Influence of Type of Mentoring Relationship on Youth Empowerment in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya

Keziah Wanja Mwaura, Dolphine A. Odero-Wanga, and Milcah Mulu-Mutuku

Department of Applied Community Development Studies,
Egerton University,
PO Box 536-20115, Egerton, Kenya

ABSTRACT: Youths, aged between 15 and 24 years, in secondary schools in Kenya, have been facing challenges such as drugs and substance abuse; negative peer pressure; unemployment and societal negative perceptions among others. This has led to the youth being labeled as source of society's problems rather than its potential asset. Various interventions have been established such as talent nurturing programs, revival of youth polytechnics, entrepreneurship trainings and youth mentoring programs. In Kenya, mentoring is a relatively new concept though studies done in developed countries have shown that mentoring has resulted to youth empowerment. However, little has been documented about mentoring relationships in Kenya; hence this study established the influence of type of mentoring relationship on youth empowerment. A sample of 107 youth was randomly sampled from the purposively selected secondary schools with mentoring programs. Majority of the respondents were involved in more than one type of mentoring relationship at any given time. Those involved in traditional mentoring which is an informal type of mentoring relationship were 98.1%; they were also in formal type of mentoring relationships; peer and reverse mentoring were common at 91.6%; team mentoring (78.5%); situational mentoring (69.2%); group mentoring (57.0%); flash mentoring (56.1%) and E/tele mentoring (44.9%). Despite the youths being involved in various mentoring relationships, only traditional, peer mentoring, team mentoring, group mentoring and flash mentoring resulted to youth empowerment. There is need for interventions in which the policy makers develop a framework for mentoring programs as a key component in the school curriculum.

KEYWORDS: Youth, Mentoring relationship, Youth empowerment, Formal mentoring, Informal mentoring.

1 BACKGROUND

Youths in Kenya, constituting over 60% of the total population, have been facing various challenges which have adverse socio-economic and political consequences on youth development and consequently on national development (1). One approach that has been used to improve the well being of the youth is Youth Development (YD). Youth Development means purposefully seeking to meet youth needs and to build relevant youth competencies to enable them to become successful adults. The approach focuses on the involvement of the youth in youth development programs such as talent nurturing, revival of youth polytechnics and youth empowerment among others (2).

Youth empowerment programs in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-county, Nakuru County involves, among others, mentoring which aims at impacting on the youths in a positive way by empowering them to develop their potential (3). Mentoring among the youths is either formal or informal. This could take place in form of the various mentoring relationships such as the traditional one-to-one, peer, group, e-mentoring, flash, situational, reverse and team mentoring (4; 5).

Informal mentoring is a relationship that develops spontaneously and is not managed or specifically recognized as a mentoring relationship. The mentee considers the mentor as a role model (5). Formal mentoring relationship develops within organizational structures that are specifically designed to facilitate the creation and maintenance of such relationship (6).

More than a decade of research has revealed mentoring to be a viable intervention strategy that holds considerable promise (7). Mentoring has resulted keen on social, economic and identity development of individuals who have been part of

mentoring relationships (8; 9). Young persons who lack a strong relationship with a caring adult while growing up are much more vulnerable to a host of difficulties, ranging from academic failure to involvement in serious risk behaviors (7). Research further suggests that mentors who are able to develop close, supportive relationships with youth are able to make the most positive changes in youth's lives (10). Research has also shown that personal relationships between youths and adults, peer mentoring and participation results in youth empowerment (11). A research on TeamWorks a group mentoring program, found that participants had better attitudes toward school, their family, and their community (12). Research showed that 81.6% of mentees in mentoring relationships improved or maintained their good behavior compared to 75.0% of those who were not mentored (13).

Most of these researches have been carried out in developed countries and little has been documented on mentoring relationships among the youths in secondary schools in Kenya. This is despite the fact that mentoring is being considered as an intervening strategy to addressing youth issues. This paper therefore sought to determine the influence of type of mentoring relationship on youth empowerment in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

2   STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in secondary schools with mentoring programs in Njoro, Lare, and Mau-Narok divisions of Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County. Njoro Sub-County lays within the Great Rift Valley and boarders other Sub-Counties namely; Nakuru, Molo, Narok South, Bomet and Rongai. It covers an area of 702.1 km^2.

The Sub-County has a total population of 178,180 and a population growth rate of 3.4%. This high population growth rate has created a predominantly youthful population. This comprises 54.79% of the population being less than 20 years of age and about 74.45% of the population being less than 30 years of age (14).

This study area was selected because it has high youth population in secondary schools. The study area has thirty eight (38) secondary schools with a population of 8,808. Cases of drug and substance abuse, irresponsible sexual behaviors, involvement in crime and lack of involvement in decision making among the youths in secondary school have been reported in the Sub-County, (15).

3   METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

A descriptive survey was conducted in October 2013 in seven secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County which were purposively selected because they had mentoring programs. The study targeted 3238 youth (1963 males and 1275 females) in mentoring programs in the schools. Multistage sampling was used in the study. Schools were purposively selected then proportionate sampling was used to get the number of the respondents from each school. All the members of the school were potential participants and the schools were stratified by gender in order to select participants from each stratum. The number of males and females included in the sample was determined proportionately. Simple random sampling was used to select from each strata. A sample size of 107 youth consisting of 62 males and 45 females was selected. Data was collected using self administered questionnaires.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data on influence of type of mentoring relationship on youth empowerment as experienced by youths in mentoring programs in secondary schools was cross tabulated and association between mentoring relationship and youth empowerment tested with Chi-square test statistics.

4   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   TYPES OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

These findings of this study indicate that majority of the respondents had more than one type of mentoring relationship. The most common type of mentoring among the respondents was traditional mentoring (98.1%) (Table 1); which is a relationship between a caring adult and young person and is formed during the course of life events, and in which the adult provides the guidance and support to the young person.

Table 1. Types of mentoring relationship among the youths in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County

Mentoring relationships	Frequency	Percent
Traditional mentoring	105	98.1
Peer mentoring	98	91.6
Reverse mentoring	98	91.6
Team mentoring	84	78.5
Situational mentoring	74	69.2
Group mentoring	61	57.0
Flash mentoring	60	56.1
E- / Telementoring	48	44.9

The higher participation in traditional mentoring could be attributed to the fact that it is an informal mentoring and results to strong relationships that are significant to the mentee (youth) and the mentors (16). Peer mentoring was also common (91.6%) as it involves a youth guiding a fellow youth. This could be attributed to the fact that due to increasing interest in peer relationships as they enter teenage years, mentees tend to naturally look up to older youths as their role model and someone worth listening to (17).

Reverse mentoring which involves senior person in terms of age, experience or position being mentored by a junior was also common at 91.6%. Mostly, this kind of relationship is informal and a mutual learning experience. Studies have shown that due to recent technological advances and the revolution of communication, young people are being turned to for technical expertise (18). In this study elder people consulted the youth when in need of using the phones or computer.

Team mentoring which involves several adults guiding groups of young people was found among the respondents at 78.5%. Each mentor provides individual time and expertise. This approach allows the youth to access several adult mentors depending on the need or mentor schedule and availability (19).

E- Mentoring was the least common at 44.9%. This could be attributed to the fact that for this type of mentoring to take place, computers or smart phones are needed as communication is through internet which may not be easily available to the majority of the respondents in Njoro Sub-County. Other mentoring relationships found among the respondents were situational mentoring at 69.2%, group mentoring at 57.0% and flash mentoring at 56.1%.

4.2   YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups in knowledge and skills in order to make choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes and actions (20). In this study, youth empowerment was looked at in terms of leadership skills; awareness of reproductive health issues; awareness of dangers of drug and substance abuse; self awareness; conflict resolution skills; career awareness and talent development.

Respondents were asked to tick on a 5- point Likert scale the benefits they got as a result of being in mentoring programs. A three point index was developed by getting the sum of scores exhibited by the respondent. For instance the lowest score was 20 and the highest 100. With this basis, a scale ranging from twenty to hundred was developed to cater for the respondents scores. These were, not empowered for a score range of twenty to forty seven; not sure for a score range of forty eight to seventy four and empowered for a score of seventy five to one hundred. A respondent with not empowered implied that they did benefit being in mentoring program. On the other hand, a respondent with empowered implied being in mentoring program enabled them gain knowledge or skills in leadership, career awareness, talent development, reproductive health issues, conflict resolution, self awareness and awareness on dangers of drugs and substance abuse. The study revealed majority of the respondents (82.2%) were empowered by being in mentoring programs (Table 2).

Table 2: Youth Empowered for being in Mentoring program in secondary schools in Njoro sub-county

Index	Frequency	Percent
Not empowered	0	0
Not sure	19	17.8
Empowered	88	82.2

4.3   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPE OF MENTORING AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

The study revealed youth in secondary school were involved in the eight types of mentoring relationships. Chi square test of independence at 95% level of confidence was used to test whether there was any significant association between type of mentoring relationships and youth empowerment. Five showed a significant association with empowerment. This is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Type of Mentoring Relationship on Youth Empowerment in secondary schools in Njoro sub-county

Variable	Chi-square value	df	p value
Traditional mentoring	5.628	1	0.018*
Peer mentoring	9.614	1	0.002*
Reverse mentoring	0.297	1	0.586
Team mentoring	5.815	1	0.016*
Situational mentoring	0.222	1	0.638
Group mentoring	6.096	1	0.014*
Flash mentoring	5.628	1	0.018*
E- / Telementoring	0.071	1	0.790

Results indicate there was a statistically significant association between traditional mentoring and youth empowerment. This can be attributed to the fact that traditional mentoring was the most common type of mentoring relationship among the respondents and the relationship being informal; stronger relationships were bound to be formed. This is consistent with reference (21) who reported that people in traditional mentoring tend to be attracted to and comfortable with each other and this has resulted to learning new skills. Studies have shown that, traditional mentoring is built on assumption that there will be change on the part of the mentee (22) and that learning flows in both directions that is from mentor to mentee and vice versa; and such synergy is a source of empowerment (23).

The study indicated there was significant association between team mentoring and youth empowerment. Team mentoring involves multiple mentors working together with young people and encouraging them to share ideas and information (4). Mentoring programs involved teachers and a group of youths where they meet and discuss several issues.

There was found to be statistically significant association between group mentoring and youth empowerment. This could be due to the fact that group mentoring is well structured and involves several mentors and mentees the relationship; provides safe avenue for learning through projects and activities (24). The study have shown various people such as teachers, pastors, peers, government officials are involved in mentoring youths in secondary school. This implies group mentoring resulted to empowerment among the youths. Similar views were expressed in studies done in developed countries which had shown group mentoring was beneficial to the youths such as gaining new skills, advice (8) and better understanding to express themselves (25) . Despite the fact that, in group mentoring strong relationship which is a major factor in mentoring could not be established as this type of mentoring involves several mentors, studies done in Boston have shown most mentees expressed preferences for group context (26).

Peer mentoring and youth empowerment were found to have a significant association. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents were teenagers and peers play a major role in the lives of the young people. A study by reference (27) noted that peer mentoring played a major role in lives of the young people as a result of a growing divide between the generations and can positively affect academic achievement and improved social integration. Similarly, reference (13) adds that peer mentoring assisted with enhancing the climate within the school, gaining self esteem, confidence and communication skills. Research indicate that in peer mentoring, mentor and mentee meet for more time frequently than adult- youth mentoring relationships and there is some evidence they have a greater impact (17;28). This study revealed respondents were empowered as a result of participating peer mentoring.

Results indicated there was no statistically significant association between e/tele mentoring and youth empowerment. Despite the fact that e/tele mentoring is usually less expensive compared to face-to-face mentoring, convenient, eliminates any scheduling or time zone issues, no geographical barriers and provides an individual with more choices for mentors it is not common among the youth in developing countries as compared to the youths in developed countries (29;30). This could be as a result that majority of the youth may not have access to computers and familiarity with computers as emails, videoconferencing, discussion boards, instant messaging and webcams are used.

The study revealed there was no statistically significant association between situational mentoring and youth empowerment. This implies that situational mentoring among the youths in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-county, which involves giving the right help at the right time and spontaneous corrections; just enough to help solve a problem or uncover hidden talent (5) does not result to youth empowerment.

Flash mentoring and youth empowerment were found to have a significant association. This can be attributed to the fact that flash mentoring is a one time meeting that enables an individual to learn and seek guidance from a more experienced person who can pass on relevant knowledge and experience while requiring a limited commitment of time and resources. This is in consistent with reference (31) who reported that flash mentoring is developed for the purpose of connecting upcoming professionals with senior professionals who have limited time to devote in mentoring. Most of the respondents in this study reported to have participated in the career fairs organized in schools that enabled them to interact with professionals in the career they aspired to pursue and this resulted to empowerment despite the relationship being short lived. Also, studies by reference (32) showed that youth liked hearing the professionals of the career they wanted to pursue and were comfortable asking them questions as they viewed them as industrious, successful, inspiring and informative.

Results indicated there was no significant association between reverse mentoring and youth empowerment. A study by reference (33) revealed that reverse mentoring targets people who are senior and may have missed out on skills which they find difficult to admit to not having especially in the area of advancement in technology and diversity issues; a skill that younger generations tend to pick up on more quickly (32). This could not have resulted to the empowerment of the youths as it focuses on technological advances. The respondents in this study admitted to have helped an older person to operate a phone, a computer or internet communication. Hence, this study revealed that reverse mentoring promoted the sharing of different generational perspectives and knowledge.

5   CONCLUSIONS

From the study findings, it may be concluded that mentoring results in youth empowerment; however, it may not be generalized that any type of mentoring relationship results in youth empowerment but the focus should be on specific type of mentoring relationship. Some mentoring relationships such as telementoring, which resulted in empowerment in developed countries was found not to result to youth empowerment among the youths in secondary schools in Njoro Sub-County.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The work was a component of a wider Masters study for KWM. DO-W and MM-M were University supervisors of the candidate. KWM, DO-W and MM-M made substantial contributions to the work from conception through data collection, analysis, drafting and revising the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

AUTHORS' INFORMATION

KWM is a Masters student and a senior youth development officer in Nakuru County, Kenya. DO-W and MM-M are community development specialists at the Department of Applied Community Studies, Egerton University, Njoro, Kenya.

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