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THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT IN HARNESSING EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF MATHIRA CONSTITUENCY IN NYERI COUNTY

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Abstract: Having had a history of excellent academic performance before, it is possible that Mathira constituency can redeem its former standard to be the "place of education" that it was in the 1970's to 1990's. The general objective of this study was to assess the role of school alumni engagement in harnessing education development in Kenya by focusing on Mathira constituency in Nyeri County. The study sought to assess how engaging school alumni in mentorship programs, funding of school activities and engagement in school governance as well as performance monitoring influences this effort. The literature review focused on the views and opinions from other authors and previous studies undertaken on this topic. Descriptive research method was used in this study. The target population was 471 teachers, 1942 students (class 8 and form four), 993 alumni of 22 public schools in Mathira constituency between July and August 2015. The study also included the ministry of education officials and other education stakeholders in the area. Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample size of 346 respondents. Primary data was collected by use of semi-structured questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data on the performance of schools was obtained from the ministry of education offices in the constituency. The collected quantitative data was edited and coded into a statistical package (Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21) for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. The analyzed data was then presented in tables and figures. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data and the results were presented in the form of prose. A multivariate regression analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the four independent variables. The study established that mentorship programs, funding of school activities, alumni engagement in school governance as well as academic performance monitoring, plays a significant role in harnessing education development. The mentorship programs give the students personal confidence to enable them to make credible decisions. The study found that the alumni have a vast knowledge on the background of the institutions and hence can advise a lot on the running of the institutions. The study therefore concludes that public schools in Mathira Constituency should rally for alumni involvement in improving education standards in terms of mentorship, leadership, funding as well academic performance monitoring all of which lead to positive development in education. In addition, school alumni should take it as their responsibility to support their former schools in whichever capacity the felt capable of. The study also recommends that the management of public schools in Mathira Constituency should involve alumni in school governance and management more as these have shown to be valuable assets in guiding the school management teams in terms of the best ways to improve education standards in their schools thus promoting education development.

Key Words: School Alumni, Mentorship Programs, Education Development, School Governance, Academic Performance, Student Motivation

Introduction

Barber (2001) noted that education is considered as a first step for every human activity. He indicated that education plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living. In many developed countries, education is largely financed by the government, meaning the government meets the major proportion associated with education for every citizen. Unfortunately, this is not the case in most of the less developed and developing countries. Buschang, Chung and Kim (2011) assert that education ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills which enhances an individual's productivity and assists in improving one's quality of life. This increase in productivity Barber (2001) notes leads towards new sources of earning which enhance the economic growth of a country. Adegoke and Ibode (2007) noted that factors that affect students' academic performance include age, gender, geographical belongingness, ethnicity, marital status, socio-economic status, parents' education level, parental profession, language, income and religious affiliations.

Reche, Bundi, Riungu and Mbugua (2012) indicated that the introduction of Free Primary Education and the passage of the Children's Act of 2001, led to vital educational achievements. They noted that enrollment in public schools increased significantly and the Kenyan Government provided funds, through two accounts in order for schools to procure need-based materials and improve on some infrastructure, thereby hoping to improve the development of education.

Despite the introduction of free primary education in Kenya and increased effort to ensure literacy levels have increased, both primary and secondary schools in Kenya are characterized by poor performance. Low achievement in test scores, poor literacy skills, and high dropout rates are but a few indicators of the bleak educational and career prospects faced by many pupils and high school students (Orodho et al., 2013). Low academic motivation and achievement have been attributed in part by educators and social scientists to a scarcity of positive adult role models in communities. Poverty, family instability, and limited opportunities to work and travel restrict the exposure of many students and pupils to upwardly mobile, successful adults. Therefore, they may not see how life goals, planning, a work ethic, and persistence contribute to the success (Sheikh, 2010).

Educators have tried to fill this need by inviting motivational speakers, including popular athletes, media personalities, and prominent business executives to visit classrooms and school assemblies. These visits are often reported in the media and presumably make vivid impressions upon students. Little evidence, however, suggests that such encounters stimulate students to persevere at school, set goals, and determine how they can fulfill their potential. Tjas and Nelsen (1996) indicate that students find personal relevance in the accomplishments of eminently successful persons, whose experiences, opportunities, and talents may be regarded by most as extraordinary and quite different from their own. Indeed, evidence suggests that persons are more likely to attend to and be influenced by models who are similar to themselves. In addition, persons tend to identify with others who share common characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences.

Based on the assumption that students may be more responsive to mentors and role models who share similarities with themselves, some educational support programs have matched adults with students of the same ethnicity and socio-economic background. These adults may spend time with students in non-school activities or in school counseling, tutoring, or other activities that encourage students to persist in school (Sheikh, 2010). Presumably, alumni and current high school students, being from a common socio-cultural environment, have shared similar experiences and hold distinctive perspectives. Consequently, alumni may be especially credible as role models for students. The educational and

career paths of alumni afford reference points as students judge their own current circumstances, abilities, performances and opportunities and as they formulate their own goals and aspirations for their futures. Through personal interactions with alumni, students learn how their predecessors have confronted challenges, persevered, and achieved rewards for hard work. Furthermore, if students perceive commonalities between themselves and alumni who have achieved success and stability, their expectations, motivation, and aspirations for their own futures may be enhanced.

Before the 1990s, Mathira Constituency in Nyeri County produced the top schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and had produced many high profile individuals that hold top positions in the government and the private sector and many more in the academic field (Wamunyu, 2012). However, in the recent times, there has been a growing concern about the deteriorating standards of education in the constituency and various stakeholders have come out and raised this issue and are seeking for a solution to the problem (Wamunyu, 2012). The current state of education is a far cry from the past years when the constituency was always ranked as one of the best performing in the entire country. The results from the 2014 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) painted a complete new picture of the constituency and the County as a whole. Nyeri County, where Mathira constituency lies, was ranked number 17 out of the total 47 counties with a mean score of 256 out of a possible 500 marks. Consequently, Mathira East district was ranked number 5 out of 290 districts in the country with a mean score of 280 marks, while Mathira West District was nowhere among the top 50 districts, a sharp contrast from the previous years where all the academic giants in the constituency hailed from that area. This is quite a worrying trend and part of the reason why Mathira constituency continues to display a dismal performance as compared to other constituencies in the country although despite this the constituency remains the best in the county. The remarkable performance of Mathira East district in 2014, however, can be attributed to a new wave that has been championed by the former alumni of the schools in that district who have opted to go back home and get involved in the development of education affairs creating a strong cooperation between the parents, teachers, pupils and the society at large in education development matters.

As a matter of principle the leadership in Mathira constituency led by their member of parliament and other authorities in the education has been working hard to determine ways in which the above situation can be rectified. Efforts have been put in place to come up with various strategies that can be applied in order to salvage the declining education status in the constituency and help restore the earlier standards of the years gone by (Mwangi, 2010). Some of these activities include, for example the establishment of the Mathira Education Trust Fund, which is aimed at sponsoring bright and needy kids through secondary school and this therefore becomes a form of motivation to the deserving pupils to work extra hard in order to qualify for this sponsorship and also ensuring that no bright student who after having passed well in the KCPE exam fails to join the secondary school that they have been admitted to due to lack of school fees. Another is the development of school infrastructure throughout the constituency and the provision of education resources through various means like book harvesting activities, corporate social responsibility efforts and other such initiatives. There is also a basic call to all former alumni of the constituency to come back home and help their former schools restore the standard of education. This latter effort is what influenced the researcher to carry out this study, being a former alumni herself of one of the best performing primary schools in the constituency to try and determine how effective this mode of intervention is and thus be able to advise the stakeholders if it is a worthy call to pursue or they need to change their approach and pursue a different strategy altogether (Mwangi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Education has been termed a major driver of development in many countries because it helps in improvement of livelihoods through poverty alleviation. However, this is only significant if it is easily accessible and of quality value to the masses. This therefore means that for education to achieve its objective in development a lot needs to be put in place in terms of infrastructure and growth of education (Nyagosia, Waweru & Njuguna, 2013). Having realized this and noting that Mathira constituency relies heavily on education for development, the leadership has engaged various stakeholders in different fields to come up with ways of capitalizing on education as the major development vehicle of the constituency.

In the recent past, public schools in Mathira Constituency have been portraying poor academic performance in both primary and secondary schools. According to the sub-county strategic plan, secondary schools were posting low performance in national examinations as compared to the primary schools. In secondary schools, the sub-county academic performance appears to have stagnated around 5.1 (2014 was 5.184 and 2012 was 5.132) contrary to the 5 year strategic plan which is geared towards achieving 7.5 mean grade by the year 2016 (Mathira Constituency Strategic Plan, 2014). In addition, private primary schools were found to be outdoing the public primary schools. For instance, in the year 2014 KCPE, 13 private primary schools out of 17 had their mean marks ranging from 350 to 349 while on 2 public primary schools out of 39 had their mean marks in the same range (Mathira Constituency Strategic Plan, 2014).

Having had a history of excellent academic performance before as well as having produced some of the best brains in the country, it is possible that Mathira constituency can redeem its former standard to be the "place of education" that it was in the 1970's to 1990's and become the center of excellence academically to be emulated by others in the country. With this in mind it has become very necessary to evaluate different strategies that can be applied in order to help catapult the constituency back to that former education standard and alumni engagement is one of the key strategies that has been identified and currently being explored (Nyagosia, Waweru & Njuguna, 2013). This forms the basic objective of this study and aims at finding out how effective this strategy is and what the likely role will be if fully implemented and therefore give an indication of how successful it is bound to be in the overall goal of improving the education standards in the constituency and if possible the rest of the county and country as a whole.

This strategy is at the early stages of exploration and the researcher being one of the players and pioneers of championing this movement found it necessary to undertake this research. This study forms a basis of obtaining information and insights so that all activities that will take place thereafter will be guided by some level of knowledge and understanding and will be based on a common understanding from a knowledge point of view.

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To assess the extent to which school alumni engagement in mentorship programs improves education development in Mathira Constituency.
2. To determine the impact of funding by school alumni in developing education in schools in Mathira Constituency.
3. To assess the effect of alumni engagement in school governance and management on education development in schools in Mathira Constituency
4. To determine the extent to which academic performance monitoring by school alumni affects education development in Mathira Constituency.

Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura (1963), the social learning theory posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. In addition to the observation of behavior, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. The theory expands on traditional behavioral theories, in which behavior is governed solely by reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the learning individual.

As Bandura (1963) initially outlined and further detailed in 1977, key tenets of social learning theory include learning is not purely behavioural; rather, it is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context. Learning can occur by observing behaviour and by observing the consequences of the behaviour (vicarious reinforcement). Learning involves observation, extraction of information from those observations, and making decisions about the performance of the behaviour (observational learning or modeling). Thus, learning can occur without an observable change in behaviour. Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning. The learner is not a passive recipient of information. Cognition, environment, and behaviour all mutually influence each other (reciprocal determinism).

Social learning theory draws heavily on the concept of modeling, or learning by observing behaviour. Bandura (1977) outlines three types of modeling stimuli: live model in which an actual person is demonstrating the desired behaviour; verbal instruction in which an individual describes the desired behaviour in detail and instructs the participant in how to engage in the behaviour; and symbolic in which modeling occurs by means of the media, including movies, television, internet, literature, and radio. Stimuli can be either real or fictional characters. This theory is relevant to the study as it partly explains the variables of role modeling and mentorship programs as having an impact on education development and the issue of motivation as a way of improving education performance.

John Dewey's Theories of Education

John Dewey won a greater international following for his educational reforms than for his instrumentalist philosophy. Between the two World Wars, where previously backward countries were obliged to catch up quickly with the most modern methods, as in Turkey, Japan, China, the Soviet Union and Latin America, the re-shapers of the educational system turned toward Dewey's innovations for guidance (Warde, 1960). As Warde continues to highlight, Dewey's work consummated the trends in education below the university level initiated by pioneer pedagogues animated by the impulses of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This was especially clear in his views on child education which built on ideas first brought forward by Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel in Western Europe (Warde 1960), and by kindred reformers in the United States. According to Dewey, the movement to reform child education must be viewed in its historical context. Children as such are not usually included among the oppressed, yet they necessarily compose one of the weakest, most dependent and defenseless sections of the population. Each generation of children is not only helped but hindered and hurt by the elders who exercise direct control over them. Just as society may deny satisfaction to the physical, educational and cultural needs of the young, so their parents and guardians may slight or ignore their rights. Most adults cannot be held individually culpable for such misdeeds; they, too, have been shaped by the society around them and are goaded by its necessities. Through them and others around them the rising generation suffers from the inadequacies of their social inheritance and the evils

of their surroundings. Growing children are normally unaware of the remoter social causes of their misfortunes and miseries; even their elders may not know about them. So they direct their resentments, as well as focus their affections, upon the members of their immediate circle.

As Warde (1960) continues to explore Dewey's work, he states that, children cannot formulate their grievances collectively, or conduct organized struggle for improvements in their conditions of life and mode of education. Apart from individual explosions of protest, they must be helped by spokesmen among adults who are sensitive to the troubles of the young and are resolved to do something about remedying them. This is a classic example of a role very well played by school alumni. However, the impulsion for educational reform does not come in the first place from any abstract recognition of the deprivations suffered by the young. It arises from reactions to widespread changes in the conditions of life which affect all age groups. Their new situation forces both parents and children to seek new ways of satisfying the new demands thrust upon them. Dewey's theories blended attention to the child as an individual with rights and claims of his own with a recognition of the gulf between an outdated and class-distorted educational setup inherited from the past and the urgent requirements of the new era. In *The School and Society*, Dewey pointed out how haphazardly the existing school organization had grown up. It was composed of oddly assorted and poorly fitting parts, fashioned in different centuries and designed to serve different needs and even conflicting social interests.

Dewey sought to supply that unifying pattern by applying the principles and practices of democracy, as he interpreted them, consistently throughout the educational system. First, the schools would be freely available to all from kindergarten to college. Second, the children would themselves carry on the educational process, aided and guided by the teacher. Third, they would be trained to behave cooperatively, sharing with and caring for one another. Then these creative, well-adjusted equalitarians would make over American society in their own image. Dewey aimed to integrate the school with society, and the processes of learning with the actual problems of life, by a thoroughgoing application of the principles and practices of democracy (Warde, 1960).

In furthering the work of Dewey, Njoroge and Bennaars (1986), indicate that schools in Africa are facing a crisis, namely, a lack of an appropriate pedagogy. This is on account of the existence of conflicting interests among the various actors and stakeholders, that is, the school, the family, and the society at large. The result of this conflict or of this competition is a malignant growth of "non-education". As a remedy, the two propose a truly African pedagogy, which includes not only instruction but also the social vision of education.

Njoroge and Bennaars (1986), also identify another crisis of African pedagogy, that is, the lack of hope. They argue that Africa is suffering from what they refer to as a "drunken boat" syndrome. In this metaphor, African pedagogy is being likened to a ship captain who has no maps, nor other piloting equipment. This situation engenders a feeling of hopelessness. Further, they attribute the problems of Africa to a lack of African pedagogy of caring and they make a plea for this type of pedagogy. In advocating a pedagogy of caring, they argue for reflective teaching which attends mindfully to the social and political context of education, as well as to technical and practical aspects of it.

Bennaars (1998) also indicates that a teacher should be a role model to students. He defines a role model as a person whom one admires and whose character or behavior one tries to imitate. Teachers often become role models for their students: students strive to do as well as or even to outdo their masters. Although there are educational skills that all teachers should acquire in order to do their work

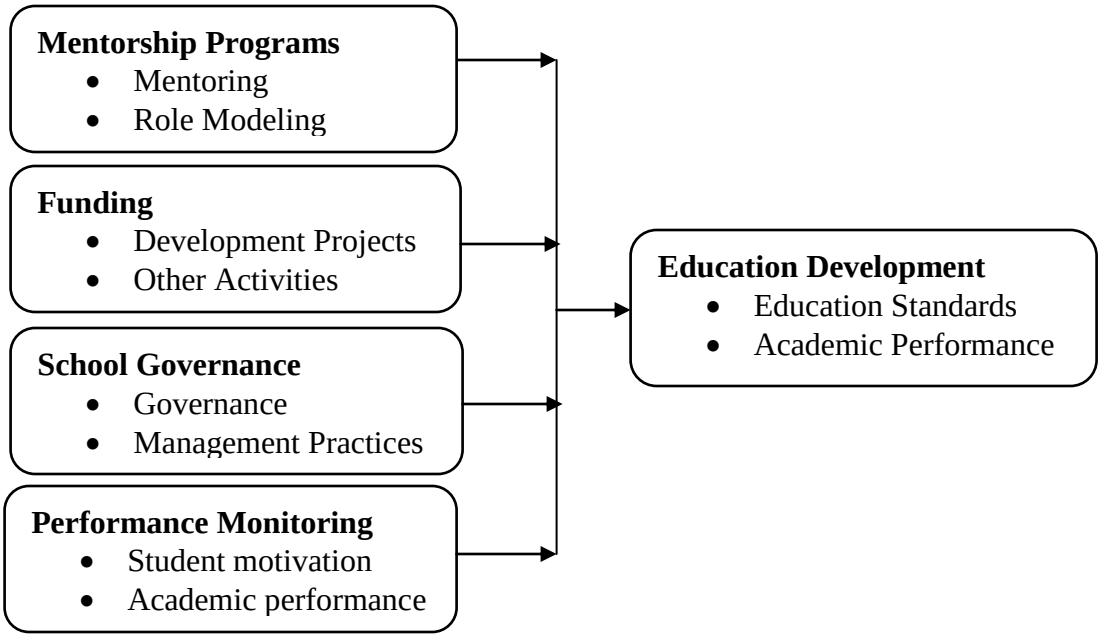
effectively, the quality that makes one a role model teacher comes from elsewhere, from one's personality and character.

In our world today, it is expected that teachers should sympathetically understand their students in order to establish a harmonious and happy relationship. This is all the more necessary since students are drawn from many different backgrounds with variations of cultural beliefs. On the basis of this fact, Bennaars never failed to show kindness, care, and sympathy towards his students. He was one of those teachers who found job satisfaction in teaching because he took it as a vocation (Wolof, 2001).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study seeks to find out how the various variables outlined affect education development in the target population. Education is a key driver of development and therefore the researcher will be seeking to understand how engaging school alumni helps to further this course and to what extent?

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables **Dependent Variable**

Research Gaps

The area under review has not had many studies done before. Studies conducted in this area include Gannon and Maher (2012) study on developing tomorrow's talent through undergraduate mentoring program; Nauta and Kokaly (2001) study to assess the role model influences on students' academic and vocational decisions in the United Kingdom; and Tjas and Nelsen (1996) study on successful alumni as role models for high school youth in Pakistan. These studies were conducted in countries with different political, legal, social and economic characteristics from Kenya and hence their findings cannot be generalized to Kenya.

Most studies focusing on alumni engagement are limited to higher institutions of learning, that is, universities and tertiary colleges and seem to overlook the lower levels of education. In addition, these studies do not show how engaging school alumni in school activities influence education development in schools.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research method was used in this study. This design was suitable for use in this study because it allowed for critical analysis of all the variables that were under investigation. The study focused on public schools located in Mathira Constituency of Nyeri County, Kenya that have active alumni engagements. The target population for this study was the 471 teachers, 1942 students (class 8 and form four), 993 alumni of 22 public schools in Mathira constituency. The study also included ministry of education officials and other education stakeholders in the area.

The target population of this study was 3406. The sample size was determined using Fishers formula (Kothari, 2004).

$$n = Z^2 pq/d^2$$

Where;

- n = the desired sample size (if the target population is > 10,000).
- Z = is the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level.
- p = is the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being studied. If unknown use 0.5.
- q = (1-p) 1-0.5 = 0.5
- d = the level of statistical significance set at 0.05
- Z = Assuming 95% confidence interval Z = 1.96

$$n = 1.96^2 (0.5) (0.5)/0.05^2 = 384$$

According to Fisher, for a population that is less than 10000 an adjustment must be done using the formula;

$$nf = n/1+(n/N)$$

Where;

nf=the final sample size, when population is less than 10,000

n=the sample for populations of 10,000 or more

N=the size of the total population from which the sample is drawn

nf=384/1+(384/3406)

nf=345

Stratified random sampling was used in the study. To select the sampling size from each of the categories (teachers, students and alumni) from each of the schools proportionate sampling was used.

Table 1: Sample Size

	School	Teachers	Students	Alumni	Total
Secondary schools	Bishop Gatimu Ngandu Girls	3	16	12	31
	Kanjuri High School	2	15	7	24
	Tumutumu Girls High School	3	16	11	30
	Ruthagati Secondary	3	13	7	23
	Mathaithi Girls	2	12	5	19
	Magutu Secondary	3	11	6	20
	Kanyama Secondary	2	9	5	16
	Kianjogu Secondary	2	9	5	16
	Gatondo Secondary	2	7	5	14
	Kabiruini Secondary	3	9	3	15
	Kiamwangi Secondary	2	10	4	16
	Gikumbo Secondary	3	8	5	16
	Kiamabara Secondary	2	9	7	18
Primary schools	Kiarithaini Primary	2	6	3	11
	Ngorano primary	2	7	3	12
	Kahiraini primary	2	4	2	8
	Kianjeneni primary	2	6	2	10
	Kiamabara primary	2	7	2	11
	Tumutumu primary	2	7	2	11
	Kanjuri primary	2	7	2	11
	Karatina DEB Primary	2	6	2	10
	Karura primary	2	7	2	11
	Total	**48**	**197**	**101**	**346**

The main tools of data collection for this study were questionnaires, interview schedules and a review of existing performance and development records of the target population schools. Before the actual data was collected, the researcher conducted a pilot study in Karura and Ngorano Primary schools both representing the two districts of Mathira East and West. The purpose was to enable the researcher to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instruments, and to get familiar with the administration of the questionnaires in order to improve the instruments and the procedures. This helped in refining the questions through rephrasing and removal of ambiguous questions.

Data analysis was quantitative as well as qualitative. The collected quantitative data was edited and coded into a statistical package (Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21) for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze quantitative data. In descriptive statistics, the study used frequency, mean, standard deviation and percentages. The analyzed data was then presented in tables and figures. On the other hand, qualitative data was coded thematically and then evaluated statistically. Content analysis was used for qualitative data, that is, data collected from open ended questions. The results were then presented in form of a prose.

A multivariate regression analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between dependent variable and the four independent variables. The regression equation was:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$

Where;

Y = Education development

X1 = Mentorship and role modeling programs by school alumni

X2 = Funding by school alumni

X3 = Engagement in governance and school management issues

X4 = Student motivation and performance monitoring

ε = Error Term

B_0 = Constant Term

B_1, B_2, B_3 B_4 = Beta Co-efficient

Results and Discussion

Mentorship Programs

The study established that most of the schools in Mathira Constituency engage alumni in mentorship programs. These findings agree with Nyagosia, Waweru and Njuguna (2013) argument that alumni engagement is one of the key strategies that has been identified and currently being explored in public schools in Mathira Constituency. The social learning theory posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. Therefore, the use of mentorship programs can help in the improvement of students' academic performance as well as help create role models who are able to help raise the standards of education in the schools.

The study also established that the alumni act as the role models to the learners thus leading to good academic performance. In addition, the study found that the alumni gave the students tips on how to pass in their final exams. The study further revealed that the mentorship program gives the student personal confidence that enables them to be able to make credible decisions to a very great extent. The findings concur with Kuh et al. (2010) findings that mentorship programs give the students personal confidence that enables them to be able to make credible decisions. In addition, the alumni mentors provide student with advice as well as give knowledge of a real life work place setting. The findings agree with Kuh et al. (2010) findings that mentorship program improves the career skills of student where the alumni mentors provide student with advice as well as give knowledge of a real life work place setting. Further, alumni mentors serve as role models that give students someone to emulate as well as give them aspirations. The social learning theory outlines three types of modelling stimuli: live model in which an actual person is demonstrating the desired behaviour; verbal instruction in which an individual describes the desired behaviour in detail and instructs the participant in how to engage in the behaviour; and symbolic in which modelling occurs by means of the media, including movies, television, internet, literature, and radio. Stimuli can be either real or fictional characters. The study also found that the alumni's focus is usually quality education, student's success, as well as the students' welfare.

The study established that students who undergo mentorship programs tend to have better academic performance as well as personal growth. These findings agree with Kuh et al. (2010) argument that students that undergo mentorship programs tend to have better academic performance as well as personal growth. In addition, mentoring programs give students a smooth transition into their chosen professions. Furthermore, the programs improve the career skills of students. These findings concur

with Huybrecht et al (2011) argument that mentorship programs in public schools lead to an improvement in the career skills of the students. The mentors were also found to show students how to translate as well as effect leadership ideas in real life situations. These findings concur with Kuh et al. (2010) argument that the mentorship program is very instrumental in enabling an institution to bring up an all rounded individual both personally and professionally. The study also revealed that alumni mentorship program is a reliable way of sustaining quality education. These findings are in line with Kuh et al. (2010) argument that mentorship programs improve the quality of education in public schools.

Funding by School Alumni

The study established that school alumni in Mathira Constituency were funding development projects. The projects that were funded include buying of textbooks, setting up a school library, buying chairs for teachers, building of school multipurpose hall, construction of latrines, electricity projects, water project, buying of chairs and desks, funding of education day budget, buying of books, building of classrooms, buying of games equipment, buying of computers and building of laboratories.

The study also found that school alumni in Mathira Constituency bring in other sponsors to the school (individuals and organizations). These findings agree with Bourgeois (2013) argument that the alumni are able to provide financial support through various means which include inviting their friends. It was also established that school alumni were moderately involved in the funding of other activities in the schools like the provision of gifts in the schools prize giving days, funding of financial aid students program, funding of putting up new facilities, funding of faculty recruitment, funding of building renovations and funding of symposiums. These findings agree with Miller et al. (2011) findings that school alumni involvement in schools allows them to bring with them gifts to motivate the performing students. Further, the findings concur with Mwangi (2010) argument that school alumni should be involved in funding of financial aid students program, funding of student publications and putting up new facilities.

Alumni Engagement in School Governance

The study established that most of the schools in Mathira constituency were engaging school alumni in school management, governance, leadership, policy development. The study also found that engagement of school alumni in school governance, leadership, policy development and management practices impact education development in the schools in Mathira Constituency. These findings concur with Gannon and Maher (2012) argument that numerous benefits arise from alumni's engagement through the contribution of well thought out strategies and directions. The alumni directives are effective in the daily undertakings of the school activities, as they understand the students' requirements.

The study revealed that upon involving the alumni in the management of the schools the students have confidence with the school's administration. Further, having alumni's engagement gives a personal touch by critical consideration of the students' body by their predecessors. In addition, the study found that alumni having passed through the school curriculum know specifically the needs of the students. The findings concur with Habib (2014) argument that after one having passed through the school curriculum, they know specifically the needs of the students as well as the appropriate approach when dealing with their issues. It was found that guidance and input of school alumni is critical to a school's governance and management. The study also found that alumni have a vast knowledge on the background of the institution and hence can carry out the managerial duties of the institution. These findings agree with Huybrecht *et al.* (2011) argument that alumni have a vast knowledge on the

background of the institutions and this fact consequently puts these individuals in a better position to carry out the managerial duties of the institution.

Academic Performance Monitoring

The study established that engaging school alumni helps in improving student motivation and academic performance in schools in Mathira Constituency. These findings agree with Fraenuel and Wallen (2006) argument that students' academic performance improves because students have a positive outlook of the future giving them the motivation to work hard on their studies when they learn and observe the status of the others who have gone before them. The study also found that engaging school alumni helps in improving student motivation and academic performance to a very great extent. These findings are in line with Fraenuel and Wallen (2006) argument that while current students observe good performance of former students and the fact that these are doing well in life based on their past good performance this tends to motivate them and they try as much as possible to emulate these former students in terms of performance and sometimes even behavior wise hoping that they too would be as successful.

The study also revealed that engaging school alumni helps in improving motivation to a very great extent. Further, engaging school alumni was found to help in improving school average grade to a great extent. As well, the study established that engaging school alumni helps in improving students' self-esteem to a great extent. These findings agree with Nauta and Kokaly (2001) argument that engagement of school alumni helps students to improve their self-esteem. In addition, the study revealed that engaging school alumni helps in improving attention in class to a great extent. These findings agree with Nauta and Kokaly (2001) who showed that persons who are perceived as role models can facilitate academic and career development through their support and guidance as well as through the degree to which they provide inspiration and modeling thus improving the academic performance of the students greatly.

The study established that by interacting with the school alumni the students admire to be like them and hence put more effort in their academic activities and hence improvement. In addition, the students and pupils get inspiration from their role models and work extra hard to be like them. Through mentorship program learners develop a positive attitude towards education thus leading to good academic performance. Engaging school alumni encourages a healthy competition and rewarding of good performance motivates the students to perform well.

Regression Analysis

A multivariate regression analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between dependent variable and the four independent variables.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.867[a]	.752	.749	.31360

The R-Squared is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable which can be explained by the independent variables. The R-squared in this study was 0.752, which shows that the four independent variables can explain 75.2% of the dependent variable. This shows that the other factors not studied in this study explain 24.8% of the dependent variable.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.261	4	22.565	229.456	.000[b]
	Residual	29.798	303	.098		
	Total	120.058	307			

The analysis of variance in this study was used to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. From the findings, the p-value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and hence the model is good in predicting how the four independent variables influence education development. Further, the F-calculated (229.456) was more than the F-critical (2.37) which shows that the model was fit in predicting the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.235	.164		-1.434	.153
Mentorship programs by school alumni	.144	.049	.115	2.935	.004
Funding by school alumni	.183	.024	.253	7.740	.000
Engagement school management practices	.276	.037	.318	7.503	.000
Academic performance monitoring	.479	.059	.381	8.150	.000

Based on this table, the equation for the regression line is:

$Y = -0.235+0.144X_1 + 0.183X_2 + 0.276X_3 +0.479X_4$

According to the intercept (β_0), when the four independent variables are held constant, the value of education development will have an index of 4.065. In addition, the findings show that there is a positive relationship between mentorship programs by school alumni and education development as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.144 and a p-value of 0.004. The findings also show that funding by school alumni positively and significantly influences education development as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.183 and a p-value of 0.000. The findings further show that there is a positive relationship between engagement in school governance and education development as indicated by a regression coefficient of 0.276 and a p-value of 0.000. Lastly, the findings show that there is relationship between academic performance monitoring and education development as shown by a p-value of 0.000. From these findings we can infer that student academic performance monitoring was the most significant factor followed by engagement in management practices, funding by school alumni and mentorship programs by school alumni.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between mentorship programs by school alumni and education development. The mentorship programs give the students personal confidence that enables them to be able to make credible decisions. In addition, the alumni mentors provide student with advice as well as give knowledge of a real life work place setting. Further, alumni mentors serve as role models that give students someone to emulate as well as give them aspirations.

The study also concludes that funding by school alumni positively and significantly influences education development. The alumni were involved in projects that include buying of textbooks, buying chairs for teachers, building of school multipurpose hall, construction of classrooms and latrines, electricity projects, water project, buying of chairs and desks, funding of education day budget, buying of games equipment, buying of computers and building of laboratories.

The study further concludes that there is a positive relationship when alumni are engaged in school management and education development. The study also found that engagement of school alumni in school governance, leadership, policy development and management practices impact education development in the schools in Mathira Constituency. Having alumni's engagement gives a personal touch by critical consideration of the students' body by their predecessors. In addition, the alumni have a vast knowledge on the background of the institution and hence can carry out the managerial duties of the institution.

Lastly, the study concludes that when the alumni put a keen interest on the academic perfomance of the school and monitor the same consistently, then the students are motivated to work harder to ensure the performance keeps improving year in year out. Everyone wants to be associated with good perfomance and therefor it is easy to get sponsors and other donors to assist the schools in their projects as well as sponsoring bright and needy kids where necessary. There is thus a relationship between good academic performance and education development. The study also concludes that engaging school alumni helps in improving student motivation, translating to improved academic performance, school average grades, students' self-esteem and attention in class.

Recommendations

The study found that school alumni involvement in and mentorship programs influences students' motivation and academic performance. However, some schools in Mathira Constituency do not have school alumni programs. The study therefore recommends that all public schools in Mathira Constituency should rally for alumni involvement in mentoring current pupils and students. This can be done by planning for annual meetings with all the alumni, by creating social media pages where alumni can communicate with each other and by using mass media to call them for meetings.

The study also found that the alumni were moderately involved in school activities and projects. This study therefore recommends that public schools management in Mathira Constituency should involve and emphasize on the contribution of the school alumni in development projects in their schools. This will help to improve standards of learning and avail all the required material and infrastructure which are key in improving students' academic performance.

The study established that some schools were not involving the school alumni in school governance. This is despite the findings that the alumni have a vast knowledge on the background of the institution and hence can carry out the managerial duties of the institution. This study recommends that the management of public schools in Mathira Constituency should involve alumni in school governance and management matters. This will help in winning their trust and hence improvement in support of development projects in the schools.

The study found that constant monitoring of performance in the schools by the alumni keeps the teachers and students on toes and always wanting to perform better and better. This study therefore recommends that public schools in Mathira Constituency need to actively ensure that their alumni are always informed of their performance and that performance targets are set out clearly every time in order to determine if there is progress or not. The alumni also need to be very actively involved and it is upon them to make sure that they are keen on following every step of the performance and that any

targets that they set forth are met and if not find suitable solutions to the causes of the failure to meet them.

Areas for Further Studies

This study was limited to Mathira Constituency and hence its findings cannot be generalized to the rest of the country as yet. This study therefore suggests further studies in the wider Nyeri County as well as other parts of the country. The study found that the four variables that were covered in this study only explain 75.2% of education development in Mathira Constituency. The study thus suggests further studies on other factors that influence development of education in schools in Mathira Constituency as well as Nyeri County as a whole.

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