Mentors and Teachers’ Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Mentoring Rural Girls Kenema District, Eastern Region Sierra Leone

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Mentors and Teachers’ Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Mentoring Rural Girls
Kenema District, Eastern Region Sierra Leone

by

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Chosen Network in mentoring Sierra Leone. The study aims to examine the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the intervention. The study is conducted to contribute to the literature on using effective mentoring interventions to address some school-related school attrition and other challenges facing rural girls’ education. Two questions were researched: i) How has the Chosen Network Mentorship program supported girls’ identity development, a sense of purpose, and general well-being? ii). To what extent have the program intervention strategies impacted academic performance?

A literature review of the study focuses on characteristics and components of effective mentoring programs in three themes; self-identification, a sense of purpose, guidance, and theoretical underpinnings of mentoring. The study adopts a qualitative research design with some basic narrative reports using a Matrix Analysis Framework to analyze data. Teachers and mentors (community and program mentors) were interviewed using individual and group semi-structured protocols. Interviews were conducted utilizing Zoom meeting technology with the support of a Research Assistant. Six interviews with sixteen study participants in three focus groups with teachers and community mentors, and three individual interviews with program mentors. The Principal Researcher conducted the interview, transcribed data verbatim, and analyzed the data.

The study found that The Chosen Mentoring program impacts the lives of rural girls by incorporating evidence-based characteristics and components of effective mentoring strategies. It was discovered that mentees had made progress in developing self-identity and a sense of purpose. Teachers and mentors observed that mentees demonstrated self-confidence, determination, and education-focused decision-making. Participating mentees in the mentoring program exhibited improved overall performance, attitude toward schoolwork, and bold decisions that prioritize their education. Teachers, parents, and mentors collaborated to provide diverse support for mentees’ improvement in schoolwork. Participants in the study observed the need for mentors and mentees to maintain a long-term relationship to maximize the mentees’ confidence and motivation to pursue their academic goals. The study recommended the need for a comprehensive study using mixed methods that include parents’ and girls’ perspectives.
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Dedication

To GOD, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit thank you for choosing Amie.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Mentoring has shown an evidential potential to effectively improve learning outcomes and graduation rates in secondary education. Mentoring has vast meaning and serves different purposes across fields and professions. Generally, mentoring involves a relationship between a caring, supportive, and more experienced adult with a child or adolescent (Rhode, 2002; Eby et al., 2008). The general approach to mentoring has been preventive oriented where an attempt is made to identify risk factors and in strategic ways, mentor uses interventions to buffer the challenges (Allen & Eby, 2007). Many countries have used mentoring to keep students in school. The Big Brother Big Sister mentorship program in the United States establishes one-to-one relationships with students in need of additional support to achieve their educational goals. The program provides emotional, psychological, and academic support (Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2021). New Zealand has similarly found mentoring to be effective to address the educational, health, and social challenges of youths from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Farruggia et al., 2011). Formal mentoring opportunities support most at-risk students to develop themselves, family and their communities. Furthermore, research on the effectiveness of formal and informal mentoring has shown evidence to empower women in closing the educational gap at advanced levels and in the career world. A study conducted on the effective mentoring of girls from low-socioeconomic backgrounds found a large effect size on improved academic outcomes (Eby et al., 2008).

The Global Partnership for Education, GPE, (2021) points out that access to school provides the opportunity for individuals, communities, and countries to be lifted out of poverty. It is estimated that four hundred and twenty million people are estimated to be lifted out of poverty
with a complete secondary education (GPE, 2021, December). However, the recent completion rate is slower globally, showing only 53 percent for secondary education. In most high-income countries except for Europe and North America, only eighteen youths from the poorest backgrounds complete secondary school for every 100 of those from rich backgrounds. Furthermore, Global Partnership Education stated that gender equality is the precondition for ending poverty, building peace, and resilient communities. In low and middle-income countries, such as sub-Saharan Africa, a few girls from poor rural homes complete secondary school. The challenges in education tend to be skewed toward females, rural residents, and poor families.

Sierra Leone, as one of the low-income countries in sub-Sahara, has also made considerable progress in basic education. The country has recently launched a Free Quality Education Intervention (August 2018) aimed at expanding free education to senior secondary. As of 2017, the completion rate for primary education is at 64.2 percent and a progressive decrease is realized in both junior and senior secondary with 44.2 percent and 21.7 percent respectively (Multi-Cluster Survey, MICS, 2017). The factors associated with dropout emanate from individual, family, and community issues. At senior secondary, the completion rate for females is 18 percent as compared to 27 percent of males, of whom 33 percent are urban residents and only five percent are rural and 41 percent are from the affluent, and only two percent are from the poorest.

The persistent challenges and barriers rural students face need individualized evidence-based programs with effective and strategic individualized solutions. Research that measures the effectiveness of formal mentorship interventions focusing on retaining girls in junior and senior secondary schools, especially in rural settings, is missing in the literature. This study will
contribute to evidence-based dropout prevention and reduction interventions focused on mentoring for rural girls in Sierra Leone.

**The Education System in Sierra Leone**

The educational system in Sierra Leone is represented in years by 6-3-3-4. The obligatory phase provides nine years of basic education, which includes six years of primary and three years of junior secondary education. A further three-year senior secondary and four years of tertiary education are offered. Schooling from primary to secondary (junior and senior) is free in all government-owned and assisted schools as of 2018. The official school starting age is at six years. The Ministry of Education and West Africa Examination Council provides three high-stakes exams at the end of primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education. After primary and secondary education, students have certificates in National Primary School Examination, (NPSE), Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), and the West Africa Senior Secondary Examination Certificate (WASSCE).

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Education is responsible for setting policies and managing the basic education sector in Sierra Leone. A national curriculum is provided to guide teaching and learning for schools. The official language of instruction is English. Students are also exposed to two to three years of optional teaching of French and native Sierra Leone dialects.

**Adolescent Mentoring in Sierra Leone**

Mentoring programs serve different purposes. In Sierra Leone, mentorship programs are commonly implemented to drive social policy, address community-led concerns, and improve life skills. Unemployment, child right or abuse, gender stereotypes, and sexual reproductive health issues such as teenage pregnancy are some issues usually addressed through mentorship
networks. The Purposeful organization in Sierra Leone, for example, leads a major mentorship program that focuses on raising awareness and advocating for the change of policies on gender stereotypes. The Purposeful was one of the organizations that recently advocated a repeal of a policy that prevented pregnant girls from going to school and taking high-stakes exams (Purposeful, 2020). Another mentorship organization is the Asmaa James Foundation. Through campaigns projects such as girls+, Black Tuesday, and Media Program, the views of girls against rape are heard (Asmaa James Foundation, n.d). The organization also partners with international non-governmental organizations to support the reintegration of teenage mothers into school. The Girls Empowerment Sierra Leone (GESL) is the third organization that mentors both in and out-of-school girls. Girls Empowerment Sierra Leone facilitates mentor training for one year to work with girls on leadership skills and becoming activists in their communities, (GESL, n.d).

Although the mentioned social issues have some effect on education, especially for girls, the programs have not been able to directly impact girls’ educational outcomes. The need for a mentorship program that equips girls to harness the benefits of policies supporting their education is of great need.

**The Chosen Network Girls Mentorship Program, GPM**

The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring highlighted that a prevention-oriented approach to youth mentorship strives to identify and reduce specific problems youth face by developing a preventive strategy (Allen & Eby, 2007). The Chosen Network Mentorship Program is a three-year mentorship intervention for girls enrolled in school in rural Eastern Region, of Sierra Leone. The pilot intervention is implemented in Kenema District in four rural communities: Hanga, Mano Junction, Talia, and Ngeihun. Mentees are selected by the community youth leaders based
on some level of good academic performance, good attitude toward schoolwork, and low-income background.

The program is designed to take girls through a three-phase interconnected model of mentorship: self-identification, discovering purpose, and guidance for general wellbeing. The program aims to support mentees to stay, excel, and complete junior and secondary school. The six-month pilot intervention (September 2021 to February 2022) aimed to improve girls' self-esteem, inspire a sense of purpose and build a resilient character through supportive long-term relationships between mentors and mentees. The program is implemented by Program mentors with support from Community Mentors in partnership with parents and teachers. In the first year of mentorship, mentors build relationships with mentees. They undertake activities such as quarterly seminars, follow-up monthly visits, and spot checks. Mentors also play a mediating role in working with parents and teachers and facilitating tuition opportunities as necessary. Throughout the mentorship process, girls are supported to develop an individual development plan of action with SMART goals and receive support from mentors to accomplish their plans.

The active role of mentors being accepted as ‘role models’ and the “verbal persuasion [from mentors] that [mentees] are capable of success” (Allen & Ebay, 2007, p.39) will greatly inspire mentees to progressively improve. To such an end, the intervention offers instrumental and relational support to girls. As stated by Allen and Eby (2007), instrumental support allows mentors to address personal development, social competence, and character development. While relational support focuses on one-to-one mentoring interaction with mentees to provide a strong and caring relationship.
The Problem Statement

This study seeks the perception of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of mentoring aimed at supporting rural girls to complete secondary education. In Sierra Leone, pupils are at high risk of dropping out of school if they are female, live in a rural community, and are from poor homes. The UNICEF (2017) outlined seven risk factors for school dropout “socio-economic status of children, absenteeism, behavior, academic achievement, recipient of/eligibility for social assistance, level of peer acceptance and other risk factors, e.g., neglect, pregnancy, refugee, etc.” (p.6). Analogically, Fortin et al. (2012), concluded that school dropout factors can be categorized at the personal, family, and school levels.

Jones and Procopio (2017) have emphasized that school attrition is inextricably linked to the failure of standardized tests. In Sierra Leone, the high-stakes examinations passing rate for junior and senior secondary levels are 46 and six percent (Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School, MBSSE, 2019 & 2020). Given the situation, the risk of attrition increases as pupils progress in their education. The failure rates can be associated with low fundamental reading and numeracy skills, especially in those from rural settings (MICS, 2017).

Another factor that contributes to the problem of dropout prevention is the high adult illiteracy rate in Sierra Leone, especially among women. Most poor households are limited to providing a support system for pupils to study at home or provide the finances required. Admittedly, schooling is highly negotiated with home chores. Children from poor backgrounds and those residing in rural communities are more likely to engage in substantial labor than their counterparts in urban and rich homes (MICS, 2017). Most girls are therefore subjugated in the vicious cycle of learning poverty.
Teenage pregnancy is another common challenge for girls of school-going age. The UNICEF (2017) found that teenage pregnancy is the third reason for school attrition among girls. Currently, the Sierra Leone Statistics demographic health study, (2019), found that four percent of 15 years old girls have already started childbearing, and the percentage continues to rise to 45 at age of 19 years. Recently, it is noted that “teenage mothers are more likely to experience adverse pregnancy outcomes and to be constrained in their ability to pursue educational opportunities than young women who delay childbearing” (p. 24). Given the situation, teenage pregnancy has been accepted in most communities as a normal rite of passage for girls.

Furthermore, Allen, Ebay, and Lentz (2006) identified the omission of mentors’ perspectives on the effectiveness of mentoring programs as a gap in the literature on the topic. The researchers further highlighted that “mentors are [fundamental] consideration to the success of any mentoring intervention and failure to examine their perceptions provides an incomplete picture of formal programs” (p.568).

The combined complexity of problems girls face requires more rigorous individualized small group interventions. Most interventions focus on large diverse groups of girls which to some extent distort the impact of better policy changes aimed at quality education for all. The provision of school-related costs, feeding programs, advocacy, teaching quality, and books play a significant role in school enrollment. Supplementing such interventions is limited as a standalone solution to improve learning and completion rates for at-risk pupils. An evidence-based mentoring program brings in skills, experiences, passion, and commitment to encourage, inspire, and support students’ learning and secondary school completion. Girls do not only become aware of societal problems through a mentorship program, but they are also supported to develop
resilience to strive for academic success. However, the question would a formal mentorship program support rural girl to stay, excel, and complete junior and secondary school? In other words, how effective is the Chosen Network Mentorship intervention to support rural girls in education? This study seeks to examine the perspectives of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the Chosen Mentorship Program for rural girls.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used to mentor girls in rural Sierra Leone. The study aims to examine the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the pilot intervention of The Chosen Network mentorship program. Mentorship plays a critical role in the improvement of academic, career, and social cohesion. There is limited or no evidence-based study in Sierra Leone to evaluate the effectiveness of academic-focused mentoring programs. The structure, components, and characteristics of current girls' mentorship programs are not well structured to guide and implement successful mentorship programs. The predominance of social and advocacy lead mentoring has created an anomaly that ignores the benefits of relational and instrumental-based mentorship programs for academic success. This study aims to bring to the attention of pupils, parents, the school, and policymakers the perspectives on the effectiveness of a mentorship program.

Furthermore, a group of researchers states that “academic mentoring programs have stronger associations with effective outcomes” (p.9) as compared to youth and workplace mentoring. The researchers accentuate that effective mentorship programs have shown evidence to successfully impact at-risk students. Consequently, this study will provide evidence for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of academic mentoring programs for at-risk girls in rural areas.
Considering that, the findings of this study will contribute to the existing research literature on mentoring at-risk girls for academic success.

Finally, the results of this study will be also used to contribute to interventions responding to educational systemic issues in Sierra Leone. Recommendations to teachers, administrators, policymakers, and organizations, including the Chosen Network mentorship program based on evidence to expand and improve the effective academic interventions for at-risk students.

**Methodology**

This study is a program evaluation of the effectiveness of the Chosen Network mentorship program for girls. The study is conducted using qualitative research methods. The program evaluation seeks the perspectives of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the program. Semi-structured interviews tools will be to conduct four individual interviews with program mentors, three focus group interviews with a group of community mentors, and two groups of teachers (Class Form Masters). The study purposively selects 18 participants (mentors and teachers) from the Chosen Network database. Data location site is in five communities in the Eastern region of Sierra Leone. The Principal Researcher will conduct interviews using Zoom technology. A Research Assistant based in Sierra Leone will support the coordination of research participants and handling technology for Zoom meetings. Field data collection will last for four days. Data will be transcribed, captured in a framework analysis matrix, and coded by themes, and summarized across groups by the Principal Researcher.
Research Question

This study seeks to explore the question; what is the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of The Chosen Network mentorship program for at-risk girls? The following constitute specific research questions are examined:

1. In what ways have the Chosen Network Mentorship program supported girls’ identity development, sense of purpose, and general well-being?

2. To what extent have the program intervention strategies impacted academic performance?

The Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the Chosen Network mentorship program. The study seeks the perspectives of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the program to support at-risk secondary school girls’ education in rural areas. The study objectives are outlined below:

1. Review literature on effective mentorship programs that have helped youth minimize risk factors that lead to school dropout

2. Secure permission from school authorities and parents

3. Develop interview protocols for individual and focus group interviews.

4. Secure a Research Assistant to help organize the focus group interviews and manage the technology and participants' consent forms.

5. Conduct individual and focus group interviews using Zoom technology with study participants by the Principal Investigator
6. Translate and transcribe interview recordings from Krio to English by the Principal Investigator.

7. Develop a framework analysis matrix, code, and analyze data by themes.

**Study Delimitations**

As with most scientific research, limitations are considered. One limitation of this study is the absence of empirical literature on the topic of mentoring in Sierra Leone. Published studies in different countries have been used to present the topic literature of this study. However, a review of data focused on the purpose of the study and research questions. Secondly, Allen and Eby (2007) highlighted that academic mentoring research tends to present only opinion pieces. Nevertheless, the theoretical designs provide the opportunity for qualitative research to test the assumptions of theories. Therefore, the qualitative research design of this study presents an in-depth analysis of mentors’ and teachers’ perspectives on the effectiveness of the mentorship program. Lastly, the study only explored mentors’ and teachers’ perspectives while mentees and parents are excluded. The interview questions incorporate the views and interests of mentees and parents. However, further studies incorporating and comparing the perspectives of parents, teachers, mentors, and mentees can add to the topic of mentoring. Finally, it is worth to know that the Principal Researcher is the founder of the mentoring program and might have uncontrollably express bias in analysis of the study. To minimize bias, Principal Researcher undertook systematic methods of collecting data, analysis the data and summarizing the report with the support of Research Committee members.
Assumptions of the Study

The study assumes that girls residing in rural communities and from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at risk of dropping out of school. It is assumed that low self-esteem, lack of sense of purpose, and guidance negatively affect mentees’ attitudes towards their academic work and eventual drop out of school. The study assumes that the strategies implemented by the Chosen Network will be able to reduce the risk of girls dropping out of school and improve learning outcomes. Study participants, teachers, and mentors are assumed to have had meaningful interaction with mentees and are in the position to express their views about the mentees’ mentoring experience. Given a quality education, young girls stand the chance to meet their full potential and close the inequality gap with a quality education.

Human Subject Approval

As ethically required to reserve the rights and welfare of study participants, this study follows all standards required by St. Cloud State University and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Principal Researcher has undergone the IRB training and regularly meets with the three Thesis Committee members to review and approve all proceedings. The study is conducted in an educational setting involving typical education practices.

Terms of Definition

1. Mentoring: Mentoring is a one-to-one mutual relationship between the mentee and mentor.

2. Relational-Mentoring: Mentoring that focuses on a close relationship that is established based on trust and about interpersonal relationships.
3. Academic Mentoring: Mentoring that supports school retention, reduce risky behavior and improve academic behaviors and attitudes such as school performance, attendance, morality, determination and enthusiasm toward schoolwork.

4. At-Risk students: Students who live in a rural setting with limited access to quality education services and from low socioeconomic background.

5. School Completion: Students can complete either basic or senior secondary education at the time of mentoring.

6. Instrumental Support: Instrumental support allows mentors to address personal development, social competence, and character development through substantive support such as providing personal care packages, school items, hygiene packages and training and etc.

7. Affirmative support: Providing advice, feedback, and other emotional support to mentees.

8. Variables of the effect of mentoring
   a) Self-Identification: Being able to articulate and act on one’s beliefs, values, strengths, and weaknesses in a group of other people.
   b) Sense of purpose: The sense of awareness of one’s future career plans and how that affects their current output and performance.

9. Framework Analysis Matrix: A set of codes (labels, paraphrase) organized into categories developed by the researcher that is used to manage, organize, and summarize qualitative data.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter two of this study reviews published and theoretical underpinnings of efficient academic mentorship interventions. The literature reviews specific evidence-based characteristics, structures, and components of effective academic mentoring programs for at-risk girls.

Overview of the Literature Review

The sources used for this literature review have been aligned to the purpose of the study and research questions integrated into the program structure of the Chosen Network mentorship program. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), a literature review provides information on the state of knowledge to facilitate positioning a current study in the context of existing research literature for that topic. The search for studies has incorporated scholastic or empirical journal articles, expert or professional reports, government, and non-governmental reports, and community-based interventions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic researched. This literature review first explores the theoretical concept of mentoring and further outlines evidence-based characteristics and components of effective mentoring programs. The literature review is presented under three structured mentoring constructs: self-identification, inspiring a purpose, and providing guidance, as structured by the Chosen Network. Given that the three-theme highlighted are constructs, the literature review will point out characteristics, components and variables used to measure or explain the efficiency of the constructs about mentoring at-risk students.

Defining Mentoring

The definition of mentorship is an ongoing debate from different field perspectives. Allen and Eby (2007) reviewed a set of collective definitions of mentoring within the field of
education, and psychology. The researchers summarized some fundamental attributes of mentoring. First, mentoring is mostly attributed to a unique relationship between individuals. Secondly, mentoring depicts the acquisition of knowledge by the mentee. Thirdly, mentoring denotes the establishment of a support mechanism and finally resorts to the absolute growth of the mentee. Given the fundamental attributes of mentoring, Bozeman, and Feeney (2007), presented a combined list of definitions of mentoring programs. As cited from the work of Eby et al. (2008) “mentoring is an intense developmental relationship whereby advice, counseling, and developmental opportunities are provided to a protégé by a mentor, which, in turn, shapes the protégé’s career experiences, [academic experience]” (p.722). Another definition cited is that “mentoring is a transformational activity involving a mutual commitment by mentor and protégé to the latter’s [short-term] and long-term development, as a personal, extra organizational investment in the protégé by the mentor, and as the changing of the protégé by the mentor, accomplished by the sharing of values, knowledge, experience, and so forth” (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994, p.723). The context of this study defines mentoring as a one-to-one mutual relationship between the mentee and mentor where the mentor provides instrumental, informational, and affirmative support for the transformative educational growth of the mentee.

Theoretical Framework

The nature of mentoring cuts across different fields with vast aims and hence associates mentoring with a diverse set of theories. Most theories underlying the concepts of mentoring have been hypothesized from the point of building personal development and gradually moving toward advancing social policies (Ragins & Kram, 2007). For this study, the mentoring concept convenes enhancement of personal development of mentees in an organized social or group function, the school. Such a concept of fostering individual empowerment has been considerably

**Vygotsky’s Theory - The Zone of Proximal Development**

According to Vygotsky (1978), development is driven by the process of learning through social interaction. The theory postulates that the interaction of a less experienced learner through the guidance and instruction of a more experienced learner stimulates learning beyond the individual’s competency. The more experienced learner, in this case, the mentor, provides structure and support in joint activities. The learner’s interaction with more experienced individuals and advanced learning materials enhances a higher level of skills and competencies than would have been attained without assistance (Allen and Eby, 2007). This concept is known as the ‘zone of proximal development’ ZPD. The ZDP is the difference between what the learner can accomplish by themselves and that which they can accomplish with support (Vygotsky, 1978). Besides, Karcher et al. (2006), highlighted that the ZPD could be determined for every field.

**Bandura’s Theory of Social Cognitive Theory**

The Bandura (1982, 1989) theory of social cognitive anchors on observation, modeling, and imitating behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Bandura, 1982). In the context of social interaction and sharing of experience, the learner replicates a positive behavior to reinforce their behavior. Consequently, negative behavior can be also reinforced. Allen and Eby (2007), pinpoints that some learners under the influence of social cognitive theory aimed for higher standards and persevered with positive expectations as such behavior was modeled in
social interaction. In this regard, the Bandura theory is conceptualized by allowing mentees to learn from competent mentors’ experiences through observation and conversational interaction.

The Effectiveness of Academic Mentoring Programs

The literature reviewed under this sub-topic focuses on empirical studies on the effectiveness of mentorship programs to achieve academic outcomes. According to Haller and Kleine (2001) reviewing literature conducted by meta-analysis enables researchers to compare and combine the results of different studies on a specific topic. One of the meta-analysis studies conducted by Eby et al., (2008) explores whether mentoring programs with youths in the school and workplace matter and to what extent. The researchers found large effect sizes on academic and workplace mentoring as compared to youth mentoring. Another study conducted by Laco and Johnson (2019) and Randolph & Johnson, (2008) to evaluate a school-based mentoring program found a significant improvement in school engagement among mentored participants. The researchers examined school-related characteristics such as grades and attendance to predict quality mentoring. Although school engagement improved, the intervention did not find any statistically significant relationship with mentees' grades.

Another study evaluated the effectiveness and characteristics of national mentoring programs in New Zealand. Twenty-three studies were included in the study. The researchers concluded that academic mentorship programs with components of psychological and interpersonal goals are more effective than programs focused entirely on education, behavioral, vocational, or cultural goals. The researchers further highlighted that “history of evaluation, utilizing principles of best practice, [focusing on] mentoring relationship, use of peers as mentors, well-structured, … [the duration] of the mentor-mentee relationship, …and researcher-practitioner relationship”
(Farruggia et al., 2011, p.1) are some of the component’s researchers consider effect in implementing mentoring programs.

**Self-Identification**

One of the main outcomes of mentoring among at-risk populations is supporting mentees’ self-awareness and self-identity formation. Spencer (2006) conducted a qualitative study to understand the process of mentoring between adults and mentees. Mentees were interviewed to understand how they initiated personal conversations with mentors about their beliefs, values, and goals. The researcher highlighted that authenticity allows mentors to have access to mentees’ thoughts, feelings, and intentions. The study findings revealed that:

Authenticity or engaging with a relational partner genuinely was emphasized by [mentees] as important to the building of the relationship and considered by several of the youth to be critical to developing trust in their mentors. A couple of youth described waiting until they had gotten to know their mentors a bit better before revealing too much of themselves. (p. 298)

In a study conducted by Lee et al., (2015), the impact of mentoring on mentees’ general, social, and family self-esteem was examined. The researchers selected thirty at-risk students to receive mentoring. The intervention provided unlimited access to mentors to provide counseling, academic help, and engage in leisure activities. As cited in the study (Lee et al., 2015), the Erikson (1968) youth identity crisis theory proposes that the key to identity achievement lies in an adolescent’s interaction with others. The researchers found a statistically significant relationship between mentoring and mentees’ social self-esteem. However, the study did not find any statistically significant relationship between mentees’ general and family self-esteem and
any improvement in academic performance. The researchers attributed their findings as a result of the short duration of mentoring. The researchers also noted that failing to involve teachers and parents in the mentoring intervention created some limitations in understanding the situation of mentees.

**Sense of Purpose and Wellbeing**

Research on the evaluation of effective mentorship programs has also explored developing a sense of purpose as a significant component of mentoring interventions. White et al., (2021), examined the process and characteristics attributed to mentorship interventions facilitating goal achievement and a sense of purpose. The researchers interviewed 38 adolescents to understand how they developed a sense of purpose. The researchers focused on natural mentors, people who adolescents think they can count on and refer to for support and guidance. The results revealed that mentees’ sense of purpose positively impacts identity, academic performance, and general well-being. Mentees mentioned family members, academic teachers, religious leaders, and other extracurricular tutors to have influenced their drive (White et al., 2021). Emotional support, information sharing, provision of materials, other financial needs, and providing feedback were stated as the different support received from natural mentors. In conclusion, the researchers found that identity formation, academic performance, and general well-being influences mentees' sense of purpose and passion.

Another study found combined and one-on-one mentoring groups have provided evidence of a component of sense of purpose contributes to positive outcomes of mentoring programs (Deutsch et al., 2017). They researchers established small groups of peer mentees and also linked mentees with mentors (dyad). Peer mentors were provided an opportunity to study together and
attend some social events. Mentors were trained by a university to engage mentees and provide the necessary support needed by individuals. The study mainly considers early adolescent girls most of which are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Mentees reported changes in academic, relational development, self-regulation, and self-understanding. In other words, mentees’ study habits, trusting people, thinking and action as well as self-worth improved. Furthermore, mentees associated changes in their academics with mentors and relational skills with interactions in small groups.

**Guidance and Mentoring**

The literature review further explored the extent to which instrumental support from parents, teachers, and mentors facilitates a critical path of effective mentoring. A meta-analysis study conducted by Goldner and Ben-Eliyahu (2021) provided an integrative review of the characteristics of successful community-based mentoring programs. The researchers selected 123 related studies to community-based interventions aimed at educational outcomes. The researchers revealed that community-based mentoring “demonstrates the importance of a single robust relational factor that includes the correlated dimensions of support, sensitivity, and trust to promote mentoring outcomes” (p. 29). Mentors and mentees’ ongoing training, parental involvement, and connecting mentees based on shared interests are worth considering for the effective guidance mentees require. Another research outlined the need for mentorship programs to consider school-based programs as a significant component of mentoring guidance (Holt et al., 2008). The study compared groups of students with over 60 percent categorized as at-risk.

Mentors followed Bandura’s theory (1978) theory of social cognition which proposes mentors intervene in the environment to facilitate cognitive and behavioral change. Mentors meet with teachers every week to monitor behavior, attendance, tardiness, and track grades. The researchers
found that mentees felt “more connected to several aspects of the school environment, most notably teachers” (p. 311). The changes were associated with the quality of the relationship between mentees and mentors.

Simões and Alarcão (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of simultaneously providing tutoring with mentoring intervention on school performance. The experimental research which compared mentored students and non-mentored students revealed that a combination of mentoring and tutoring was effective to minimize mentees’ unexcused absences and improving performance in the course taught students’ overall GPA as well. However, the researchers found a mixed trend in school performance for both mentored and non-mentored students with Basic Psychological Needs (BPN). The BPN theory emphasized self-determination theory and a high score is related to high performance. Although mentored students’ BPN scores were higher, their academic performance was marginal compared to non-mentored students.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of community-volunteer-mentor relationships in a school-based program implemented by the Big Brother and Big Sister Mentoring program (Bayer et al., 2015) was examined. The researchers randomly selected 1,139 students who were divided into a treatment group and control group (waiting list) and matched them with community-volunteer members. Mentors and mentees meet three to four times a week to talk about mentees’ future goals, engage in games and creative activities. The academic outcome was measured by four variables; academic performance, completion of schoolwork, quality of work, and scholastic efficacy to determine the effectiveness of the community members in an SMP. The results of the study showed a moderate statistically significant close relationship with community volunteers.
that slightly influenced mentees’ schoolwork as compared to other students who were in a control.

**Summary of Literature Review**

This literature review first explores the theoretical concept of mentoring and outlines evidence-based characteristics and components of effective mentoring programs. Mentoring constructs are presented under three themes: self-identification, inspiring a purpose, and providing guidance. The sources used have been aligned to the purpose of the study and research questions. Mentoring is defined as a one-to-one mutual relationship between the mentee and mentor. The theoretical underpins of the study supports the ideology that mentoring stimulates learning beyond an individual’s competency. Such learning could be cognitive, affective and social. Furthermore, academic mentorship programs with components of psychological and interpersonal goals are more effective compared to programs focused entirely on education, behavioral, vocational, or cultural goals. Research suggests it is crucial for mentorship programs to consider school-based programs as a significant component of mentoring guidance.
Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter three describes the research methods employed in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies used to mentor rural girls. The chapter constitutes the following: study area, method of design, research sampling, participants’ profile, interview protocols, data collection procedure, data analysis and presentation, and ethical and security considerations.

Study Area

Sierra Leone is a small country located on the southwest coast of West Africa with an area of 71,740 sq km. The country’s population has grown to 6.8 million with a population growth of 2.44 percent (December, 2021). Forty-one percent of the population is aged 14 years and below (UNESCO). Sierra Leone is one of the low-income countries in the world with half of the population living on $1.90 per day and with its Gini index at 34, income inequality is high (World Bank, 2021). Sierra Leone's economy depends on agriculture and minerals. The country is diverse with more than ten ethnic groups. The official and largely spoken languages are English, Krio, Mende, and Temne. The ruling government has priorities that include education, health, agriculture, energy, and building frustration among other priorities. As of 2018, the government launched a free quality secondary education program that focuses on radical inclusion and quality education. Since then, the literacy rate for Sierra Leone women is 43 percent. School dropout and learning poverty are major issues in education, especially for rural settlers and low socioeconomic populations.

Kenema district is in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone and is the third-largest city in the country. The Mende ethnic group, which is predominantly based in the South and East, makes up
one-third of the country’s population. The district is a land of minerals (gold and diamond) and vast agricultural products like cocoa, coffee, and palm oil. As with the nation's completion rate pattern, pupils progressively drop out of school. Farming and illegal mining are the major livelihood in Kenema. Hanga, Talia, Mano Junction, and Ngeihun are four rural communities selected for the implementation of the Chosen Network intervention.

Research Design

This study is part of a program evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies used by the Chosen Network - Girls Mentorship Program to improve rural girls’ education. The study employs a qualitative design. According to Allen and Eby (2007), qualitative studies are important to understand the nature and dynamics of developmental processes compounded in mentoring relationships and evaluate the effectiveness of the theoretical models proposed. As research has proven over time, qualitative research is suitable for exploring phenomena that are not well understood by people. A semi-structured interview protocol will be used to explore participants’ perspectives on the effectiveness of the mentorship program. Participants are interviewed using similar question guides and themes. Data collected will be coded and summarized using a Matrix Analysis Framework method.

Participants

A purposive sampling selection has been used to select mentors, and teachers given their role in implementing the mentoring intervention. Eighteen (18) participants have been purposively selected for the study. As cited by Lodico et al., (2006), “the logic and power of purposive sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn to a considerable length of degree about issues of central
importance to the purpose of the research” (Lodico, et al., 2006, p. 140). The selection technique has been both extreme case and homogeneous purposeful sampling. Participants are selected based on unique quality and shared attributes of being associated with at-risk students. Data will be collected from program mentors, community mentors, and Form Masters (teachers/academic advisors).

**Mentors**

Program mentors are the lead implementors and they interact with mentees frequently whether through phone or face-to-face. There are two types of mentors: community volunteers and program mentors. Each four-implementing community has a community volunteer mentor who lives in the same town as the mentees. The Program Mentors provide information, train, collect data and provide feedback while responding to mentees’ concerns. Two of the program mentors are university students and the other two are graduates. Community mentors facilitate communication with the program mentors, assist in support events, visit girls at home and in school. They also serve as mediators for teachers, parents, and program mentors. According to Allen and Eby (2007), high-quality and committed mentors are crucial to the success of a formal mentoring program. Program mentors are therefore included in the study to derive the holistic perspective of the mentorship program.

**Form Master Teachers**

Form Masters are teachers that track students’ attendance and performance in school. Form Masters interact with students daily and assess their overall performance. Form Master role also allows teachers to support students establish leadership structure in the classroom and school.
Understanding Form Masters’ perspective on the effect of the mentorship program on students they interact with is important to this study.

**Interview Protocols**

This study uses semi-structured interview protocols to seek the perspectives of teachers and mentors. The semi-structured protocol is organized in themes to explore the outcome of mentoring intervention observed in mentees.

According to Lodico et al. (2006), “an interview is a purposive conversation with a person or a group of persons” (p.121). Furthermore, interviews allow participants to convey their feelings, react to and interpreted events, situations, or experiences of life. The research tool of this study has been designed to examine the study research questions and explore the theoretical framework. Therefore, participants’ perspectives of mentees’ identity, sense of purpose, and strategies employed by the Chosen Network are the themes explored across the three groups. A total of four individual interviews and three focus group interviews will be conducted. Data will be collected in the four research communities: Ngeihun, Talia, Mano Junction, and Hanga.

**Table 1**

*Interview Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Number of Interviews/groups</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Mentors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mentors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Procedure

Participants were selected based on their participation in the mentoring intervention. Mentors and teachers were contacted by the Principal Researcher to discuss the proposed study. The principal researcher sent permission letters to ten schools and participation letters to ten teachers. The letters were signed and returned by nine Principals and nine teachers accepting to participate in the study. Data collection will last for four days. Data will be collected in the participants’ locality using zoom meeting technology. A Research Assistant will be hired to organize study participants and the Principal Researcher will conduct the interviews. During the interview, focus group interview participants will be referred to as P1, P2, and so on. Individual participants will be also referred to as Program Mentor participants one, two to four.

Lodico, et al., (2006), highlighted that by using semi-structured interview tools “researchers could modify or refine interview protocols as they collect and analyze data and realign the focus of their study” (p. 106). Semi-structured interview protocols facilitate the researchers to probe for an in-depth understanding of the participants’ perspectives.

The interviews will take place on Zoom. The Zoom meeting will be recorded, and participants will be encouraged to be on video to ensure rapport and other observable characters. Interview recordings will be saved, translated, and transcribed by the Principal Researcher. A framework analysis matrix will be developed to capture data transcripts. Data will then be coded and analyzed by the Principal Researcher.
Analysis and Presentation

A framework analysis matrix will be developed to code, summarize, and analyze the data collected. According to Gale et al., (2013), “a framework analysis matrix is a set of codes organized into categories that are developed by the researcher that is used to manage, organize and summarize data” (p. 5). Seven steps are outlined by the researchers to analyze data using the Framework Analysis Matrix.

1. Transcription: The interview recording will be transcribed verbatim.
2. Familiarization: The Principal Researcher will review the transcribed data to become acquit with the content.
3. Coding: After familiarization, the Principal Researcher will carefully select words or label or paraphrase the transcribed transcripts. The research will focus on substantive messages that express behaviors, values, emotions, incidents, and other clues participants view to communicate.
4. Develop an analytical framework: The codes developed will be shared with Thesis Committee Members for validation.
5. Apply the analytical framework: The code data will be assigned numbers and indexes.
6. Charting data into the framework matrix: Data will be charted in the framework using columns and rows to compare participants and summary responses.
7. Interpretation: Data will be interpreted and summarized by arising themes.

Ethical Considerations

Issues of ethics focus on establishing safeguards that will protect the rights of the participants (Lodico, et al., 2006). This study seeks to interview mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of the Chosen Network mentorship program. The ethical issues considered in this study are
securing informed consent from participants, protecting them from harm, and ensuring confidentiality (p.147).

Participants will be provided information about the study and told of possible risks. The risks involved in this study have been minimized to allow participants to express themselves freely. Since participants will be talking about their experiences, they will be informed and ensured of confidentiality within the groups and between the interviewer and interviewees. All participants will be respected and treated appropriately. Data collected from participants will be only used for this study. Study participants are labeled participants one, two, three, and so on. Data collected will be un-identified to participants’ demographics. Although participants’ names are recorded on the consent form, their names are not captured during the interviews. Lastly, the research report will be shared with relevant partners.

Data Security

This study considers data security to prevent a bridge between confidentiality and other standards ethical standards. First, the interviews recorded will be encrypted. The interview recordings will be stored as a secured laptop and secured with a password. Similarly, the transcribed data and matric analysis used for the study will be also secured with a password for the duration of the study. This will limit access to the data by unauthorized people. At the end of the study, the recordings will be deleted. Data will be only used for the research. Data will be kept confidential and private.

Summary of Methodology

The study methodology describes the approach employed in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies used to mentor rural girls. The chapter constitutes the following: study area, research
design, participants’ profile, research sample, interview protocols, data collection procedure, data analysis and presentation, and ethical and security considerations. A qualitative method is used to study the importance of the nature and dynamics of effective processes in mentoring relationships. The study seeks the perspective of teachers and mentors. A semi-structured interview protocol will be used to explore participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of the mentorship program. Six interviews were conducted with sixteen participants. Interview questions were broadly categorized under mentees' identity, sense of purpose, and strategies employed by the Chosen Network. Data was collected in the four research communities: Ngeihun, Talia, Mano Junction, and Hanga. Interview recordings were saved, translated, and transcribed by the Principal Researcher. A framework analysis matrix was used to analyze data. This process was followed by all the requirements set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. Cloud State University and vetted and approved accordingly.
Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study on mentors' and teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of mentoring at-risk rural girls in Eastern Sierra Leone. Four individual and three focus group interviews were conducted. The findings have been presented in three themes; mentees' self-identity, a sense of purpose, and strategies employed to mentor rural girls. The findings have also been linked to interview and research questions explored in this study.

The first research question of this study asks: in what ways have the Chosen Network Mentorship program supported girls’ identity development, sense of purpose, and general well-being?

Mentees' Self-Identification

Teachers and mentors were asked to express their opinions about how girls feel about themselves, exercise their agency, and changes observed in values, confidence, and self-concept. Eighty percent of teachers, community and program mentor expressed that the girls feel they belonged, were special, privileged, confident, and proud of themselves compared to how they felt before participating in the mentorship program. One program mentor, during an individual interview, stated;

Most mentees feel lucky to be part of the program; they feel they belong and are satisfied with the care shown to them. They feel exceptional and expressed feeling good about themselves.

In addition, a teacher in group one focus group interview shared that;

We observe that the girls are proud of themselves and bring their colleagues together.

The findings of the study also revealed that 70% research participants (11) expressed that mentees are bolder in expressing themselves and are seen as role models among their colleagues.
Mentees are also said to show some form of self-discipline and responsibility toward their education.

One of the teachers in the second group discussion mentioned that;

The girls have acquired the confidence to stand and speak out for their rights and decide which is best for them.

In an individual interview with program mentors, one of them stated that;

The girls were timid in the first few interactions, but they significantly improved their confidence.

Following the interviews, a community mentor in a focus group interview with community mentors expressed that;

The girls are now bold and confident to talk to their teachers and us, the community mentors.

However, 30% teachers and program mentors (4 out of 13) conveyed that some girls were still timid and shy to express themselves. A teacher mentioned that;

From observation, some of these girls are still timid and are afraid to fully accept themselves because of the customs and traditions they are growing up.

Furthermore, the 81 percent of participants (13) expressed that mentees have started making decisions, taking the initiative, negotiating, and expressing their views about situations that support their education.

In the first group interview, one teacher shared his observation about a mentee who decided not to be part of a group she thought was not helpful to her education dreams anymore.
There is a peer group that the mentee in my school admired and tried to imitate their bad behavior, but since they started interacting with mentors, they are distancing themselves from bad behaviors and making good choices.

On the other hand, another teacher in the second focus group interview mentioned that mentees in their school have been able to make friends.

The girls have shown a willingness to learn and bring their friends along.

Furthermore, a community mentor in a focus group interview for community mentors shared that;

With consistent monitoring and advising, the girls now have their mindset on what they want to become in life and how they want to achieve.

90% Teachers (8 out of 9) in both group interviews commonly noted that mentees are making more effort toward the improvement of their education by establishing study groups.

Our mentees also formed study groups at their home to help each other with homework.

During the interview with the Program Mentors, one of the mentors also disclosed an example of how a mentee was keen on negotiating study time with her foster parent.

She said yes; I told my aunt that the main reason I am in Kenema City is to go to school and I should be able to pass my exams. So, she asked the aunt to reduce her house chores so that she could have time to study.

The program mentor further went on to say that

If she were timid to negotiate her study time as it might have been before she participated in the mentorship program, she would yield to her aunt's request and fail her exams.
Likewise, another program mentor mentioned that mentees have shown some control over themselves and displayed awareness of what is good or bad.

Mentees are now aware of their responsibilities in society, and such virtues have greatly influenced the lives of their colleagues.

Similarly, a teacher in the second group interview voiced that;

The girls have some control over themselves now as they never had the opportunity or safe space to be heard, which has helped them know what is good and bad for them.

Finally, 81% (13) research participants shared their observations on mentees' values, confidence, and self-concept. Most study participants stated that mentees have improved behavior and attitude towards their education. The participants report improved attendance, class participation, and behavior issues.

In the two focus group interviews, a teacher in group one interview stated that;

The mentee in my school was mostly absent, tardy, and did not submit assignments, but she has committed to regularly attending school on time and submitting her assignments.

Another form master teacher mentioned that;

The girl in my class was not doing well, but with the desire to perform well now, she usually comes to the staff room to ask for help with her schoolwork.

In addition, to form master teachers’ opinion, one program mentor also shared the response she got from a mentee she asked whether she would achieve her educational goals:

When we asked mentees whether they would achieve their educational goals, one of them responded, "if I make an effort to get good grades, I can go to a university…, that is why I study every day".
One more program mentor, during an individual interview, voiced that:

Oh, the girls are very interested in their education now. Most of them were not having good grades, but their second-term results were good.

A program mentor also revealed that;

During our interaction, I have observed that the girls are more confident in talking about what they intend to do.

One of the community mentors further reiterated in a focus group interview that;

The mentees in my group have learned to regulate what is right for them. They have started standing by the decisions that are best for them. They now know the activities that will help them succeed and are working on them.

**Mentees' Sense of Purpose and Well-being**

The opinion of teachers and mentors were explored to understand mentees' interests, motivation, and attitudes towards their educational goals. Generally, 81% research participants (16) stated that program mentees show interest in their education to some extent than when they started participating in the mentorship program. In a focus group interview, one of the community mentors expressed mentees' improvement in attendance and overall performance.

The girls are now applying more effort when it comes to their academics. They attend school regularly and have improved their grades. Before they participated in the program, some were irregular in school, and some were average students.

Similarly, during an individual interview, a program mentor revealed that in her interaction with mentees' parents, most parents confirmed that mentees spend more time studying at home.

Most parents admit that the girls discussed their study plan developed with the support of mentors, and they see them studying more often now.
The program mentor continued to unveil her knowledge about mentees' improvement in attendance.

Even when it comes to attendance, before now, just after lunch, the girls' truant school and mostly absent for half of the school day. Teachers are now looking out for them, so their attendance has improved.

Furthermore, in the first focus group interview, one of the teachers mentioned that program mentees have started taking initiatives toward their education.

Mentees have formed study groups to help each other. The mentoring program has inspired the girls to learn and ask for help when struggling.

In addition, another teacher in the second focus group interview shared that mentees ask for support when needed.

So, when I give the girls group assignments, they will come and ask questions if they do not understand, and I am willing to support them.

One of the community mentors commented on mentees' influence among their peers in a social context. The community mentor mentioned in a focus group interview that;

Some of my mentees now advise their friends to deviate from some social activities that will expose them to abuse and, more importantly, should abstain from early sexual activities.

One of the program mentors also noted that mentees now communication has improved.

If any mentee cannot attend a school or the mentorship activities, they would call to communicate the reason. This shows that they are interested in making better choices in life.
During the third individual interview, the program mentor stated that mentees are more interested in their education than when she started interacting with them.

The girls are very interested in their education and have high determination.

Lastly, 70% study participants (11) shared their views about mentees' motivational drive toward their education and further related their experiences with the issues of girls' education.

In the first teacher group discussion, one of the teachers stated that mentees' interaction and support from mentors have given hope to the girls and motivated them.

When we talk about motivation, the first thing that comes to my mind is mentoring intervention. Students work together and see each other succeed. The effort of mentors and peers is a source of great motivation.

A teacher from the second group interview shared an example of the Chosen Network initiatives that motivate mentees to pursue their education.

The Chosen Mentorship program supports mentees in different ways. For example, when mentees are faced with any challenge, as teachers, we help them or negotiate with their parents to help them. We try to understand their situation and help them to our best ability.

One of the community mentors in a group interview with community mentors shared that,

Our relationship with the girls! The connection we have established with the girls hardly exists among them and their families and society.

Another community mentor in the group interview mentioned that,

I think mentees are also moved by the self-care items they receive from the program mentors.
In the first individual interview, one program mentor also mentioned that mentees are motivated because they feel more comfortable going to school during their menstruation.

Some of the girls explained that they had to always use a piece of cotton cloth during menstruation, which they said was uncomfortable and discouraged them from going to school. We give mentees packages that come with pads and school items like bags, books, and other helpful personal care items.

The program mentor continued to express that another aspect of the program that motivates mentees is the inclusion of teachers and parents. In addition, the program mentor stated that they try to connect with mentees, teachers, and parents by sharing their personal stories, which relate to the situation mentees find themselves in.

Another motivation for the girls is the involvement of parents in the program. So, the connection and communication between the parents and teachers from masters have been working well and supportive to the mentees.

We tell our personal stories to share the experiences related to the girls, their parents, and teachers so that they can learn from and relate. With these references, they picture themselves doing more incredible things in life and society.

The Chosen Mentoring Program Strategies, Challenges, and Participant Recommendations

Research participants were asked to share their perspectives about the efficacy of mentoring strategies employed by the Chosen Network, highlighting the challenges and recommending ways to improve the program. The study further explores the question; ‘to what extent have the program intervention strategies impacted academic performance?’
**Mentoring Strategies**

According to their knowledge, 70% research participants (11) were asked which of the activities employed by the Chosen Network were the most effective. One of the program mentors in the first individual interview stated that

> All our activities are essential. From my observation, and as we are at the start of the intervention, many of the activities make sense. We have started seeing some change in the mentees, and every situation is unique and dynamic.

A teacher from the first group discussion added that one-on-one mentoring and regular visits to girls’ schools and homes had been the most effective strategies mentors and teachers have employed.

> One-on-one mentoring allows us to engage one girl at a time to understand their situation, support them and provide advice.

Another teacher from the second group interview cited a regular visit to mentees as an example of activities that make the program effective.

> The Chosen Mentorship Program Mentors pay regular visits to mentees. Mentors monitor the girls' grades, check on their study habits, and monitor girls' schoolwork by teachers.

Following the group interviews with community mentors, one of the mentors also shared that,

> The regular mentoring and monitoring by all the mentors (program mentors, community mentors, teacher mentors, and parents) is greatly helping the girls. With all these people around them and constantly reminding them of their goals, they strive more for their improvement.

A program mentor also conveyed during an individual interview that choosing among the activities is difficult as all the activities are essential at the moment, but she went further to state that,
However, if I could pinpoint one or two effects, we regularly undertake the home and school visits. The seminar is also very important. The seminar brings program mentors, community mentors, and the girls to explore critical topics that equip them to face certain situations and raise awareness of certain issues.

Another program mentored reinforced that,

Another strategy or activity that has worked well is the involvement of teachers.

One of the teachers cited an example of the effect observed from one of the activities of the Chosen Network.

…most parents were not visiting the school or communicating with teachers. After the teacher-parent conference, the father of one of my mentees visited.

A program mentor also shared that parents who attended one of the conversation meetings have started participating in their children's education. The mentor stated that,

During the parent-teacher conference, we let them realize the value and importance of girl child education… Since then, some parents have been keeping close eyes on the girls and reminding them of their objectives.

Similarly, a teacher in the second group discussion stated that the community mentors in their community sometimes visit the school to follow up on mentees' progress.

My community mentor visits the school sometimes. She asks a question about attendance, attitude to schoolwork, and overall performance of mentees in the school.

Research participants were also asked what aspects of the mentoring strategies implemented by the Chosen Network have not been effective. A few research participants (30%) mentioned
that activities such as the seminar, parent involvement, and tutoring were not regular and might not have been effective. One teacher in the first group of teachers’ interviews stated that,

…most parents are still not visiting the school or communicating with teachers, even after the teacher-parent conference. When I started talking to my mentee, I thought one of the mentors was her mom, but I later learned she was a mentor from the Chosen Network.

Another teacher in the second focus group interview expressed his view that,

Community Mentors do not visit the schools. Well, it is something I think they should note now.

During the second focus group interview, another teacher expressed some concern that they cannot provide effective tutoring for students, including mentees.

We do not give individual assignments/tutoring, but we do some group work with the group the girls have formed. We have large class sizes, and I might not be able to give extra work to only one student at a time.

In the second interview with one of the program mentors, it was conveyed that,

I think the seminars are formal and we give too much information to the mentees' we have to make it practical and active for the girls.

The study participants were also asked to share their observations of the benefits of the mentoring program. Most research participants mentioned that there is some improvement in mentees' attitude toward schoolwork, self-esteem and behavior, and overall performance.

A program mentor in one of the individual interviews stated that,

… Another interesting new habit we find about the girls is that most have initiated study groups at their homes and schools. A politician installed solar lights for students in one of the communities since the community does not have regular electricity. Initially, the girls would leverage such opportunities, but now, they believe in themselves and apply effort to succeed. They have been studying with other colleagues using such opportunities.
During the first focus group discussion, a teacher in one of the group

I could not call the mentee's name, but she had behavior issues. Her dad said that she mostly leaves the house for school, but her report card shows high absent days. We tried to engage her…She has improved in attendance and comes to school regularly. Even when she had pain in one of her hands, she was still coming to school. Her grades have also improved compared to the first term.

Furthermore, one of the teachers in the first group interview shared the opinion that girls mentees had a negative perception that early childrearing instills respect and signifies responsibility to the girls, but he stated his observation that,

Some of our mentees now realize that early pregnancy is a barrier to their education as it was viewed as a symbol of respect and responsibility.

Another teacher stated that the mentees have been bold enough to ask for support to meet their academic goals.

Some girls are now bold enough to ask for help because of what they thought in the mentorship program.

Following the interview, one of the community mentors in a focus group interview expressed that one of the changes noticed in mentees is the progress in interaction with their peers and even adults like them.

…Nevertheless, mentees' interaction with their colleagues and us (teachers) has improved greatly. They are more confident when around us with the awareness that we care about their opinion, happiness, and education.
One of the program mentors in the first interview highlighted another change observed in teachers as one of the benefits of the Chosen Mentorship program. The program mentor shared examples of extra efforts teachers are making toward mentees' education that,

The girls' study sessions last for two hours, and they have a teacher from the school to supervise them. Another community has initiated weekend tuition for the students, helping them with homework. Although the teachers were asking for payment with our interaction, they have waved the tuition fee for our girls.

**Challenges**

Furthermore, research participants were asked to express their observation of challenges faced and anticipated in implementing the Chosen Mentorship Program. Most participants mentioned school attendance, mentees' distance to school, and lack of basic needs, given mentees' low socioeconomic background, as one of the root causes of challenges faced. One of the teachers in the first group interview articulated that,

One of the problems girls face as rural teachers is low school attendance. Parents cannot afford the costs associated with schooling. The girls got discouraged and gave up.

A program mentor in the second interview pronounced that,

One big challenge is the location of the girls. Some of our girls had to go to the city to continue school. We cannot have some of the girls together to take classes.

In the third individual interview, a program mentor mentioned that most mentee;

They talked about not having lunch when they went to school. The communities they live in also do not have electricity to support their study at night. They also said they need money to be paying for extra lesson fees.

Similarly, a community mentor revealed that mentees are challenged with basic materials needed to advance their education. It was stated that,
Another challenge is that these girls lack sufficient learning materials to aid them in academics.

The findings of the study also found that most mentees are struggling to balance house chores with schoolwork or study time. A teacher in the first group interview voiced that,

My mentee does not have time to study at home. She has a lot of domestic chores to do. She even comes to school late. When I asked her, she said her mother gives some work in the morning before she leaves for school.

A community mentor revealed a similar concern about the

One major problem we face is the too many chores mentees are asked to do by their parents or foster parents. After such activities, mentees become fatigued and unable to study effectively.

Another teacher in the second focus group interview voiced that most girls do not have family members to help them with schoolwork at home.

As for my mentee, the problem that she told me about, and from what I see, the absence of people at home to help her with homework is a challenge. She usually complains that her mom, sisters, and brothers cannot help because they are uneducated. So, staying around a family like that discourages students.

In an interview with one of the program mentors, the mentor shared their observation that most parents have a negative perception of girls’ education.

We still have some parents dwelling on the perception that girls experiencing puberty have to care for themselves. …. Such a perception leads girls to be betrothed in marriage early or in transactional relationships.

Another program mentor mentioned pronounced their concern about the support mentees receive from parents stating that,
Some of the girls' parents do not provide fees for them. I do not know whether the parents are reluctant to support their kids or cannot afford the money.

Parents of mentees were also perceived to be interested in traditional activities concerning their girls compared to girls' education. One teacher and a community mentor during focus group interviews noted that,

The teachers think parents are more interested in cultural commitment than their children's education. (Community Mentors, FGI)

Another issue is that the girls are interested in joining a secret "Bondo society." The girls see Bondo society as a rite of passage to womanhood and marriage life. (Teacher, FGI)

Furthermore, one of the program mentors cited an issue relating to the school.

Another issue is corporal punishment. Some teachers are still isolating classrooms and do not effectively teach.

In a focus group interview, one of the teachers stated the need for more female teachers and educated women to inspire girls' education.

We need to get more female teachers. For example, we have someone in the community that is a lecturer at Kenema Polytech, so we are trying to see how we can encourage her to visit the girls and inspire them. (Teacher, FGI)

Following the interview, one of the program mentors stated that girls are challenged within the community they live stating that,

The community mentees reside do not have electricity to support their study at night.

The research findings also revealed that some mentees are still timid and not confident to talk about the challenges they face. A teacher in the focus group interview stated that,
Some of the girls are still hesitant to share their problems with us. We need to work on the way to approach these girls. I believe we can be able to overcome some of the challenges.

Similarly, a program mentor reinforced that,

From observation, some girls are still timid and afraid to fully accept themselves because of the customs and traditions.

Study participants were also asked to state what kind of training they would need to mentor girls toward their education effectively. A program mentor mentioned that;

I wish to be trained in managing complex issues related to girls' backgrounds, households, and community customs and traditions.

Similarly, a community mentor voiced that,

We have not been professionally trained to engage with the girls. We need to understand mentoring girls better.

Lastly, a teacher also conveyed that they have to be trained on the process of mentoring girls as sometimes they do not know what to do.

We need to understand how to mentor girls. The problems are many, and sometimes we do not know what to do. We need a step-by-step guide.

**Participant Recommendations**

The research question finally engaged participants in ways they perceived the implementation could be improved. A teacher in a focus group interview suggested that,

I want to know more about mentoring, especially how to engage the girls in their academic development.
A program mentor also advocated that teachers and community mentors need to be trained on effective mentoring strategies like the concept of one-on-one mentoring is new.

Our concept of mentoring girls is different, and I believe we need to train mentors on what it is and how to go about it.

Teachers also are professionals in their field. I do not think mentorship is included in teacher training colleges here in Sierra Leone. So, we must explain and train them to go about mentoring girls.

Another teacher requested that the mentoring program and the guidance and counseling unit be linked to guide teachers on mentoring girls.

We need more knowledge in guidance and counseling. The mentoring program should partner with the school’s guidance and counseling unit to support girls. I want to learn how to engage the students.

During the interviews, one of the teachers requested that,

We need to strengthen our communication with program and community mentors and parents. We communicate with program mentors, but it has not been regularly or well planned. Sometimes we just see them visit the school.

The study’s findings also revealed that parents need to be regularly engaged. One of the program mentors in the first individual interview recommended that,

I would not say parents need to be trained. Instead, we need to engage them in conversation about the program and try to educate and negotiate with them on the kind of support they can give their daughters.

**Summary of Study Findings**

The findings of this study have been presented in three themes; mentees' self-identity, a sense of purpose, and strategies employed to mentor rural girls. The findings have also been linked to
interview and research questions explored in this study. The findings are presented using mostly
direct quotes along the category of participants sharing their views in individual and group
interviews. The quotes present facts and evidence of the sixteen study participants responses to
the research question.

The study found that eighty percent of teachers, community and program mentor expressed
that the girls feel they belonged, were special, privileged, confident, and proud of themselves
compared to how they felt before participating in the mentorship program. With regards to the
perspectives of study participants on the sense of purpose and general wellbeing of mentees,
81% research participants (16) stated that program mentees show interest in their education to
some extent than when they started participating in the mentorship program. Most research
participants mentioned that there is some improvement in mentees' attitude toward schoolwork,
self-esteem and behavior, and overall performance. Furthermore, according to their knowledge,
70% of research participants (11) were asked which of the activities employed by the Chosen
Network were the most effective. Most participants mentioned school attendance, mentees'
distance to school, and lack of basic needs, given mentees' low socioeconomic background, as
one of the root causes of challenges faced.
Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The primary purpose of the study seeks the perspective of teachers and mentors on the program effectiveness of the mentoring rural girls through exploring the perspectives of teachers and mentors in Kenema District, Sierra Leone. This chapter presents the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations of the study result.

Summary of the Study

The study examined the perspectives of teachers and mentors on the effectiveness of relational-based mentoring. The study commenced with a literature review highlighting the vast concepts and applications of mentoring and identified evidential components of an effective mentoring program aimed at academic excellence and mentees' well-being. Furthermore, the study based its concept on the influence of two philosophers: Vygotsky and Bandura. Vygotsky's (1978) theory applies to the zone of proximal development, which claims that the interaction of a less experienced learner through the guidance and instruction of a more experienced learner stimulates learning beyond the individual's competency. Similarly, Bandura's (1982) social cognitive theory postulates that a learner can replicate positive behavior through social interaction that models such a positive behavior. The study employed a qualitative method and purposeful sampling to select teachers and mentors implementing the mentoring program for the Chosen Network. Through Zoom Video technology, the study interviewed nine teachers and three mentors using semi-structured focus groups and individual protocols. A Research Assistant was contracted to support mobilizing study participants and assist with technology. The interviewees mainly responded in Krio, Sierra Leone vallecular English, and the Principal Researcher translated the recording to English. Data were transcribed verbatim by the Principal Researcher and captured in a Matrix Analysis framework, coded, and summarized by themes.
Conclusions

The study is designed to gather the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of The Chosen Network mentorship program for at-risk rural girls using the following research questions:

1. In what ways has the Chosen Network Mentorship program supported girls' identity development, a sense of purpose, and general well-being?

2. To what extent have the program intervention strategies impacted academic performance?

Research participants were asked whether mentees have shown any possible change in their education. The findings from the study revealed that most mentees (80%) had shown some positive progress in how they identify themselves to a large extent. Participants revealed that mentees' have progressed in self-esteem, self-perspective and negotiating decisions toward their education. Research participants said participants have some sense of belonging and are more confident, conversational, and make good choices toward their education. The study showed that mentees are more willing and have a mindset to commit to their learning process. On the other hand, the study also disclosed that mentees have more areas for improvement in mentees' self-esteem and self-perception.

Furthermore, the study disclosed that some mentees (70%) have demonstrated a great sense of purpose toward their education and general well-being. The awareness and commitment of mentees toward their educational purpose were demonstrated in the improvement of overall performance, attitude towards schoolwork, and behavior. The study found that mentees' attendance, grades, study time, class participation, and homework submission improved.
Mentees also demonstrated modeling positive behaviors that made them role models in their schools.

Lastly, the study showed that strategies employed to engage mentees were effective to a large extent. The study revealed that the program activities offered affirmative and instrumental support that have provided friendly relationships and motivation for mentees to progress academically. The study found that mentors' consistent visits, involvement of teachers and parents, and seminars conducted for girls provided relevant information and supportive mechanism to keep girls focused on their academics. Similarly, the study disclosed that the packages given to girls included basic personal hygiene items like pads they needed to attend school comfortably. However, participants also found out that tutoring services and parent involvement have not been regular and might not have positively affected the mentees and their families.

**Discussion of Results**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussions are focused on the research questions the study poses, the literature review, and the theories used to explain mentoring concepts. The study explores, the perspective of mentors and teachers on the effectiveness of The Chosen Network mentorship program for at-risk rural girls. The study questions examine the mentoring program's components, characteristics, and structure. According to Farrugia et al. (2011), the history of evaluation, application of evidential practices, prioritizing relationship building, and use of peer mentors are critical components in effective mentoring programs. The researchers further concluded that academic mentorship programs with components of "psychological and interpersonal goals are more effective than programs focused entirely on
education, behavioral, vocational, or cultural goals. The finding this study guided the study. The results have been presented under highlights of study topics below.

The Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

Mentoring theories focus on improving the personal development of others following the advancement of social policies. The study results showed that mentees' interaction with mentors improved their overall academic performance, sense of purpose, and general well-being. Vygotsky's theory (1978) of the zone of proximal development claims that the interaction of a more experienced learner with a less experienced improves the latter's competency beyond their capacity. This study confirms the positive change in mentees' self-identity, a sense of purpose, and general well-being due to their relationship with mentors and teachers. Mentees were observed to be more confident, determined, and prioritize their education in decision-making. Mentors and teachers reported being able to support mentees to change the narrative of low expectations of incapability to that of a capable expectation. It can be reaffirmed that support from teachers and mentors helped mentees to develop some form of identity.

Bandura (1982) further emphasizes that learners can replicate a positive behavior through social interaction. The study revealed that mentees were influenced by the mentors' advice and care. Teachers and mentors believe that their story of success amid struggles motivated some mentees to envision a brighter future. Such motivation and inspiration are rooted in the strategies teachers and mentors shared to have been effective and helpful in their situation. The finding is confirmed by the study of Allen and Eby (2007), who using Bandura's cognitive theory, reaffirmed that some learners under the influence of social cognitive theory aim for higher standards and persevere with positive expectations as such behavior was modeled in social interaction.
Effectiveness of Mentoring Strategies

The findings of this study explored evidence-based characteristics and components associated with effective mentoring programs for academic success. The findings of this study reported that program activities were impactful for the first phase of the mentoring intervention. Fourteen study participants (87.5%) mentioned that the approach of one-on-one mentoring that fostered dyad relationships through regular visits to mentees' schools and homes effectively influenced mentees' attitudes, determination, and enthusiasm toward schoolwork. In addition, study participants stated that the involvement and collaboration of teachers and parents positively impacted a mentees' sense of purpose. The report found that the parent-teacher meeting facilitated by the Chosen Network helped to create a supportive learning environment for mentees to overcome challenges and proactively engage in schoolwork. Such findings could be compared to Laco and Johnson (2019), whom found improved school engagement among mentees influenced the overall performance of students. The collaboration of teachers, parents, and mentors created triple support for mentees to develop relationships, improve their attitude toward schoolwork at home and school, and believe in themselves. It was reported that the instrumental and affirmative support received from the mentoring program prompted a sense of care among mentees. Research participants stated that participants exhibited some confidence in their appearance and comfort in attending school and interacting with peers.

Following the effective characteristics and components of the mentoring intervention, mentees reported having shown some changes that positively impacted their education. Such changes were confirmed by increased confidence and self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and determination to complete school which eighty percent of mentees participating in the mentoring program were observed to have improved overall performance, attitude to schoolwork, being
decisive, and prioritizing their education. The effectiveness of the pilot mentoring program for rural girls could be associated with the findings of Farrugia et al., (2011), who pointed out that comprehensive mentoring programs should involve psychological, interpersonal, and educational. Similarly, teachers were shown to have improved the amount of support provided in monitoring and supporting mentees' study time. Teachers were reported to support girls in small group studies and provide advice and monitor as needed. Parents were reported to have visited schools for the first time or frequently and collaborated with parents and mentors to respond to mentees' needs and interests. Program and community mentors were also reported to have improved their willingness to visit girls and connect with teachers regularly. The Chosen Mentoring program was found to have involved such critical evidence-based characteristics and components in impacting the lives of rural girls.

The study further provided the platform for research participants to share a challenging aspect of the programs that could be improved to amplify the program's effectiveness. The findings revealed that 75 percent (12 out of 16 participants) of study participants think the need for long-term and continuous interaction of mentees and mentors to maximum mentees' confidence and determination to pursue their academic goals. The results also revealed that all teachers, parents, and mentors need to be formally trained in handling some complex challenges mentees face that relate to negative traditional practices that negatively impact their education. Fourteen of the research participants (87.5%) pointed out that parents need to change their narrative about girls undertaking most aspects of the family house chores and taking care of themselves early. Furthermore, 75 percent (12 out of 16) of research participants pointed out external challenges such as the low socioeconomic background of parents, lack of community infrastructures like electricity supply, and teachers' isolation to have negatively impacted
mentees' progress in some way. Finally, the program participants emphasized the need for regular individual and project-based tutoring for girls' unique academic backgrounds and interests. In addition, reported integrating extracurricular activities that are skills-based and social aspects to complement the hard work of mentees learning journey.

**Mentees' Self-Identification**

Mentees' self-identification was explored to unveil mentees' level of self-awareness, self-concept, and exercise of agency based on the values developed through empowering interactions with mentors. Mentees felt a sense of belonging being selected to participate in the mentoring program. The fact that mentors had experienced similar challenges mentees currently undergo and were resilient to face such challenges was an inspiration. As stated by Humberd and Rouse (2015), most mentees' first reaction to mentorship is the projection of their future related to mentors' past and current life. Some mentors were graduates and some university students who had been through similar struggles created some hope for mentees, and they felt assured of their future. Mentees were further found to have attained confidence, motivation, and determination toward their education. Some mentees were reported to respond to questions about their educational aspiration positively.

In addition, mentees were reported to have shown some level of self-discipline by committing to individual work plans, including personal study time that were agreed upon with mentors. Mentors and teachers generally observed a significant change of mindset in mentees toward their education that empowered mentees to negotiate, take the initiative and ask for support to enhance their school performance. This observation and perspective of research participants could be linked to Kaplan and Flum (2009) finding that mentees developing personal identity positively impacted self-esteem, confidence, and motivation toward their education.
Furthermore, the research results found that mentees were reported to have improved in school attendance, performance, and behavior. Most mentees were observed to attend school despite the challenges they face regularly. Teachers who participated in the research reported that rural schools face the challenge of low attendance, especially among girls. Similarly, most research participants revealed that girls have improved in overall performance as a result of their positive change in attitude toward schoolwork. For instance, girls were reported to have formed school, home, neighborhood study groups and camps when they started participating in the mentorship program. Such acts demonstrate the willingness of mentees to pursue their academic desires. Mentees reported making bold decisions about their choice of friendship, banking on the essence of education. Some girls whom peers negatively influenced became positive influencers of the same peers.

It can be proposed that mentees' personal identity development through interaction with mentors and teachers impacted positive actions toward their education. As stated by Lee et al. (2015), Erikson's identity theory points out that adolescent interaction with others is key to identity, and such identity development can be linked to the positive impact of education (Karcher, 2005).

**Mentees' Sense of Purpose and Well-being**

A mentees' sense of purpose and well-being explores the extent to which the desire to pursue education and well-being was observed by mentors. The study questions were focused on examining the indication positive characteristic and components of mentees' desired educational goals, attitude to schoolwork, influence, and motivation of mentees.

The findings of the study showed that social interaction and overall academic performance have significantly improved. Mentees were determined, motivated, enthusiastic, and focused on
their education. The findings of the study reveal that mentees demonstrated enthusiasm in their attitude to schoolwork by implementing proactive actions to negotiate and prioritize school attendance and more study time with the support of parents, teachers, and mentors. The findings of this study pointed out that mentees' improvement is interconnected with a general attitude to learning by regularly attending school, reducing tardiness, participating in classroom discussions, and submitting assignments. In different ways, mentees established a school and home group study to receive the maximum support of teachers and parents given their situations. Some mentees reported initiating school study camps as they lack electricity to study at night, or the parents are not educated to support learning reinforcement at home. The finding of this study agrees with the findings of White et al. (2021), who found that mentees' sense of purpose positively impacts identity, academic performance, and general well-being.

Mentees' demonstration of pursuing their education goals is hinged on determination. Teachers and mentors revealed that mentees believed in their capacity to succeed if given support. The study's finding reported that mentees confidently responded that she is capable of achieving her dreams despite the challenges. Such determination provides a platform to build resilience. One of the research findings showed that most mentees were comfortable requesting help from teachers, mentors, and their parents. Although sick, the mentee happened to turn up for school in such a condition with the notion that she would miss out on essential classes if she had to stay home. The resilience of mentees is a critical skill to master as most challenges they face have complex root causes, and mentees need to strive for continuous success.

The motivational drive and influence on mentees' determination to pursue their academic dreams were one of the positive changes observed in this research with about 75 percent (12 out of 16) participants reiterating the point. Mentees' motivation was associated with their interaction
with mentors and encouragement from teachers. This statement is linked to Spencer et al. (2019), who found out that marching mentees with mentors who encourage them is important to develop a positive relationship. Mentors and teachers used a problem-solution-based approach that allowed a robust support mechanism to buffer mentees' challenges. Mentor and teachers were available to engage in discussions, and support mentees develop a possible solution to a problem. Mentees were also motivated by the stories of some mentors who had been in similar situations as the mentee. Such conversations nurtured some form of relationship between mentees and their mentors and teachers. In addition, girls were reported to have been motivated by the instrumental support rendered by mentors. Instrumental support that came in as a self-care package provided basic hygiene necessities like pads that provided comfort for mentees to attend school during their menstrual cycle. Similarly, some mentees were reported to have changed their perception about the choice of starting childbearing at an early age. A mentee was reported to have advised a friend to delay childbearing and instead focus on her education. The changes observed in mentees are associated with the findings of a study conducted with adolescent girls from low socioeconomic backgrounds who reported changes in academic, self-regulation, and self-understanding through mentoring interactions (Farrugia et al., 2011, p.1).

**Limitations of the Study**

The process and findings of this study have limitations; some were addressed in the study's methodology, while others would need consideration for further research.

1. The Principal Researcher was unable to until publications on mentoring within the study location. However, the Principal Researcher used publications that focused characteristics and components of mentoring rather than environmental factors.
2. The study excluded parents' and mentees' perspectives. This was due to availability of resources including time. However, the research questions allowed teachers and mentors state what they have observed and events that have occurred with parents and mentees.

3. The use of technology, precisely zoom video technology, to conduct interviews was challenging and costly. Some participants involved in the study could not individually log on to zoom accounts and were grouped for interviews which restrained some clarity of sound of the recording.

4. Research Assistant was hired to support technology needs of the interviews but not trained on research methods. Nevertheless, the Research underwent IRB training which covered the ethnical aspect of the study and was not allowed to conduct interviews.

5. The Principal Researcher is the founder of the Chosen Network Mentorship Program which connects her to the study participant. While steps were taken to minimize the effect of bias, this aspect is considered as a limitation given her identification with some participants.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Future researchers could employ additional sources of information to strengthen research conclusions and recommendations.

1. Teachers and administrators in rural schools should provide one-on-one mentoring programs that combine psychosocial, and tutoring for low-performing girls

2. Mentoring activities must consider strategies to address out-of-school issues such home chores, time to study, that negatively and indirectly impact the overall school performance of mentees.
3. Mentoring programs must be long-term to establish strong relationship between mentees and mentors in collaboration with parents and teachers.

4. The one-on-one mentoring approach must be utilized by teachers, administrators and mentors to enhance individualized problem-solving and empower girls' agency.

5. Teachers, administrators and mentors must utilize evidence-based strategies to support girls' progress in the sense of purpose while also leveraging academic skills that could prevent school dropout.

6. Teachers, mentors and administrators should be trained on mentoring girls to be able to effectively design and implement the intervention.

**Recommendations for Research**

1. Future researchers must consider employing a comprehensive sample size that includes parents' and mentees' perspectives, with more teachers and mentors to support more evidential conclusion

2. The causative relationship of the components and characteristics of mentoring rural girls must be employed for future research. Researchers must consider variables like what constitute a good mentor-mentee relationship, the effect of instrumental support on mentoring rural girls, and the extent to which sense of purpose strengthens motivation.

3. Researchers should employ mixed methods and use control groups with focus on the specific variables listed to compare evidence of effect mentoring programs.

4. Data collection should be conducted face to face to minimize effects on the quality of data

4. Researchers should consider using anonymous methods of collecting data to reduce bias of any form especially if they are familiar with research participants.
5. The Ministry of Education should consider piloting a national mentoring program that
employs university students, teachers, administrators and community members for rural girls
from low socioeconomic background.
References


https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.


https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558420942481
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

April 4, 2023

To: Aminata Phoray-Musa
Email: aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Faculty Mentor:
Co-Principal Investigator(s):

Project Title: Mentors and Teachers’ Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Mentoring Rural Girls

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects.

Your project has been: Approved

Expiration Date: March 26, 2023
Approval Type: Expedited 1
SCSU IRB#: 3630123

Please read through the following important information concerning IRB projects:

ALL PROJECTS:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (e.g., research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).
- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (e.g., research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

EXEMPT PROJECTS:

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

EXPEDITED AND FULL BOARD REVIEW PROJECTS:

- The principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.
- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

Sincerely,

IRB Chair: Dr. Mill Mathew
Chair and Graduate Director
Assistant Professor Communication Sciences and Disorders

IRB Institutional Officials:
Dr. Claudia Tomany
Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies
The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your continuing review for your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects.

**PROJECT TITLE:** Evaluating the Effect of Two Forms of Response Blocking

**Your project has been:** Approved

**SCSU IRB#:** 36303564

**1st Year Approval Date:** March 29, 2022  
**2nd Year Approval Date:** March 28, 2023  
**3rd Year Approval Date:**

**1st Year Expiration Date:** March 28, 2024  
**2nd Year Expiration Date:** March 27, 2024  
**3rd Year Expiration Date:**

Please read through the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (e.g., research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (e.g., research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.) by completing an IRB Modification/Revision Request Form.

- The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

- Expedited and full board review projects are due for annual renewal 1 year from your approval date, or on the expiration date listed on the approval stamp) and the principal investigator is required to report the status of the project prior to the expiration date by completing one of the following:
  - Continuing Review Form: Request to extend the project as either subject recruitment/enrollment continues or data collection continues and the project has not concluded.
  - Final Report Form: Indicate project completion, data collection is complete (data analysis may continue).
- You will receive an email reminder approximately one month in advance of the expiration date. 
  **NOTE:** If a report form is not submitted timely, the protocol will be closed, and a new submission will be required.

- Approved consent form(s) and recruitment document(s) display the formal SCSU IRB stamp which is indication of official approval and lists expiration dates. These are the forms to be used during the project study. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

Feel free to contact the IRB for assistance at 320-368-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding for expedited response. Additional information can also be found on the IRB website https://www.sctcloudstate.edu/irb/protocol.aspx.

Sincerely,

**IRB Chair:**  
William Collins-Frashier

**IRB Institutional Official:**  
Dr. Claudia Tomany

**Program Director:**  
Amiha Kaviri

**Applied Clinical Research:**  
Dean of Graduate Studies
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Study Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewer: __________________________ Date of Interview: __________

Setting and location of interview: __________________________

1. Based on your observation, how do the mentees feel about themselves?
   a. How do they see themselves?

2. Based on your observations, how have the mentees in this program been able to use their voice and exercise their
gency/power?
   a. Please share some examples

3. To the best of your ability, what changes in values, confidence or self-concept have you noticed among the
mentees in this program?
   a. Please describe and share examples.

4. In what ways, if any, have mentees expressed interest in pursuing current educational goals, leadership roles, or
other personal or professional goals?
   a. Please provide examples.

5. What is the attitude, in your opinion, of mentees regarding their education and professional plans for the future –
after they graduate?

6. Have you noticed a change in factors that motivate or influence mentees’ personal and learning decisions?
   a. Please explain.
   b. What are some of the factors that seem to influence decision-making?

7. What learning and mentoring strategies and activities are most effective?

8. What are the academic benefits of the Chosen Network mentorship program?
   a. Please give some examples.
   b. To what extent have you observed changes in academic learning and improvement?

9. What learning and mentoring strategies or activities are least effective?

10. What are some of the challenges or obstacles remaining associated with implementing the Chosen Network
    Mentorship program?

11. What formal training and resources are needed by mentors and teachers to maintain/sustain this program?

12. In what ways, if any, can the mentorship program be improved?
    a. What changes would you make?

13. Do you have any other suggestions or comments regarding Chosen Network Mentorship program?
Appendix C: Administrators Permit and Teacher Consent Letters

February 24, 2022

To: Afleen Kafou
Al-Qudus Islamic Secondary School
Hangu
Krakow District

Dear Mrs. Kafou,

My name is Aminata Pharaoh-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my thesis degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentoring Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls’ education. This study seeks to understand the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentoring Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recordings will be used only for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach, please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at amnata.pharaoh-musa@stcloudstate.edu.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Pharaoh-Musa
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 495-4929

Dr. Amy Christensen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building, B109
St. Cloud, MN 56301
amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
(320) 308-3195

Enclosures: (4)

Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form
Permission Letter

Date: 25-02-2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: [Signature]

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teachers for her Master’s thesis study on the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

[Date: 25-02-2022]
February 24, 2022

To: Emmanuel A. Williams  
SLMB Secondary School  
Mano Junction  
Kenema District

Dear Mr. Williams,

My name is Ammara Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master’s degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls’ education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: ammara.phoray-musa@stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Ammarta Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301  
(320) 405 4929

Dr. Amy Christensen  
Major Professor  
Educational Administration & Leadership  
St. Cloud State University  
720 4th Avenue South  
Education Building, B109-1  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu  
(320) 308 3115

Enclosures: (4)  
Permission Letter Template  
Teacher Interview Protocol  
Teacher participation request  
Teacher Consent Form
Permission Letter

Date: 25/07/2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: [Signature]

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master's thesis study on the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

The Principal
Emmanuel A. Williams
To: Sheku S. Brima
Kenema District Council Secondary School
Talia
Kenema District

Dear Mr. Brima,

My name is Aminata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls' education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 405 4929

Enclosures: (4)
Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form

Dr. Amy Christensen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building, B109-1
St. Cloud, MN 56301
anchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
(320) 308 3115
Permission Letter

Date: 25th February 2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: Kenema District Council Secondary School Talia

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phony-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master’s thesis study on the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

The Principal
Sheku S. Brima
February 24, 2022

To: Amara Kamara
Karl Kuhnel Memorial High School
Kameta District

Dear Mr. Kamara,

My name is Aminata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls' education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 405 4929

Dr. Amy Christensen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building B109-I
St. Cloud, MN 56301
amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
(320) 308 3115

Enclosures: (4)

Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form
Permission Letter

Date: 25th February 2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: Karl Kuhne Memorial High School, R.P., Ken

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master's thesis study on the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

The Principal
Amara Kamara
February 24, 2022

To: Emmanuel A. Williams
SLMB Secondary School
Mano Junction
Kenema District

Dear Mr. Williams,

My name is Aminata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master’s degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls’ education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 405 4929

Enclosures: (4)
Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form

Dr. Amy Christensen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building, B109-1
St. Cloud, MN 56301
achristessen@stcloudstate.edu
(320) 368 3115
Permission Letter

Date: 25/07/2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Amirata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master's thesis study on the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

The Principal
Emmanuel A. Williams
February 24, 2022

To: Mohamed Karimu  
National Islamic Senior Secondary School  
Largo  
Kenema District

Dear Mr. Karimu,

My name is Aminata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls' education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phoray-Musa  

St. Cloud, MN 56301  
(320) 405 4929

Dr. Amy Christensen  
Major Professor  
Educational Administration & Leadership  
St. Cloud State University  
720 4th Avenue South  
Education Building, B109-1  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu  
(320) 308 3115

Enclosures:  
Permission Letter Template  
Teacher Interview Protocol  
Teacher participation request  
Teacher Consent Form
Permission Letter

Date: 28/07/2023

To: S. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: Mohamed Karimu Secondary School

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master’s thesis study on the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

The Principal

Mohamed Karimu
February 24, 2022

To: Grace F. Dauda
Tongo Agri Sec. Sch
Tongo Field
Kenema District

Dear Mr. Dauda,

My name is Amarata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls' education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to my self at: amarata.phoray-musa@st.csu.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Amarata Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 405-4929

Enclosures: (4)

Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form

Dr. Amy Christensen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building, B109-1
St. Cloud, MN 56301
amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
(320) 308-3115
Permission Letter

Date: 25/02/2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: Tongot Agricultural Sec Sch

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phony-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master's thesis study on the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

[Name]
Principal

[Date]
February 24, 2022

To: Charles Morison
UMC Secondary School
Ngehua
Kemena District

Dear Mr. Morison,

My name is Aminata Phora-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls’ education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at: aminata.phora-musa@stp.cloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phora-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 465 4925

Enclosures: (4)
  Permission Letter Template
  Teacher Interview Protocol
  Teacher participation request
  Teacher Consent Form

Dr. Amy Clarityessen
Major Professor
Educational Administration & Leadership
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Avenue South
Education Building, B109-1
St. Cloud, MN 56361
aclineeressen@stp.cloudstate.edu
(320) 308 3115
Permission Letter

Date: 25th /02/2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: United Methodist Church Sec. Sch.

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Poray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master’s thesis study on the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Principal Charles M. Wanguhu
February 24, 2022

To: Amos J. Ghonda

Kenema District

Dear Mr. Ghonda,

My name is Aminata Phoray-Musa. I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, United States. This form is being sent to ask permission to allow your Form Master teacher to participate in a study being conducted in fulfillment of my master's degree at St. Cloud State University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by teachers and mentors to support rural girls’ education. This study seeks the perspectives of community and program mentors as well as teachers regarding the overall performance and effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program.

The estimated time for your teacher to participate in the focus group interview is approximately one hour. All research participants will meet through a Zoom Video Meeting format and the interview will be recorded. The interview recording will be only used for the purpose of this study and destroyed upon conclusion of the study.

The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated in this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Included in the enclosures is the teacher interview protocol and the teacher consent form for you to review. If permission is granted, I have enclosed a standard permission letter template and teach. Please complete with your signature, scan, and return to myself at aminata.phoray-musa@go.stcloudstate.edu

Thank you for your time and kind consideration regarding permission for your Form Master teacher to participate in an interview for my thesis research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my major professor. Our contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aminata Phoray-Musa

St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 405 4929

Enclosures (4)

Permission Letter Template
Teacher Interview Protocol
Teacher participation request
Teacher Consent Form
Permision Letter

Date: 25th Feb 2022

To: St. Cloud State Institutional Review Board

From: [Signature]

Re: Permission to Conduct Study

This school organization has agreed to allow Aminata Phoray-Musa to collect data from my Form Master teacher for her Master's thesis study on the Chosen Network's Mentorship Program. Please consider this a letter of approval.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

The Principal

Amos J. Gbenda
Appendix D: Consent and Release for Video/Audio Recording

Teacher Consent and Release Form for Video/Audio Recording

Participant
You are invited to be part of a study to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by mentors in partnership with teachers to support rural girls’ education. This study will fulfill requirements for a Master’s degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at St. Cloud State University.

Background of the Study
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. The study seeks the perspectives of mentors and teachers on the efficacy of the intervention.

Procedures
If you decide to participate, data will be collected in a focus group interview. The focus group interview will last approximately an hour. In this study, you will be asked to provide your views on the effectiveness of the intervention activities, strategies, and the effect on mentees. The study interview protocol consists of thirteen semi-structured (open-ended) questions. Research participants will meet through Zoom Video Meeting and the interviews will be recorded.

Risks and Confidentiality
The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated with this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Benefits
The findings of this study are hoped to contribute to the research literature on effective mentoring strategies and provide recommendations to prevent girls’ attrition and improve learning.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns participating in this study and if you are interested in learning the results of the study, feel free to contact me at 320 405 4929 or email me at aminata.phoray-musa@co.stcloudstate.edu. You may also contact my major professor, Dr. Amy Christensen 320 308 3115, or email me at amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
Acceptance to Participate

Please mark “X” if you agree to the following and have decided to participate. Please also print your name and sign.

☐ I consent to participate in the Master’s study conducted by Aminata Phoray Musa
☐ I understand that the study involves sharing my view about the Chosen Mentorship program and girls mentored.
☐ I permit to be in the video/audio recording that will be used by the Principal Researcher to record and analyze data.
☐ I understand the transcription of the audio recording will be used by the Principal Researcher to record and analyze data.
☐ I realize that the results will be published in the final paper.
☐ I understand that confidentiality will be maintained.
☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any harm.

__________________________
(Name Print)

X

(Signature)
Program/Community Mentor Consent and Release Form for Video/Audio Recording

Participant
You are invited to be part of a study to evaluate the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program, specifically, to measure the effectiveness of the interventions used by mentors in partnership with teachers to support rural girls’ education. This study will fulfill requirements for a Master’s degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at St. Cloud State University.

Background of the Study
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Chosen Network’s Mentorship Program. The study seeks the perspectives of mentors and teachers on the efficacy of the intervention.

Procedures
If you decide to participate, data will be collected in a focus group interview. The focus group interview will last approximately an hour. In this study, you will be asked to provide your views on the effectiveness of the intervention activities, strategies, and the effect on mentees. The study interview protocol consists of thirteen semi-structured (open-ended) questions. Research participants will meet through Zoom Video Meeting and the interviews will be recorded.

Risks and Confidentiality
The risks involved in this study are minimal for the participants associated with this study. The confidentiality of the information gathered from participants will be maintained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Benefits
The findings of this study are hoped to contribute to the research literature on effective mentoring strategies and provide recommendations to prevent girls’ attrition and improve learning.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns participating in this study and if you are interested in learning the results of the study, feel free to contact me at 320 405 4528 or email me at amireta.phernay.muse@co.stcloudstate.edu. You may also contact my major professor, Dr. Amy Christensen 320 308 3115, or email me at amchristensen@stcloudstate.edu
Acceptance to Participate

Please mark "X" if you agree to the following and have decided to participate. Please also print your name and sign.

- I consent to participate in the Master's study conducted by Aminata Phoray Musa
- I understand that the study involves sharing my view about the Chosen Mentorship program and girls mentored.
- I permit to be in the video/audio recording that will be used by the Principal Researcher to record and analyze data.
- I understand the transcription of the audio recording will be used by the Principal Researcher to record and analyze data.
- I realize that the results will be published in the final paper.
- I understand that confidentiality will be maintained.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any harm.

(Name Print)

X__________________________

(Signature)