

## Perceptions of student mentees on their mentor relationship and effectiveness of the mentoring programs: A case study of students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program, Nairobi, Kenya

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### Abstract

Youth mentoring programs are an increasingly popular intervention and although successful mentoring relationships can promote a range of positive developmental outcomes, relationships that fail can lead to decrements in a youth's functioning and self-esteem. The present research therefore investigated the relationship between mentor-mentee relations and the effectiveness of the mentorship program. The most achieved outcomes of the mentoring program in students included service activities (such as community work, professional organization) rated by 38.1% of respondents, new study methods or strategies (38.1 %) and conference, seminar, workshop presentation or poster (23.8%). The findings indicated a positive correlation between mentor-mentee relations and the effectiveness of the mentorship program using Pearson correlation test at 0.01 level of significance. Recommendations were made regarding the importance of enhancing positive and healthy mentor-mentee relationships in any mentoring program to yield concrete outcomes in the program

### Key words

Mentoring, self-esteem

### INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is a relationship between caring adults and youth that provides support and guidance for the youth in his/her many developmental needs, including personal and academic areas of life. Supportive elderly adults, that is, teachers, neighbors extended family members, or volunteers, can lead to positive outcomes among youth living in high-risk circumstances (Rhodes, 2002). Indeed, there is considerable literature to indicate that mentoring relationships support the healthy development of children and youth by reducing risky behaviors. For example, in one study, those youth who had natural mentors (that is, not forged through mentoring programs) were significantly less likely than other youth to take part in a range of problem behaviors (Beier, Rosenfeld, Spitalny, Zanksy and Bontempo, 2000). Likewise, in a study of over 700 low income urban adolescents, Zimmerman, Bigenheimer, and Notaro (2002) found that youth who had natural mentors had more favorable attitudes toward school and were less likely to use alcohol, smoke marijuana, and become delinquent than those without mentors. Unfortunately, many children and adolescents do not readily find supportive non-parent adults in their communities. Changing family and marital and employment patterns, overcrowded schools, and less cohesive communities have dramatically reduced the presence of caring adults in the lives of youth (Eccles and Grootman, 2002; Putnam, 2000). As such, mentoring programs are being

increasingly advocated as a means of redressing the decreased availability of adult support and guidance in the lives of youth (Grossman and Tierney, 1998; Rhodes, 2002). In Kenya, even though institutionalized mentoring is a new venture, the number of mentoring programs has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in learning institutions. For example, at Kenyatta University, the mentoring program was fully initiated 7 years ago with some of the following aims: to assist students in the academic and social transition from secondary school education to the university and beyond, to provide "continuous source of information and guidance for the students from mature and more experienced mentors, to encourage discipline, social integration, personal growth and academic skills development through cooperative partnership between and among mentors and mentees, and also to inculcate life and leadership skills to students.

Nevertheless, at the core of any mentoring program is the relationship between the mentor and mentee that will see the mentee benefit from the mentoring program, and making the mentoring program more effective to the youths. A growing number of evaluations suggest that volunteer mentoring relationships can positively influence a range of outcomes, including improved peer and parental relationships, academic achievement, self-concept, and behavior (Aseltine, Dupre, and Lamlein, 2000.; Dufsois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper, 2002;

Grossman and Tierney, 1998). Like other relationships, however, youth mentoring relationships can vary in closeness and duration, in ways that have implications for their effectiveness.

Whereas some mentoring relationships can be extraordinarily influential, others are only marginally helpful or even dissatisfying and hurtful. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) recently explored this variation with particular attention to the duration of mentoring relationships. Youth who were in relationships that lasted a year or longer reported improvements in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes, while progressively fewer positive effects emerged among youth who were in relationships that terminated after six months or a year, or between three and six months.

Youths who were in dyads that terminated within a very short period of time reported decrements in several indicators of functioning relative to control youth. Along similar lines, Slicker and Palmer (1993) found that students who were "effectively mentored" (as measured by the quality and length of the relationship) had better academic outcomes than controls, whereas those whose relationships terminated prematurely experienced a significant decline in self-concept when compared with youth who were not mentored at all.

Researchers have uncovered common elements of mentoring programs that are associated with longer duration and success. For example, in a review of the literature on mentoring, Sipe (1998) identified three major elements of successful programs: screening, orientation and training, and support and supervision. Similarly, DuBois et al. (2002) used meta-analysis to review 55 evaluations of mentoring programs. Stronger effects emerged for those youth in programs employing practices similar to those identified by Sipe. These "best practices" were associated with youth reporting more frequent contact with their mentors, feeling some emotional closeness to the mentors, and participating in the mentoring relationship for a longer period of time.

The efforts of program staff, mentors, and youth to facilitate the formation of strong, long-lasting mentoring bonds appear to be crucial to the achievement of positive youth outcomes through mentoring. This suggests that the process through which mentoring and other relationship based interventions are effective hinges on the strength of this interpersonal bond. Several

researchers have noted the power of a close, trusting intergenerational connection. After examining over 600 mentor protege pairs, Herrera and her colleagues observed that at the crux of the mentoring relationship the bond forms between the youth and mentor, and if a bond does not form, then youth and mentors may disengage from the match before the mentoring relationship lasts long enough to have a positive impact on youth (Herrera, Sipe, McLanahan, Arbreton, and Pepper, 2000).

The effects of negative exchanges may be particularly salient during the adolescent years, when issues of acceptance and rejection are paramount. Feelings of belonging are central to adolescents' sense of self, which is often defined through others' eyes (Noam, 1997). Although this dependence on others' impressions can be beneficial when mentoring relationships are enduring and supportive, adolescents are apt to feel more profound disappointment if their mentor does or says anything that is hurtful. In addition, adolescents may be more likely than children or adults to hold negative expectations for their interactions with adults, as they strive to establish their independence from parental authority (Baumrind, 1987; Furstenberg, 1990). In particular, youth who are involved with mentoring programs may have experienced disappointment in past relationships with adults (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Despite the best of intentions, however, mentoring program staffs are often burdened with relatively large numbers of relationships and responsibilities to handle as majority are lecturers and have busy workloads ranging from teaching, research, publications, conference attendance and community work, without forgetting their family responsibilities. These can make them easily miss the subtle warning signs that the mentoring relationship is in trouble or even miss at all to initiate a productive and effective relationship with the mentee.

### Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the mentoring model used and preferred by students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
- ii. To find out the students' developmental needs addressed in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
112. To establish the current mentor characteristics and mentees, mentor

- preferences among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
- iv. To establish the nature of mentor-mentee meetings of students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
  - v. To find out whether there is a relationship between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
  - vi. To find out sex and age differences in the mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
  - vii. To establish mentorship program outcomes among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program

### Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in this study:

- i) What are the mentoring model(s) used and preferred by students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- ii) What are the students' developmental needs addressed in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- iii) What are the current mentor characteristics and mentees' mentor preferences among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- iv) What is the nature of mentor-mentee meetings of students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- v) Is there a relationship between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- vi) Are there significant sex differences between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta university mentoring program?
- vii) Are there significant age differences between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?
- viii) What are the mentorship program outcomes among students' in the Kenyatta University mentoring program?

### Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study:

- Ha1 There is a positive relationship between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
- Ha2 There is significant sex differences between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program
- Ha3 There is significant age differences between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program

### Methodology

The study adopted a case study design which was used to establish an in-depth nature of mentoring models, mentor characteristics and preference by students, nature of mentor-mentee meetings and relationships between mentor-mentee relations and mentorship effectiveness, including mentorship outcomes among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program. The sample consisted of 21 students randomly selected from the mentoring list of students in the May to August 2013 session III Kenyatta University. Boys were 13 while girls were 8. They were given mentorship profile questionnaire that asked them about the nature of mentoring models, mentor characteristics and preference, nature of mentor-mentee meetings and relationships between mentor-mentee relations and mentorship effectiveness, and mentorship outcomes in the Kenyatta University mentoring program. The items on the mentor-mentee relations and mentorship effectiveness were in the .S-point Likert scales format. The items on the questionnaire were adapted from Beck (2005) scale designed to measure effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations test at 0.05. level of significant was used analyze whether there was a significant relationship between mentor-mentee relations and mentorship effectiveness, while ANOVA test at 0.05 level of significance was used to analyze sex and age differences with regard to mentor-mentee relations and mentorship effectiveness. The results of the analysis are discussed below.

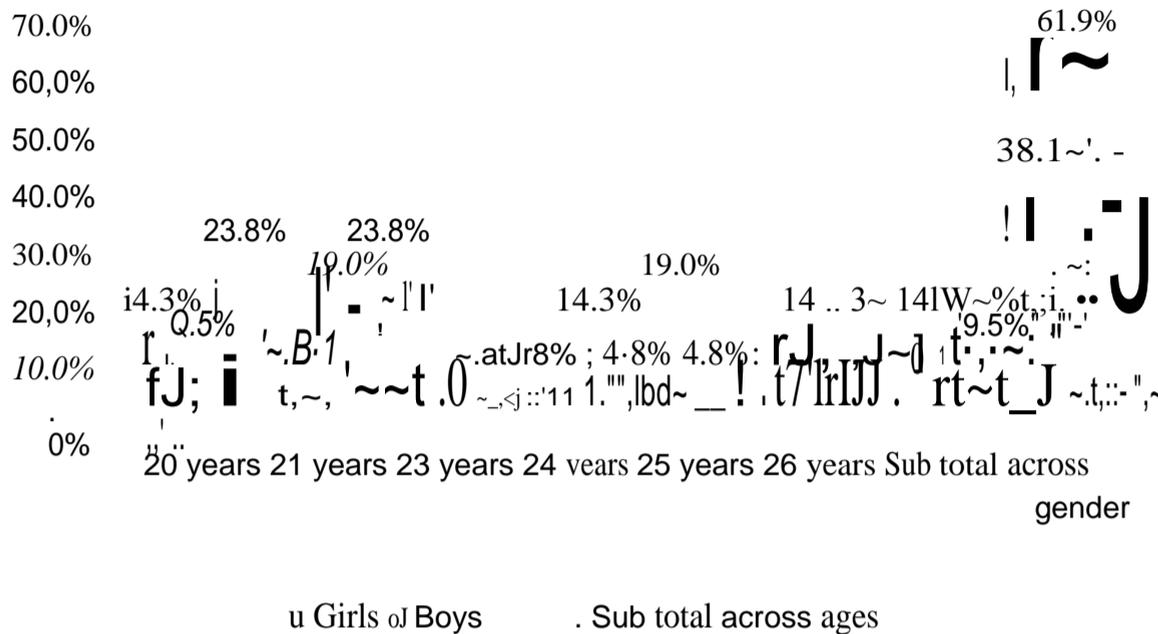
**Results and Discussions**

The results of analysis are discussed under demographic characteristics and hypothesis testing as shown below.

**Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

The results of the analysis on sex and age characteristics of the sample and other demographic related statistics are shown in figure 3.1 and table 3.1 below;

Figure 3.1 Distribution of Respondents across Gender and Age



N=21

Figure 3.1 above shows that boys were majority in the sample (61.9%) and girls were represented by 38.1 %, The ages of the respondents varied from 20 to 26 years, representing the age

category that really calls for mentoring program, In fact, respondents of ages 20 years, 21 years and 24 years were highly represented in the sample (23.8%, 23.8% and 19%, respectively)

Table 3,1 Sumrnary'of demographic statistical characteristics

	Age	Duration in mentorship program	Number of mentors one came across
Mean	22.7	3.57	1.25
Median	23.0	2.00	1.00
Mode,'	20.0n	1.00	1.00
Standa.rd Deviation	2.31	2.87	0 ..
Skewness	0.12	0.44	55
Range	6.00	7 ..	2.24
Minimum	20.00	00	2.00
Maximum	26.00	1.00	100
		8.00	3.00

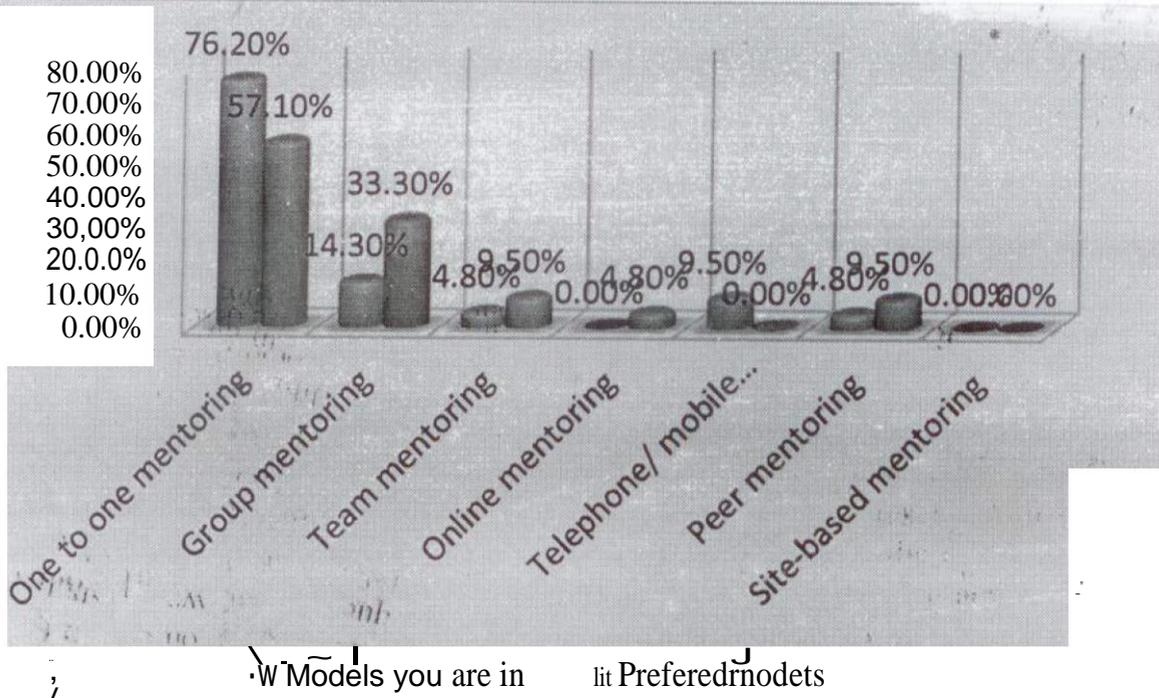
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 3.1 above shows that the mean age of the respondent was 22 . 7 years, the mean duration in the mentorship program was 3.57 semesters and the number of mentors a student came across in the mentorship program was 1. In addition, it can be deduced for the table that the longest duration one has been in the mentoring program was a period of 8 semesters and that the maximum number of mentors one had in the program were three (3) in number.

**Analysis of Research Questions**

The results of analysis for the following research questions are presented in form of figures and tables coupled with the respective discussions on the same. Mentoring models) used and preferred by students The findings on the models used and preferred by students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program are summarized in figure 3.2 below,

Figure 3.2 Mentoring Models used and Preferred



N=21.

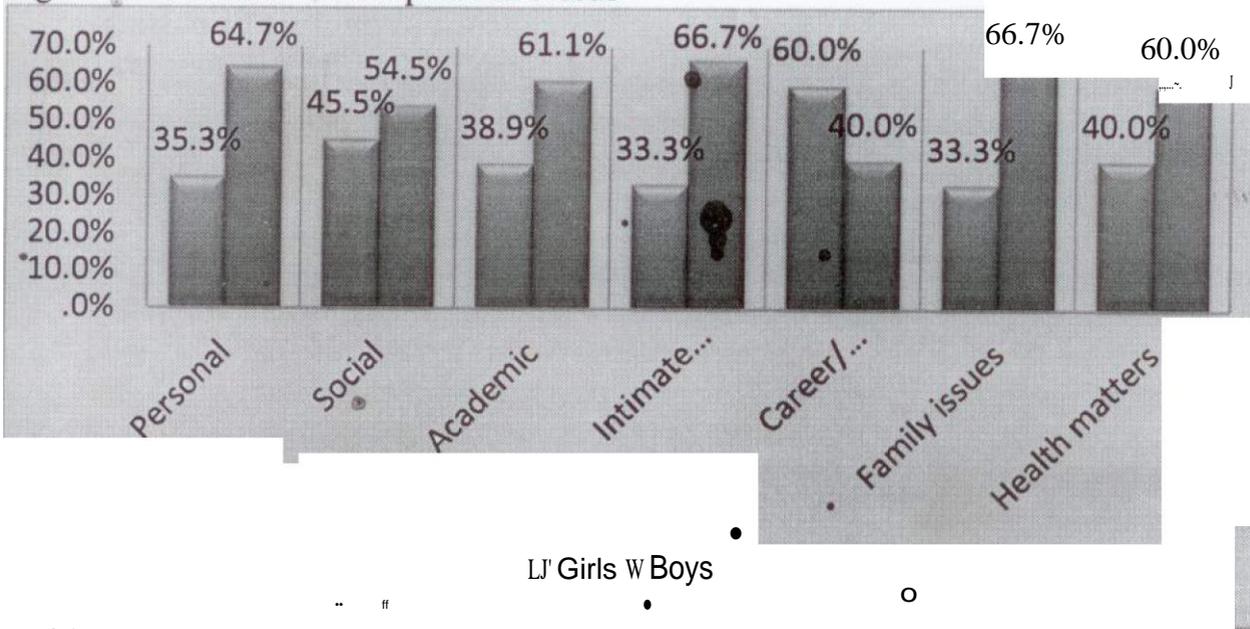
Figure 3.2 above shows that the most used and preferred model of mentoring by students in the mentoring program at Kenyatta University is one to one mentoring between the mentor and the mentee as chosen by 76.2% and 57.1 % of the respondents in the total sample, respectively. But also group (14.8%) and telephone (9.5%) mentoring were used as reported by respondents. Nevertheless, group mentoring (33.3%), team mentoring (9.5%) and peer mentoring (9.5%) seem to be preferred by some students. In addition, some 4.8% of the respondents prefer online mentoring. Different reasons were given against several model preferences. For example, One to one model was preferred based on such reasons as confidentiality, freedom of expression and personal touch. Group model was preferred because it offers diversity of experiences and

ideas shared, networking and social interaction; last but not least, is the online model that was preferred because of easy conduct and record keeping of mentoring meetings and sessions. There is therefore a need to embrace different modes of mentoring in order to reach out and increase convenience to many mentees. Indeed, as the social structure changes (Eccles and Grootman, 2002; Putnam, 2000), by using multiple models, caring adults will be in a position to reach out to many needy youths,

Students' developmental needs addressed in the mentoring program

The results on the nature of students' developmental needs met by students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program are summarized in figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3 Students' Developmental Needs



N=21

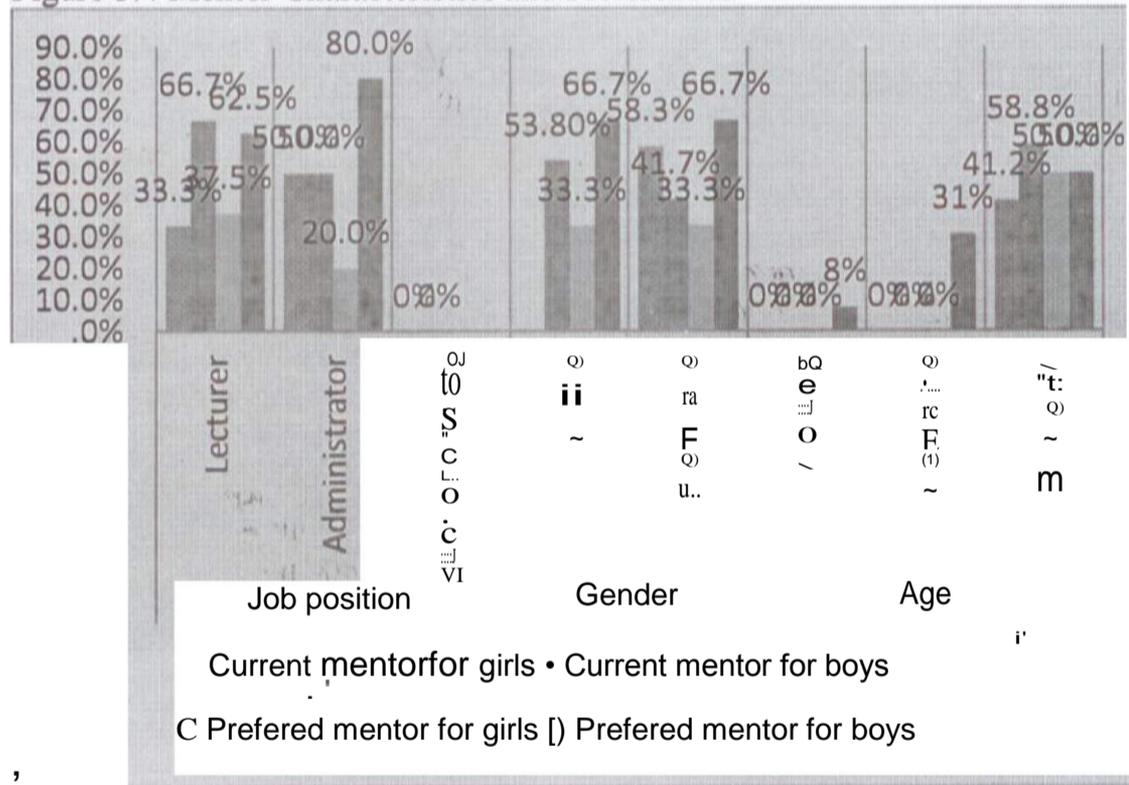
In figure 1.3, there is an indication that most of the students' developmental needs were met in the mentoring program. However, there were sex differences in the extent to which they were met with boys achieving most of their needs and slightly higher than girls. The outstanding boys' needs met were personal needs (64.7%), intimate relationships (66.7%) and family issues (66.7%). On the other hand, the most outstanding girls' needs met are career/professional needs (60%) and social issues (45.5%). But girls seemed not satisfied with the achievement of intimate relationship (33.3%) and family issues (33.3%) needs from the mentoring program. Nevertheless, there was indication from the respondents that they too benefited concerning life experiences and faith-based issues and needs. These results on varied achievements gained by

students in the mentoring program concurs with the findings from other studies which suggest that volunteer mentoring relationships can positively influence a range of outcomes, including improved peer and parental relationships, academic achievement, self-concept, and behavior in mentees (Aseltine, Dupre, and Lamlein, 2000; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper, 2002; Grossman and Tierney, 1998).

Current mentor characteristics and mentees' mentor preferences

The current characteristics and preferences of students' mentors were analyzed in terms of job position, gender and age, and figure 3.4 below gives a summary of the findings.

Figure 3.4 Mentor Characteristics and Preferences



N=21

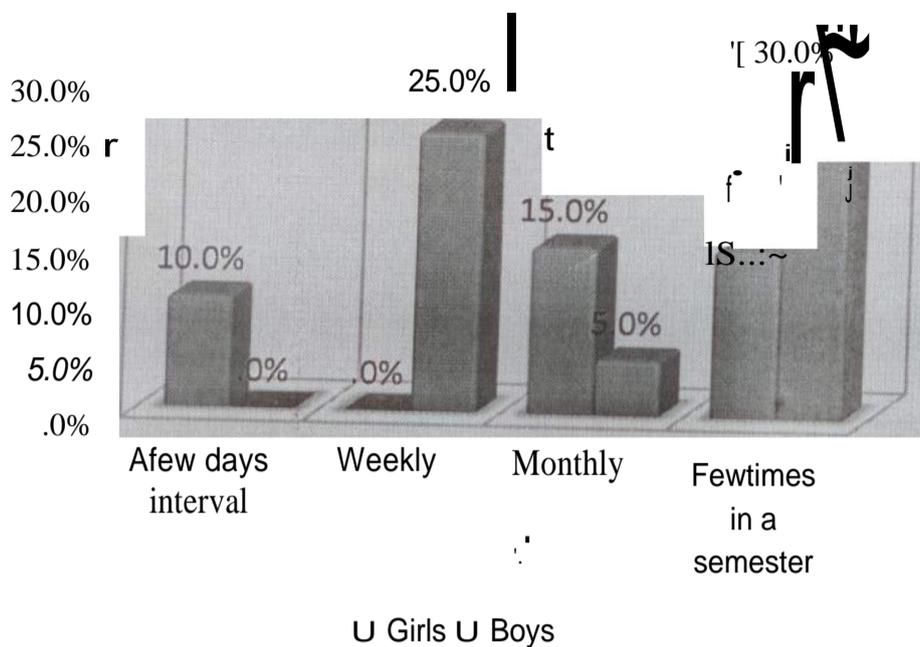
From figure 3.4 above, the most outstanding characteristics of current mentors are lecturer mentors for boys (66.7%), administrators for both boys (50%) and girls (50%), male mentors for boys (53.8%), female mentors for girls (66.7%) and elderly mentors for boys (58.8%). In the preferred mentors majority of boys prefer administrators (80%), also they prefer male and female mentors (both at 66.7%), and young (8%) and age mates (31%) as mentors. On the part of girls, they preferred mentors as lecturer (37.5%), males (33.3%) and elderly (50%). As seen in figure 3.4 above, the lack of male current mentor for females could be a reason as to why intimate relationships and family issues as developmental needs for girls as shown in figure 3.3 were less

achieved as they shunned away from discussing such issues with their fellow female mentors. This could have not been the case if they had male mentors. Further, this case is reinforced by the fact that 33.3% of the girl mentees indicated that they would have preferred male mentors. There is scarcity of literature concerning mentor preference by mentees: hence, more studies need to be conducted on this hypothesis.

Nature of mentor-mentee meetings

The nature of mentor-mentee meetings was analyzed in terms of frequency of meetings and duration of the meetings. The following figures give the summary of findings in this respect.

Figure 3.5 Frequency of Mentor-mentee Meeting's

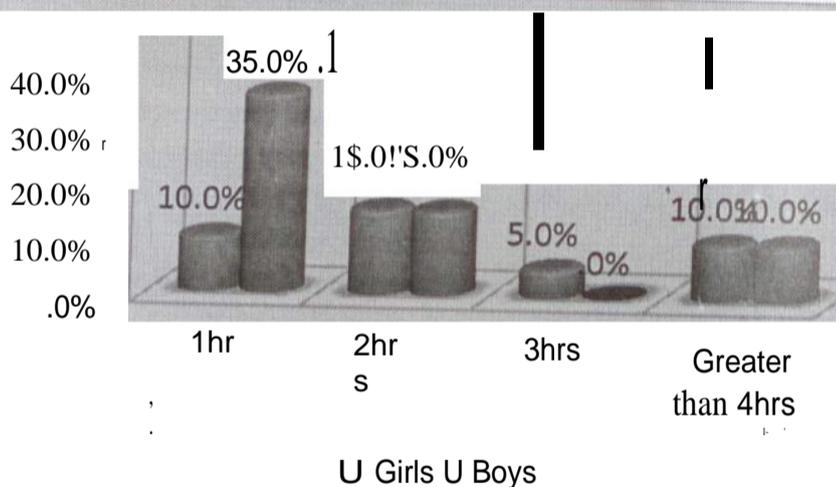


N;21

Figure 3.5 shows that boys' mentees met their mentors on weekly basis (25%) and a few times in a semester (30%), whereas, 10% of girls' mentees met their mentors after a few days interval, and 15% on monthly basis. Closely related to the frequency of meetings is the

duration of meetings, both of which determine the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship in any mentoring program. The results of the duration of mentoring meetings are presented in figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6 Duration of Mentoring Meetings



N;21

Figure 3.6 shows that majority of boys mentees (35%) spend one hour with their mentors, whereas girls' mentees are well distributed in their meetings with their mentors ranging from one hour to more than four (4) hours. The more frequent and durations of mentoring meetings determine the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring programs. Studies have indicated that youth who were in relationships that lasted a year or longer reported improvements in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes, while progressively fewer positive effects emerged among youth who were in relationships that terminated after six months or

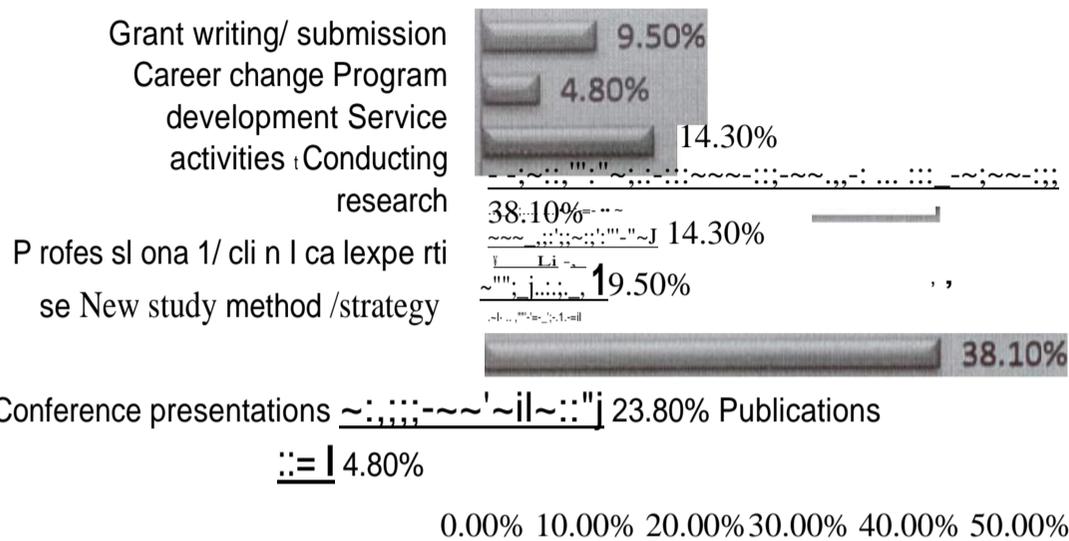
a year, or between three and six months (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002). Similarly, Slicker and Palmer (1993) found that students who were "effectively mentored" (as measured by the quality and length of the relationship) had better academic outcomes than controls, whereas those whose relationships terminated prematurely experienced a significant decline in self-concept when compared with youth who were not mentored at all. This being the case girls in the Kenyatta University should be achieving their mentoring goals and functioning relatively well than boys. However, on the achievement of developmental needs as a result of mentoring.

boys achieved more than girls. It will be more valid to check whether these sex differences in the effectiveness of mentoring program in the sample are significant (see hypothesis testing).

The effectiveness of the mentoring program can be concretely measured by the outcomes mentees have achieved, In the Kenyatta University mentoring program, the mentees indicated various achievements as summarized in figure 3.7 below

Mentorship program outcomes

Figure 3.7 Mentorship Program Outcomes Measures



N=21

In figure 3.7 above, the most achieved outcomes of the mentoring program in students included service activities (such as community work, professional organization) rated by 38.1 % of respondents, new study methods or strategies (38.1 %) and conference, seminar, workshop presentation or poster (23.8%). In addition, the respondents indicated that they also had achieved life skills and personal well-being as a result of the mentoring program.

Hypothesis related to mentor-mentee relationship and mentorship effectiveness were analyzed as shown below.

Relationship between mentor-mentee relationship and mentoring program effectiveness among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the first hypothesis on the relationship between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores. The results of the analysis are shown in table 3.2 below.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3.2 Pearson correlation coefficient test for the relationship between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores

Variables	Mentoring Program Effectiveness Scale Scores
Mentor-Mentee Relationship Scale Scores	Pearson Correlation .883
	Sig. (2-tailed) ,000
	N 21

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From table 3.2 above, the relationship between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores of students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program was positive and significant at 0,01 level of significant (0.883 and p>0.01, 0.000). This implied that the mentor-mentee relationship increased mentoring program effectiveness, These findings concur with those exemplified by

other previous studies that best practices increases mentoring program effectiveness (DuBois et al., 2002; Herrera, Sipe, McLanahan, Arbreton, and Pepper, 2000; Sipe, 1998).

Sex differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores

among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program. Anova test at 0,05 level of significance was used to analyze the second hypothesis on the sex

differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores." The results of the analysis are shown in table 3,3 below,

Table 3.3 Anova test for the sex differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Mentor-Mentee Relationship Scale Scores	Between Groups	.037	1	.037	.000	.989
	Within Groups	3447.106	19	181.427		
	Total	3447.143	20			
Mentoring Program Effectiveness Scale Scores	Between Groups	15,841	1	15.841	.087	.771
	Within Groups	3442.731	19	181.196		
	Total	3458.571	20			

Table 3.3 shows that there are no significant sex differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores (and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores). This implies that regardless of one's sex differences, the effects of mentor-mentee relationship and the mentoring program effectiveness was more less the same in both boys and girls. Though there is scarcity of literature in this area, these findings could open up interest in the same.

Age difference, between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores among students in the Kenyatta University mentoring program

Anova test at 0.05 level of significance was used to analyze the third hypothesis on the age differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores. The results of the analysis are shown in table 1.4 below.

Table 3.4 Anova test for the age differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Mentor-Mentee Relationship Scale Scores	Between Groups	1035.060	5	207.012	1.287	.320
	Within Groups	2412,083	15	160.806		
	Total	3447.143	20			
Mentoring Program Effectiveness Scale Scores	Between Groups	1649.155	5	329.831	2.734	.060
	Within Groups	1809.417	15	120.628		
	Total	3458.571	20			

In table 3.4, the results shows that there are no significant age differences between mentor-mentee relationship scale scores and mentoring program effectiveness scale scores. This implies that regardless of one's age differences, the effects of mentor-mentee relationship and the mentoring program effectiveness was more less the same across all age categories of the respondents. Just like in sex differences in table 3.3, since there is scarcity of literature in this area, these findings could also open up interest in the same.

### Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is clear that mentor-mentee relationship affects the mentoring program effectiveness and outcomes in mentees as explained in the review of related studies research literature. Hence, considerations should be made in enhancing and managing positive relationships between mentors and mentees in any mentoring program.

### Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that workshops and conferences should be fostered between mentors

and mentees in mentoring programs to highlight the importance of healthy relationships among them. In addition, mentees preferences for the nature and type of mentoring programs should be listened to in order to increase the trust and effectiveness of mentoring programs .. Further research is hereby recommended on mentoring programs in high school set ups in the country.

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