

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE**

ISSN-2213-1356

www.ijirk.com

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADULT MALE PARTICIPATION
IN FORMAL MENTORSHIP ON MALE YOUTH SELF-
ESTEEM AS REFEREED BY MENTEE AGE AND
CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

Dr. Pocyline Wanjiru Kinuva & Dr. Dinah Changwony
KAG EAST University, Kitengela, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The question that this article seeks to answer is if the age and cultural background of a male youth interferes with the effectiveness of formal mentorship. The study from which this article is drawn employed a quasi - experimental design with a control group in determining the effectiveness of adult male participation in formal mentorship on male youth self-esteem and connectedness. The study participants were 52 mentees and 13 adult male mentors. They were drawn from Kiserian town in Kajiado North and Kajiado West constituencies of Kajiado County, Kenya. The mentees were out of school male youth aged between 15 and 23 years, from different cultural backgrounds in Kenya who live in Kiserian Township. Post-test results showed that mentees' self-esteem improved by 7.89 points (from 16.81 to 24.70). The study though, confirmed that the divergent mentees' post-test self-esteem means were not significantly different across age categories at $F(2, 23) = 1.311, p = .289$. The ANOVA analysis results however indicated that cultural background had an impact on the effectiveness of mentorship on self-esteem; $F(7, 18) = 2.675, p = 0.044$. The paper therefore concludes that though a mentee's age may not significantly impact on the effectiveness of mentorship on self-esteem, the cultural background can/may. Recommendations are made for mentorship be made available for all male youth but studies be conducted to find out what aspects of the different cultural background make this intercept on self-esteem possible.

KEYWORDS: *Adult, male, youth, self-esteem, formal mentorship, age, cultural background, effectiveness SAVE (Select and Match; Assess and Implement; Verify and Monitor & Evaluate, End and Follow-up).*

INTRODUCTION

While being psychosocially well is as important for male youth as it is for female youth, both genders are vulnerable to many factors which threaten the stability of their psychosocial health. Aschenbrener and Johnson (2017) agree with the latter as they observed that Native American youth struggle with many psychosocial issues. Male youth however, seem to be more susceptible to these factors than female youth (Kraemer, 2000; Izugbara & Undie, 2008; Burnett & Spelman, 2011 & Wilson, Cordier & Whatley, 2013). One of the innumerable ways of ensuring psychosocial well-being is having a sense of high self-esteem (Kennon, 2010). High self-esteem may also imply autonomy and a sense of self-pride (Kennon, 2010). On the other hand, low self-esteem more often than not leads to hopelessness, depression, being suicidal, drug abuse and risky anti-social behaviour (Kennon, 2010); leading to the loss of social capital (Kraemer, 2000). On the other hand, high self-esteem is known to increase male youth social capital (Holland, Reynolds & Weller, 2007). One of the factors cited for increased male youth self-esteem is mentorship (Liang, Lund, Mousseau, & Spencer, 2016).

Existing research findings suggest that mentorship programs are supporting Native American youth to increase their self-esteem (Aschenbrener & Johnson (2017). Enhancing male youth self-esteem through mentorship leads to healthy connectedness with significant others and increased productivity in society. Mentorship can be carried out formally or informally. DuBois and Silverthorn (2005), examined outcomes from Wave III of the National longitudinal study of adolescent health carried out in United States and established that informal mentorship is not as effective in mitigating male youth risk factors as formal mentorship. According to Strassmann (2011) Informal mentorship can be conducted by fathers, male relatives and members of the community. There are many reasons however why informal mentorship may not be as effective as formal mentorship.

One cause of the ineffectiveness of informal mentorship is due to parents habitually spending less nurturance time with their children than is necessary (Perry, 2014). Although the participation of fathers in raising their sons is known to have immense benefits for male youth self-esteem, it is conspicuously missing in many cultures (Boyd & Bee, 2008). Yet, Hurd and Zimmerman (2014) posit that spending frequent quality time together is absolutely essential for any mentorship to be effective. Another aspect diminishing the efficacy of mentorship by fathers is the escalation of households where only the mother is present, referred to as matrifocal (Schwimmer, 2003). Matrifocal families is often associated with poverty, which adversely interferes the rearing of male youth (Odih, 2002). In addition, adult males though willing and available may be inept at formal mentorship (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). According to Holland (2009) male youth low self-esteem and involvement in risky behaviour can be diminished through formal mentorship by empowered adult males. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, (2015) observed that indeed, mentorship by accountable, helpful male adult role models can adequately increase male youth self-esteem and mitigate against risky factors. DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) suggest that formal mentorship can be effectively steered by nonparent male adult through coaching, role modelling and guiding.

LITERATURE UNDERPINNINGS

Cleveland, Stockdale and Murphy (2000) describe mentorship as a combination of process and relationship, originated by the mentee or mentor. As a process, it is expected to ascertain that male youth learn appropriate social roles and acceptable ways of meeting their needs and wants, while acquiring other proficiencies of life (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001). Mentorship can also refer to deliberate efforts made by an experienced adult male (mentor), to relate to a less experienced male youth (mentee). These efforts include being a role model, coaching, guiding, advising and spending quality time together so as to enhance male youth self-esteem and connectedness (Kinuva, 2018). One of the key things that mentorship can do is to increase a mentee's self-awareness.

DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) were of the view that non-parent male adult mentors can function as key coaches and helpful models; supporting knowledge and proficiency, exposing mentees to constructive societal standards, increasing significance and self-esteem, while aiding male youth to understand/realize their full potential. The National Mentorship Partnership (NMP) (2004) terms a mentor as an adult who, alongside parents, offers male youth support, counsel, friendly bolstering, and positive examples. Mentors are found in innumerable social relationships. It is therefore not uncommon to find the term mentor being used to mean teacher, friend, guide, coach, adviser (Gardiner, 2008); as well as counselor and role model (Johnson & Howe, 2003). It is interesting to note that mentors too benefit immensely from mentorship relationships especially in terms of individual fulfilment and growth (Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent, 2004).

A review conducted by Sanchez, Hurd, Neblett and Vaclavik (2018) indicated that despite mentored individuals in America being mostly youth of colour, little was known on the impact of such programs on specific cultural populations. Besides, they noted that the few studies focused explicitly on mentoring black boys lacked thoroughness. The review further revealed that there was ambiguity on whether mentoring programs targeting specific cultural groups would be more effective than those generally aimed at diverse groups. In a study carried out among late adolescents from Belgium and China Chen, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, Boone, Duriez, Lens, Matos, Mouratidis, & Ryan (2015) found out that the fulfilment and obstruction of the desire for high self-esteem applied regardless of a person's cultural background. The need for male youth mentorship for high self-esteem therefore applies across the cultures of the world.

Among the Aborigines, mentorship is viewed as a passage exclusive to each individual and useful in building the self-esteem of male youth (Snively, 1990), emphasis being on interpersonal interaction rather than focusing on goals (Sawyer, 1991). An elder is considered a mentor, if he recognizes and is sincerely attentive to the entire spectrum of a learner's experiences, not just academic undertakings; in order to realize natural wisdom made ideal traditionally but applied compassionately and respectfully (Taylors, 1992). Elders ordinarily utilize laid back methods in mentoring; sometimes giving narratives which seemingly are irrelevant to the mentee's present experiences but which allows him or her to draw out the meaning as their needs dictate (Barbara & Fjola, 1994).

The Dogon of Mali, have relentlessly conserved their culture, the forces of change directed at them notwithstanding. In Africa, they are amongst the few ethnic groups that have continuously evolved their cultural traditions. In their way of life, the Dogon have a well-defined structure of family groupings with specific functions. Strassmann (2011) found that like in other African cultures, psychosocial support for youth among the Dogon, would ordinarily be provided by close blood relatives and the community as a whole. The World Bank (2007) seems to agree with this when it asserts that a community that is protective of its male youth takes the responsibility of raising them.

According to Jomo Kenyatta (2015) and Leakey (2007) the Agikuyu in Kenya made mentoring male youth a collective responsibility of the immediate household, and the tribe as a whole. Customarily, the Maasai male youth living in Kajiado County grow up in the basic Maasai social unit *enkang* village also known as *kraal* or *boma*, where married male adults live with their families (Finke, 2003). Several families living together may make mentorship of young males easier due to proximity to nuclear and extended family members. In this kind of setting however, closeness between members of small communities, make it difficult to establish trust in a formal mentoring relationship due to interference of significant others (Garringer, 2014). It is important to note that the social cultural systems that supported male youth in the African context have largely failed due to destruction of the social fabric by foreign religions, urbanization and modern economy. Subsequently, formal mentorship by adult males who might not be blood relatives or close community members was recommended for male youth in Kiserian of Kajiado County (Kinuva, 2018).

Richardson (2012) conducted a study in the United States to determine the significance of the role played by black coaches in mitigating male youth involvement in crime and increasing their psychosocial wellbeing. The findings indicated that male coaches of black origin are critical to the provision of black male youth social capital. The study however suggested the need to investigate how these male coaches could expand their role from mainly availing social capital to also include mentorship. Mentorship would comprise activities such as guidance, support, encouragement among others. Although the study registered positive results, only black male youth participated. This makes it therefore difficult to ascertain if the involvement of black coaches would have had a similar positive effect on male youth from other cultures.

A study conducted by Cornell Alexander among African American male youth to examine the effect of mentorship on educational advancement and preparation for college in the New Brunswick (NJ) Kappa League mentorship program proved that formal mentorship works (Gary, 2011). A total of 16 male youth were involved in the study. Data analyzed by Gary (2011) revealed mentoring as a feasible substitute in fighting certain challenges that black male youth face in high school years and when transiting into college. During the period they participated in the survey, nine were slated for enrolment in 4-year College programs while six were scheduled for 2-year college programs. One male youth opted to hold a job rather than join college. Gary's study found mentorship effective in educational advancement and preparation for college. The effects of the mentorship on self-esteem was however not measured. Besides, the study participants were drawn only from among African American male youth, making it impossible to tell if the effects of the mentorship would have varied among other cultures. The varying of the positive mentorship effects as mediated by age too was not measured.

Liang et al. (2016) scrutinized the impact of growth- nurturing mentorship on self-esteem of youthful female students from well-to-do populations. Previous studies have established that this group is vulnerable to emotional suffering and low self-esteem, ensuing from perfectionism and an inordinate pressure to succeed. The study aimed at determining whether high quality mentorship would positively influence these students' self-esteem; and encourage involvement in constructive actions. The study which involved 207 girls from two separate high schools found positive results. A strong correlation between growth-enhancing mentorship and self-worth as intervened by youth involvement in constructive actions was established through ordinary least squares regression method. This study however, neither indicate whether the subjects were from different cultural backgrounds nor tested such difference in the self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

The study from which this article is drawn employed a quasi-experimental design in determining the effectiveness of adult male participation in formal mentorship on male youth self-esteem and connectedness. The independent variables in the study were mentors' participation and personal qualities which were operationalized as age coupled with cultural background. The dependent variables are mentees' self-esteem and connectedness. On the other hand, the extraneous variables include mentors/mentees' ages and culture. Also, the SAVE mentorship model which was employed as protocol for the study was an intervening variable. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to gather data. They consisted of questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion Guides (FGDGs), a mentors' selection criteria and the SAVE mentorship model. The development of research instruments was done by examining the research objectives, and the related literature. The study also adopted Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale which was incorporated into both the pre-test and post-test mentees' questionnaires. Further, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides were developed and utilized for collection of qualitative data; one for the mentors and the other for the mentees. The study employed the SAVE mentorship model and a criterion for selecting potential mentors. The study participants were fifty-two (52) mentees, selected through snowballing. They were drawn from Kiserian town in Kajiado North and Kajiado West constituencies of Kajiado County. This group comprised of out of school

male youth aged between 15 and 23 years, from different cultural backgrounds that live in Kiserian. The study put 26 male youth through mentorship interventions while 26 provided control for the quasi- experiment.

Male youth (Mentees) Distribution by Age

Figure 1 presents a comparison of the distribution of the mentees in the study in the experimental and control groups. The options provided in the relevant item of the questionnaire were three namely; 15-17 years, 18-20 years and 21-23 years old. Those in the 15-17 age bracket were 11= 42.3% (experiment) and 10= 38.5% (control); 18-20 years were 12= 46.2% (experiment) and 8 = 30.8% (control); while 21-23 composed of 3(11.5%) for the experimental group and 8 (30.8%) in the control group.

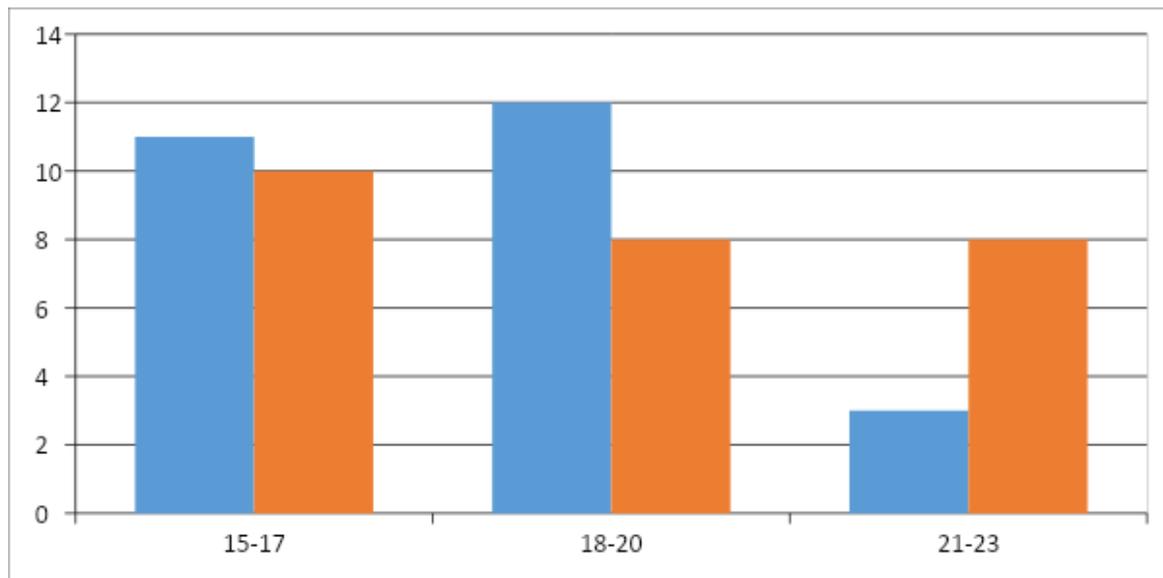


Figure 1: Distribution of Male Youth by Age

Distribution of Mentees by Cultural Background

Male youth cultural distribution was reminiscent of the general demographic data of the metropolitan Kiserian location. Nine ethnic groups were represented in the study sample. In the experiment group, the Luhya group was the largest at 6 (23.1%), followed by the Maasai, Kikuyu and Kamba which had four participants each. There were three Luo mentees, two Meru and Kisii each and one Swahili respondent. On the other hand, the control group was composed of; five Maasai and Kikuyu each, four Kisii, three Luo and Kamba each, two Meru, Luhya and Kalenjin each.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section deals with the findings and the analysis of the data collected in the study

Age and Cultural Differences in Male Youth Self-Esteem as Enhanced Through Formal Mentorship

The objective of the study from which this paper is extracted was concerned with examining whether the effectiveness of adult male participation in formal mentorship on male youth self-esteem was mediated upon by mentee age and cultural background. This was coupled with the hypothesis that male youth self-esteem as enhanced through mentorship is not significantly mediated by mentee age and cultural background. Towards this effect, mentees in both the experimental and control groups were pre-tested and post-tested on the level of self-esteem.

Age Differences in Male Youth Self-Esteem as Enhanced Through Formal Mentorship

The distribution of the mentees in the treatment and control groups is indicated on Figure 1. The age group options provided in the relevant item of the questionnaire were three (3) namely; 15-17 years, 18-20 years and 21-23 years old. Those in the 15-17 age bracket were 11= 42.3% (experiment) and 10= 38.5% (control); 18-20 years were 12= 46.2% (experiment) and 8 = 30.8% (control); while 21-23 composed of 3(11.5%) for the experimental group and 8(30.8%) in the control group. The analysis of the pre-test data revealed a mean of 16.81 which was within the normal range of self-esteem. The mentees aged 15-17 (16.7) and 18-20 (17.83) were within the normal range of self-esteem. These groups of mentees were however closer to the lower limit of the range. In contrast, 21-23 year olds had low self-esteem as indicated by the mean of 14.67. The analysis was carried out using ANOVA.

Table 1: Treatment Pre-test of Self-esteem Based on Age of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	29.523	2	14.762	.804	.460
Within Groups	422.515	23	18.370		
Total	452.038	25			

The pretest one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results on the mentees self-esteem though, indicated no significant age differences as reproduced on Table 1: $F(2,23) = .804, p=.05$. In comparison, the analysis of the pre-test control group data revealed a mean of 16.65 which is normal self-esteem. The mentees aged 15-17 (16.60) and 18-20 (17.00) and 21-23 year olds scored a mean of 16.38. Though all the age groups were within the normal range of self-esteem, the means were marginal. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results on the mentees self-esteem in the control pre-test though, indicate no significant differences as reproduced on Table 2; $F(11,14) = 1.029, p = .471$. The pre-test and post-test results of the control group were the same. From the analyses carried out, the treatment group was not significantly different from the control group.

Table 2: Control Pretest of Self-esteem Based on Age of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	7.979	11	.725	1.029	.471
Within Groups	9.867	14	.705		
Total	17.846	25			

After mentorship intervention, the treatment group's post-test data indicated a group mean of 24.70 for male youth self-esteem. This is an improvement of 7.90 points in comparison to the pre-test mean of 16.81. The mentees aged between 15 and 17 years scored the highest mean of 25.42 followed by 18-20 age group which scored 24.31; an improvement from 16.7 and 17.83 respectively. The one mentee who fell in the 21-23 age bracket scored the lowest points at 21.00 but had improved from low self-esteem of 14.67 points to normal self-esteem. The ANOVA results for the comparison of mentees' self-esteem by age are displayed on Table 3.

Table 3: Treatment Post-test of Self-esteem Based on Age of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	21.853	2	10.926	1.311	.289
Within Groups	191.686	23	8.334		
Total	213.538	25			

Post-test results show that mentees' self-esteem improved by 7.89 points (from 16.81 to 24.70). This outcome though, confirms that the divergent mentees' self-esteem means were not significantly different across age categories at $F(2, 23) = 1.311, p = .289$ as indicated on Table 3. The null hypothesis which stated that male youth self-esteem as enhanced through formal mentorship is not significantly mediated by their age was therefore accepted at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Cultural Differences in Male Youth Self-Esteem as Enhanced Through Formal Mentorship

The related objective in the study was to appraise if male youth self-esteem as enhanced through formal mentorship is mediated by their cultural background. The corresponding null hypothesis consisted of determining if male youth self-esteem as enhanced through mentorship is not significantly mediated upon by their cultural backgrounds. Male youth ethnic/cultural distributions were reminiscent of the general demographic data of the metropolitan Kiserian location. Nine (9) ethnic groups were represented in the study sample. In the experiment group, the Luhya group was the highest at 6 (23.1%), followed by the Maasai, Kikuyu and Kamba which had 4 participants each. There were three Luo mentees, two Meru and Kisii each and one Swahili. On the other hand, the control group was composed as follows; five Maasai and Kikuyu each, four Kisii, three Luo, three Kamba, two Meru, Luhya and Kalenjin each.

Based on Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, the experimental group's self-esteem mean of 16.81 was within the normal range albeit leaning toward the lower limit. A closer look at the analysis however, reveals that certain cultural groups had a slightly higher mean than others. The Meru (19.50), Luo (18.67), and Maasai (17.75) participants, scored higher than the mentees from other cultural groups. Luhya mentees (16.67), Kamba (16.50), Swahili (16.00) and Kikuyu (15.75) scored lower but were still within the normal range of self-esteem. The Kisii mentees however scored lowest (13.00) and were also in the low esteem range. Although these study findings on cultural differences in self-esteem may not be significantly different from those determined by age, they may point to the fact that culture more than age has a greater influence on how male youth appraise themselves.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed for analysis. The results on the pre-test of the treatment group meant to establish self-esteem based on cultural background of mentees as Table 4 show ($F(7,18) = 417, p = .879$) no significant difference in self-esteem based on mentees' cultural differences. The control group too indicates no significant difference in self-esteem based on the cultural background of mentees; $F(11, 14) = 1.231; p = .351$ as indicated on Table 4.

Table 4: Treatment Pre-test of Self-esteem Based on Cultural Background of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	63.038	7	9.005	.417	.879
Within Groups	389.000	18	21.611		
Total	452.038	25			

The control group also had most cultural groups residing in Kiserian represented. Nine (8) ethnic groups were represented in the study sample. The Maasai and Kikuyu had the highest number of participants at five each. There were four Kisii and three Kamba and Luo mentees each. The mentees from the Luhya, Kalenjin and Meru cultural groups were two each. The self-esteem analysis shows means that are within the normal range. The group mean stood at 16.65; just slightly lower than that of the treatment group but still skewed towards low. In the control group, the Luhya mentees scored highest (19.50) followed by the Luo (19.00), Maasai (18.20) and Kalenjin (18.00). The next in line were Kamba mentees (17.00), Kikuyu (15.00), and Kisii (14.25) while the Meru ones scored the least with a mean of 13.50.

Table 5: Control Pre-test of Self-esteem Based on Cultural Background of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	70.729	11	6.430	1.231	.351
Within Groups	73.117	14	5.223		
Total	143.846	25			

There were minor deviations in how the various cultural groups scored when comparisons are made between those in the control and experimental groups. The self-esteem of some cultural groups tended to remain consistently higher than others, for example the Maasai, and Luos. This might be a pointer to the fact that the cultural upbringing of these two groups may have endured global cultural changes. Mentees' self-esteem in the treatment group was also measured after the intervention based on their diverse cultural backgrounds: which varied from the pre-test ones. The two study participants from Kisii community who had scored the lowest during the pre-test seemed to have gained the most from mentorship. Their mean increased from 13.00 to 27.50; an additional 14.50 points. The Swahili mentee too gained highly from the 16.00 points to 30.00, a gain of 14.00 points. Mentees from the Luo community scored a mean 26.33 up from 18.67 while their Kikuyu counterparts recorded a mean of 26.00, which was higher than 15.75 pretest one. Meru mentees scored 24.50 same as their Luhya colleagues. Male youth from Maasai and Kamba communities counted the lowest pretest mean of 22.75 and 21.75 respectively.

Table 6: Treatment Post-test of Self-esteem Based on Cultural Background of Mentees

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	108.872	7	15.553	2.675	.044
Within Groups	104.667	18	5.815		
Total	213.538	25			

The ANOVA analysis results on Table 6 show that the impact of cultural differences on the effectiveness of formal mentorship was significant; $F(7, 18) = 2.675, p=0.044$ as depicted on Table 6. Based on these results, the hypothesis that "Male youth self-esteem as enhanced through mentorship is not significantly mediated by their cultural background" was consequently rejected at $\alpha=0.05$. In other words, male youth cultural background significantly dictated upon their perception and value of self.

Recommendations

Formal mentorship works and is urgently needed in helping male youth to achieve psychosocial wellbeing. On way of measuring psychosocial well-being is male youth self-esteem. The study therefore recommended that formal mentorship through adult males should be offered to male youth despite their age. On the other hand, studies should be carried out to ascertain why some male youth from certain Kenyan cultural background seemed to have higher self-esteem than others and what aspects of cultural groups intercept the effectiveness of formal mentorship on self-esteem.

Conclusion

The study findings showed self-esteem across the ages to be unaffected by their various ages. The results on cultural differences in self-esteem agree with the general belief that some Kenyan communities might have a higher esteem than others. In the study, Maasai, Luo and Meru male youth tended to score higher both in the treatment and control groups. The Kisii male youth though seemed to have gained more from the intervention than those who had a higher self-esteem score at pretest. The positive effects on male youth self-esteem are not intervened by the age but cultural background does make a difference.

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