
Career workshops for girls in STEM	23 (21.5%)	26 (24.3%)	41 (38.3%)	13 (12.1%)	4 (3.7%)	2.5234	1.0759
Hiring of extra female teachers in schools	25 (23.4%)	33 (30.8%)	27 (25.2%)	13 (12.1%)	9 (8.4%)	2.5140	1.2160
Composite						**2.8825**	**1.1685**

Results show that close to half 49 (45.8%) of teachers agreed that every girl in the school has been allocated a female mentor, 23 (21.5%) said that every girl in the school has a female teacher who acts as a mentor and only 11 (10.3%) said that all girls in their schools do not a female teacher who acts as a mentor. This means that some schools have allocated girls female teachers as mentors while others do not have. The reason for schools not allocating female teachers to act as mentors to girl learners could be attributed to their low number in schools as evident from the information in the demographic section. The members of FGD No. 4. said that some teachers in their schools acts as role model towards finishing their school. This means that they are not left alone and can look up to a female teacher for advice, consultation and further help. To others, girls lack female teachers due to the following reason as mentioned by Head teacher No. 2 during interview:

Lack of commitment in the side of female teacher, they want to leave school after lower primary lessons

The lack of mentors to girl child education was found by Wanjiku (2012) to contribute to low completion of secondary education. This means that mentors are needed for girls in school to enable them complete school.

Results also show that 9 (8.4%) of teachers said that they do not provide guidance and counselling for girls in their schools, 30 (28.0%) provide the services sometimes and often while 38 (35.5%) indicated that the service is always provided to girls in their schools. the result henceforth suggests that schools have made efforts to help girls in their schooling in Loima Sub County. the head teachers and girls' pupils also confirmed that guidance and counselling sessions were provided regularly to girls in public primary schools in Loima. For example, HT No. 2 affirmed that:

Guiding and counselling sessions with learners on life skills and general life

This means that one area of mentorship where girls received psychosocial support in their schools. The study findings agree with Kinyanjui (2016) who discovered that guidance and counselling methods (one on one and peer – peer) were common mentorship strategies for girls in several primary schools in ASAL counties of Kenya. However, Waithira *et al*. (2015) found out that there was inadequate counseling of girls in schools resulting to their low participation in public day secondary schools in Naivasha Sub County.

Findings reveal that 21 (19.6%) of schools do not invite former girls to come and mentor girls in their schools, 41 (38.3%) said that they rarely invited old girls, 32 (29.9%) sometimes invited old girls, 8 (7.5%) often invited them and 5 (4.7%) always invited them. The result shows that most schools do not invite former girls to come and mentor the present girls in their institutions in the study area. Even the head teachers interviewed admitted that they do not have a structured programme of inviting former girls in their schools. Girls also confirmed this information during FGDs where they indicated that former girls are not invited. For example, this is what Group 7 said:

Actually, rarely have we seen former girls coming to school to talk to us even during the assembly. It is something we have been yearning for so as we can look up to them as role models.

The findings agree with Kinyanjui (2016) who found out that few schools use school alumni to mentor girls in ASAL counties of; West Pokot, Tana River, Kwale, Mandera, Samburu, Wajir, Turkana, Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit and Narok. This situation of not having former girls come back to school to come and inspire them could be due to lack of active old girl alumni association and even most girls despite finishing class 8 failed to proceed to secondary schools since there is no tracking mechanism existing in their schools on the education progression to the higher education levels.

Result also show that 38 (35.5%) of respondents said that sometimes training is provided to prospective and existing girls to act as mentors to others in the schools, 22 (20.6%) said this does not happen and only 13 (12.1%) agreed that this training is regularly conducted in their schools. From the results, it can be deduced that training of girls to acts as mentors to others in the school is not a regular practice in public primary schools in Loima Sub County. This is result differs with Kinyanjui (2016) who found out that there was leadership training for girls in primary schools in several ASAL counties in Kenya.

On whether there is an established programme for girls mentoring, 15 (14.0%) said that it has never happened, 22 (20.6%) said that it rarely happens, 36 (33.3%) said that it sometimes exists, 22 (20.6%) said that the programme is often done and 12 (11.2%) said that this programme always exists in their schools. The above result suggests that not all schools have made sure that there is an established programme for girls mentoring. This could be because some schools value girls mentoring activities while others have not given it a priority. The information coincides with interview results where some head teachers 4 said they had mentorship plans in their schools, 3 were planning to have while 3 did not have. This is what head teacher No. 1 reported:

The mentorship programmes are done on termly basis through encouragement from role models invited to the schools and regular counselling.

Another Head teacher No. 6 had this to say:

Enhancement of girl-teacher relationship that is aimed at sensitising girls on the importance of education in their lives

The above results on existence of mentorship programmes differs with Schnautz 2014) study in the United States that found out that the mentoring programme facilitated girls' completion rate.

Result also showed that 41 (38.3%) of teachers indicated that sometimes career workshops for girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in primary schools, 26 (24.3%) said that these workshops for girls to embrace STEM are rare and 23 (21.5%) indicated that it has never happened in their schools. the poor performance and negative attitude that had been alluded to contribute to girls drop out of school could be contributed due to lack of efforts to provide information and seminars for girls to embrace STEM subjects in primary schools. During interview with the head teachers, some indicated that they incorporated some co-curricular activities with mentorship sessions for girls as said by head teacher No. 8

Providing them with a rich curriculum e.g. co-curriculum activities and formal curriculum

Lastly, when asked as to whether their schools hired extra female teachers in schools, 25 (23.4%) indicated that their schools have never, 26 (24.3%) rarely employ female teachers, 41 (38.3%) sometimes employ female teachers, 13 (12.1%) often employ and only 9 (8.4%) of teachers agreed that their schools employ female teachers. The result show that the schools have not made efforts to make sure more female teachers are hired (by BOM) in schools who will act as mentors to girls to help them remain in schools and complete their primary education in Loima Sub County. Head teacher No. 2 explained this during interview with regard to hiring of extra female teachers to bridge the shortfall:

Lack of funds to undertake such programme

This means that inability to raise the adequate amount of money inhibits some schools to address issues affecting girl child education in Loima Sub County. Composite values shows that 57.65% of schools in the sub county have sometimes provide mentorship to girls in order to keep them in school and make sure they complete their primary schooling in Loima Sub County. The study coincides with Kinyanjui (2016) who found out that mentorship programmes varied greatly across schools as the government did not have proper policies and models of implementation. This means that it is upon school to devise their own mentorship models for girls across the nation.

Through open-ended questions, the teachers were asked to state other mentorship strategies that they were implementing in their institutions to make sure there is increase in girl's enrolment rate in their schools. Only 47 out of 107 responded to this question and results are summarised in Table 2

Table 2 Other Mentorship Strategies for Girls' Education in Schools

Other mentorship strategies	Frequency	Percent
Educating parents and community on the importance of girl child education	9	19.1
Girl guide clubs	8	17.0
Female teachers have been assigned to be talking to girls in specific days while at school	8	17.0
Invitation of resource person to talk to them	6	12.8
Assigning girls at risk leadership roles in schools	6	12.8
Working with NGOs like girl child network which encourage girls to have positive attitude towards education	4	8.5

Strengthening support for re-admitted girls who have come to school after delivery	2	4.3
Making follow up for those who are absent	2	4.3
Working with church leaders to enlighten the girls on the importance of education	2	4.3
Total	**47**	**100.0**

Results show that schools educate parents and community on the importance of girl child education. Some schools have also activated Girl Guide clubs through which mentorship initiatives happen. This was confirmed by Focus Group Discussion (FGD) No. 3 who said that:

Formation of clubs and Christian societies where guidance and counselling are done by teachers and learners

This means that Christian Unions (CUs), Young Catholic Association (YCAs), clubs and societies act as mentorship areas for girls in public primary schools in the study area. Further, some schools have assigned female teachers to talk to girls on specific days while at schools. In addition, some schools said that they invite resource persons to come and talk to their learners. This was revealed from Focus Group Discussion (FGD) No. 5 where the girls indicated that key resource persons are invited by their teachers and schools to come and talk with them. Further, the result shows that some schools also have assigned girls at risk of not completing their schooling leadership roles to be a role model to others and inspire others to finish and continue with their studies. to other schools, they worked closely with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to address the issue of girl child education as mentioned by Head teacher No. 8 who remarked that:

An NGO called EDT has such mentorship programmes over the holiday.

To check on the effect of the mentorship activities on girls' completion rate, a Karl Pearson correlation statistical test was computed. The results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Correlations on Girl Child Mentorship Activities and School Completion

		Mentorship Activities	Girls' Completion
Mentorship activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.250[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	107	107
Girls' completion	Pearson Correlation	.250[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	107	107
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Correlation statistics shows that there exists significant effect ($r=0.25$, $p=0.009$) between mentorship activities and girls' completion of primary education in Loima Sub-County. This means that the use of mentorship activities targeting girls in primary schools could increase the rate of their completion of primary education in standard eight in the study area and vice versa is true. The study finding coincides with Schnautz 2014) found out that school mentoring programmes in Utopia Texas, U.S.A had positive influence on learners who were at risk of dropping out of school. In addition, Hilbert (2020) found out that mentoring programmes were ineffective with showing an increase in learner' attendance of school hence higher completion levels. This means that mentorship programmes that have been customized for a particular school do have significant influence on girls' completion rate. in concluding to the benefits of mentorship, Somani (2017) discovered that they were very helpful in developing girls' potential, inspiration and encouragement. This means that regular provision of mentorship to girls would improve their completion of school.

3. CONCLUSION
The study concludes that correlation statistics showed that there existed a significant positive effect between mentorship activities and girls' completion rate in public primary schools in Loima Sub County.

4. RECOMMENDATION
1. School management should consider varying mentorship strategies provided to girls in schools.
2. The school management should need to activate old girls' association and Girl Guide clubs in their schools to mentor girls.
3. During budgeting, schools need also to make sure that various professionals on girls' child education set funds aside for mentorship activities.
4. The schools should collaborate with faith based and non-government-based organisation to provide mentorship.

REFFERENCES
[1] Hilbert, T.A. (2020). *Mentoring as a pathway to addressing chronic absenteeism in urban high school academies*. PhD Dissertation, Seton

Hall University https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2792

[2] Kober, M.J. (2016). *"Educational opportunities for adolescent girls' empowerment in developing countries"* Master's Theses, The University of San Francisco. https://repository.usfca.edu/thes/168.

[3] Kinyanjui, J.W. (2016). One solution to several problems: How mentoring is changing girls' education in Kenya. Retrieved online on 20th October 2020 from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2016/09/20/one-solutions-to-several-problems-how-mentoring-is-changing-girls-education-in-kenya/

[4] Schnautz, B.M. (2014). *The effects of school-based mentoring on student achievement for junior high school students.* D.Phil Dissertation, Texas A&M University.

[5] Somani, T. (2017). Importance of educating girls for the overall development of society: A global perspective. Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 7(1), 125–139.

[6] Waithira, J.G., Kiumi, K. & Ngugi, M. (2015). To determine the influence of selected school based factors on girls' participation rate in public day secondary schools in Naivasha Sub-County, Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management, 6*(7), 528-540. DOI: 10.18535/ijsrm/v6i7.el05.