



Students' perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria

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Received 4 Dec 2022; Accepted 16 Jan 2023; Published 30 Jan 2023

Abstract

The main thrust of this study is to determine students' perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Two purpose statements, two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The accessible population for this study is 14,619 secondary school students in Anambra state. Although the target population relates to all secondary school students in South-east, Nigeria. The sample for this study comprises of 363 senior secondary school II students (male = 168, female = 195, rural area = 170, urban area = 193) randomly selected from three local government areas in Anambra state, South-east, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled influence of Academic Mentoring on Academic Achievement Questionnaire. Three experts validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha statistics and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.803. Data collected through direct delivery approach was analysed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. Data relating to the hypotheses was analysed using t-test statistics for independent sample. Results reveal that male secondary school students agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. In the same vein, female students agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. The findings further revealed that, secondary school students in rural areas disagreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. In the same vein, students in urban areas agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. In line with the hypotheses, a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools existed. The study further revealed a significant difference in the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Keywords: students, academic, academic mentoring, achievement, academic achievement, secondary schools

Introduction

The issue of academic achievement has remained a source of concern to researchers, especially as the academic achievement of secondary school students is deemed to be declining. For instance, statistics according to Olusegun (2015) ^[9] indicated that less than 40 percent of the candidates who sat for public examination in Nigeria obtained up to credit passes in five subjects which are the minimum academic qualifications for admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria almost every year. This situation is unacceptable and calls for measures to revamp the system where students' achievement is optimal and acceptable.

This, however, seems not to be the case presently as among other researchers James (2016) ^[5] showed that students' academic achievement is still on the decline, especially those at secondary school level. Secondary school students of the adolescent age reflect changes on multiple levels which include biological and cognitive growth, social development, peer relationship and family relationships (Longmore, Peggy & Wendy, 2012) ^[6]. Secondary school students in the context of this study can be conceptualised as children in post-primary school level of education, who are in their transitional stage of physical and psychological human development and are under the guidance or care of parents or guardian. Students in

secondary schools tend to experience a significant change compared to primary school. This is perhaps because secondary school function on a more bureaucratic system with more teachers, peers and curricular choices among others (Hill & Chao in Anyamene *et al.* 2020) ^[3].

An increased emphasis on improving and refining educational standards and practices has occurred over the last 15 years. This has increased the requirement in the state graduation requirements in core subject areas that are requiring that schools require rigorous curriculum standards for all students. In addition, schools that do not improve their test scores annually by the standards set by adequate yearly progress could face consequences such as losing federal funding or possibly be restructured by the federal government as well. According to Malik, Agunbiade and Arkwewuyo (2019) ^[7], mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. Mentoring can be further perceived as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where the mentor provides constant and needed support, guidance and concrete help to the protégé as they travel through life. It was further expressed that mentoring can expose youth to new information which may help them make

better decisions about their current or future lives.

Langhout, Rhodes and Osborne in Malik, Agunbiade and Arkwewuyo (2019) ^[7] examined different degrees of support, structure, and activities in mentoring relationships and identified four different mentoring styles in a traditional youth mentoring setting. Moderate mentors were conditionally supportive and showed moderate levels of activities and structure. Unconditionally supportive mentors were characterized by the highest levels of support. Active mentors offered the highest number of activities, but very little structure. Low-key mentors provided the lowest level of activities, but still high support. Furthermore, the following types of mentoring have been identified, they are traditional, group, team, electronic (e-mentoring), academic mentoring and peer mentoring. Nevertheless, academic mentoring will be the focus of this study. Academic mentoring is a caring youth mentoring other youths that are close in age, and it often takes place in a school setting with the focus of building a relationship and academic sharing.

Mentoring Partnership (2017) ^[8] opined that positive academic mentoring relationship can have profound effects on a mentee's sense of self-worth. It was further expressed that due to similarity in age of peer mentors to their mentees, mentees might feel more comfortable sharing concerns and problems with their mentors. This increases mentees access to appropriate support and resources during the time of learning. However, the goals of academic mentoring are often oriented towards positive social skills and relationship strategies supported through skill-building activities between mentors and mentees. This goes to show that academic mentors are expected to be model of behaviours in order to promote learning and positive development in mentees; create learning experience by taking advantage of local resources to cultivate their mentees existing interests; focus on the positive activities, approach challenges from a place of optimism and possibility; and encourage their mentees to build self-esteem and self-confidence.

Students under different mentoring programmes could vary based on gender. Gender here is the characteristics of being male or female, hence academic mentoring among secondary school students could exert greater influence on male students than on female students. Similarly, the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement of students could vary based on school location. This is a scenario where students in urban areas tend to perform better than students from rural areas. Studies have shown that the outcomes of different mentoring styles have been noted to increase the student's learning ability and achievement level. Langhout *et al.* in Malik, Agunbiade and Arkwewuyo (2019) ^[7] found that mentees generally benefitted most from moderate mentoring relationships with a conditional amount of support and a moderate level of activities. In spite of the available literature, it has not been empirically established in South-East Nigeria, where the issues of academic achievement of students thrives and is reported to be fluctuating among schools. However, this informs the present study. Nevertheless, the general focus of this study is to examine students' perceived influence of

academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools in south-east, Nigeria. In specific terms this study examined;

1. Male and female students' perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.
2. Secondary school students in rural and urban area perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools?
2. What is the perception of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Review of literature

The following literature have been empirically conducted and reviewed for this present study.

Afolabi, Faleye and Adeola (2015) ^[2] examined mentoring among academic staff of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population included all academic staff in the university. Purposive sampling was used to select 200 academic staff from the 13 faculties in the university. An instrument titled Academic Staff Mentoring Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to validation and reliability, with a coefficient of 0.762. Results showed that 86.5% of academic staff was involved in mentoring relationship and 93.5% of academic staff had a favourable perception of mentoring. The study concluded that most academic staff in the university were involved in mentoring relationship and perceived mentoring as a veritable means of academic development.

In the same vein, Udom, Okoedion and Okolie (2020) ^[10] conducted a study on the impact of mentoring on students' academic excellence in university of Benin, Benin city. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 300 respondents using accidental sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. this questionnaire was validated and its reliability established, with a reliability coefficient of 0.621.

Data collected were tested and analysed using descriptive, frequency distribution, correlation and linear regression analysis. The result of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between mentorship and academic excellence. The result also revealed that mentorship does have a significant impact on academic excellence in University of Benin.

Ihedioha and Osu (2012) ^[4] examined the opinion of academic staffs of the school on the effect of mentoring on students' general development in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Abuja Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A total of sixty-six teachers completed the questionnaires asking them to indicate their opinion on how the mentoring exercise has affected the general development of the students. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by three experts in the field of Educational Psychology. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were 0.79, 0.77 and 0.80 for cognitive development, affective development and psychomotor development respectively. Percentage analyses show that majority of the teachers; agree that the schools' mentoring program has made positive impact on the general development of students. The chi-square analyses indicate no significant difference between male and female teachers' opinion on cognitive development, affective development and psychomotor development of the students. Proponents of mentoring programs hypothesize that mentoring programs could be part of the answer to the problems of children.

Adepoju and Oluchukwu (2011) ^[1] assessed and investigated the academic performance of secondary school students in two principal subjects (English Language and Mathematics) at the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in ten secondary schools typical of urban and rural locations in five randomised Local Government Areas of Oyo State, Nigeria between 2005 and 2007. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. An instrument titled: Students' Academic Performance in English Language and Mathematics Questionnaire (SAPEMQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The ten secondary schools involved were selected based on simple random sampling technique and the statistical tools employed to analyse the data collected were percentages, means scores and multiple regression (backward procedure). Four research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The result among other things revealed that, there was a marked difference in the performance of students in urban and rural schools at the SSCE with impressive means scores obtained in urban schools (Urban = 69.8, 54.4 and 60.2 in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively; Rural = 36.4, 24.9 and 23.8 in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively).

Materials and methods

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey research design. The accessible population for this study is

14,619 secondary school students in Anambra state. Although the target population relates to all secondary school students in South-east, Nigeria. The sample for this study comprises of 363 senior secondary school II students (male = 168, female = 195, rural area = 170, urban area = 193) randomly selected from three local government areas in Anambra state, South-east, Nigeria. The sampling procedure adopted the multi-stage sampling procedure, whereby elements were selected at different stages and used in the study. In the first stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to select Anambra state from the existing five states in the South-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Secondly, the proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to stratify secondary schools in the state, based on the Local Government Areas. Only senior secondary school II students were selected using the simple random sampling technique of balloting with replacement after stratification. The instrument for data collection was a 20 – item structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Academic Mentoring on Academic Achievement Questionnaire”.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity with experts in the Department of Educational Foundations and Administration; and Department of Guidance and Counselling. A pilot testing of the instrument was carried out using Cronbach alpha statistics. In doing this, 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to SS II students randomly drawn from schools in Asaba Delta State. The subjects chosen were not the original subjects for the study but share similar characteristics with the subjects to be used for the study. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was 0.803. The administration of the questionnaire structured for data collection was done through direct delivery approach. In this method, copies of the questionnaire were distributed personally to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The researcher had a discussion with the research assistants on the administration and retrieval process. Data relating to the research questions was analysed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. While data relating to the hypotheses was analysed using t-test statistics for independent sample. The analysis for the research questions was interpreted using a criterion mean of above 2.50 termed agreed and below 2.50 termed disagreed. For interpreting the null hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha level, where the p-value is greater than the significant value, the null hypotheses will not be rejected. Otherwise, where the p-value is less than the significant value, the null hypotheses will be rejected.

Results and discussion

Results

Research question 1

What is the perception of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the perception of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools

S/N	Item statements	Male (n=168)			Female (n=195)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My mentor showed genuine concern for me and treated me with respect	3.21	.78	Agree	3.06	.043	Agree
2	My faculty mentor helped minimize my anxieties about course work	2.41	.89	Disagree	3.45	.421	Agree
3	My mentor provided guidance about my educational problem	2.62	.75	Agree	2.51	.74	Agree
4	My mentor advised me about a subject progress	1.41	.83	Disagree	2.78	1.02	Agree
5	My mentor guides me during homework	3.01	.70	Agree	1.48	.98	Disagree
6	My academic achievement is influenced by my mentor support	2.11	.61	Disagree	3.06	.51	Agree
7	My mentor provides information about internship programmes	2.29	.78	Disagree	2.55	.02	Agree
8	My academic achievement improves as my mentor directs my attention towards self-study	3.11	.73	Agree	3.51	.66	Agree
9	My mentor is rarely available during my free period	2.63	.70	Agree	2.00	.89	disagree
10	My mentor provided information about research opportunities	1.01	.79	Disagree	3.54	.43	Agree
11	My mentor does not have knowledge about academic opportunities	3.02	.83	Agree	2.61	.52	Agree
12	My mentor provides me with textbooks related to my school subjects	3.11	.70	Agree	2.11	.63	Disagree
13	My mentor disagrees with my opinion during learning	2.11	.61	Disagree	3.02	1.11	Agree
14	I am guided by my mentor through constructive feedback	3.21	.78	Agree	2.06	1.06	Disagree
15	My mentor lacks knowledge about internship programmes	3.42	.78	Agree	3.04	.82	Agree
16	My zeal to study comes from my mentors' advice	2.55	.89	Agree	2.65	.75	Agree
17	My mentor provides adequate support during my learning	3.61	.75	Agree	2.85	.65	Agree
18	My mentor avoids difficult assignment	1.20	.83	Disagree	1.76	1.01	Disagree
19	I perform low despite the mentorship form my mentor	2.36	.70	Disagree	1.82	.68	Disagree
20	I dislike mentoring programme organized by my school	2.78	.78	Agree	3.21	.11	Agree
	Mean of Means	2.55		Agree	2.50		Agree

Table 1 reveals the mean standard deviation on the perception of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. The mean of means scores of 2.55 reveals that male secondary school students agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. Male students had a homogenous response as reported in the standard deviation section. In the same vein, the means of means score of 2.50 shows that female students agreed to the items raised on their

perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. Female secondary school students had a heterogenous response in their ratings, this is as reported by the standard deviation.

Research question 2

What is the perception of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the perceived influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the perception of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools

S/N	Item statements	Rural Area (n=170)			Urban Area (n=193)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My mentor showed genuine concern for me and treated me with respect	1.62	.67	Disagree	2.58	.67	Agree
2	My faculty mentor helped minimize my anxieties about course work	2.31	.77	Disagree	3.42	.87	Agree
3	My mentor provided guidance about my educational problem	1.06	.66	Disagree	3.11	.84	Agree
4	My mentor advised me about a subject progress	1.63	.83	Disagree	2.01	.86	Disagree
5	My mentor guides me during homework	2.38	.61	Disagree	3.62	.62	Agree
6	My academic achievement is influenced by my mentor support	2.67	.58	Agree	1.12	.61	Disagree
7	My mentor provides information about internship programmes	3.21	.76	Agree	1.34	.86	Disagree
8	My academic achievement improves as my mentor directs my attention towards self-study	1.91	.81	Agree	2.67	.62	Agree
9	My mentor is rarely available during my free period	1.05	.86	Disagree	3.47	.61	disagree
10	My mentor provided information about research opportunities	2.67	.86	Agree	2.11	.89	Disagree
11	My mentor does not have knowledge about academic opportunities	3.21	.67	Agree	2.78	.67	Agree
12	My mentor provides me with textbooks related to my school subjects	2.50	.77	Disagree	2.71	.86	Agree
13	My mentor disagrees with my opinion during learning	3.11	.66	Agree	2.70	.67	Agree
14	I am guided by my mentor through constructive feedback	3.21	.67	Agree	2.39	.87	Disagree
15	My mentor lacks knowledge about internship programmes	2.50	.77	Agree	2.61	.84	Agree
16	My zeal to study comes from my mentors' advice	3.42	.66	Agree	3.42	.86	Agree
17	My mentor provides adequate support during my learning	2.57	.83	Agree	3.10	.62	Agree
18	My mentor avoids difficult assignment	2.38	.61	Disagree	3.33	.61	Agree

19	I perform low despite the mentorship form my mentor	1.47	.58	Disagree	2.51	.86	Agree
20	I dislike mentoring programme organized by my school	2.11	.76	Disagree	3.32	.62	Agree
	Mean of Means	2.34		Disagree	2.71		Agree

Table 2 reveals the mean standard deviation on the perception of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. The mean of means scores of 2.34 reveals that secondary school students in rural areas disagreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. Students in rural areas had a homogenous response as reported in the standard deviation section. In the same vein, the means of means score of 2.71 shows that students in urban areas agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. These students in urban areas had a homogeneity in their ratings, this is as reported by the standard deviation.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Table 3: T-test analysis summary on the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools

Sources of Variation	N	Mean	SD	df	p-value	Sig. value	Decision
Male	168	36.24	4.32	361	0.01	0.05	Significant
Female	195	38.45	3.39				

The result presented in Table 1 shows the t-test summary of the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. The results show that at 0.05 level of significance, the p-value is less than the alpha value and the null hypotheses is rejected. This implies a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Table 4: T-test analysis summary on the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools

Sources of Variation	N	Mean	SD	df	p-value	Sig. value	Decision
Rural	170	35.34	4.51	361	0.00	0.05	Significant
Urban	193	36.74	3.55				

The result presented in Table 2 shows the t-test summary of the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. The results show that at 0.05 level of significance, the p-value is less than the alpha value and the null hypotheses is rejected. This implies there is a significant difference in the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools.

Discussion of findings

Data relating to research question 1 reveals that male secondary school students agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. In the same vein, female students agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. In line with the hypotheses, a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools existed.

This finding agrees with Ihedioha and Osu (2012) [4] who's percentage analyses show that majority of the teachers; agree that the schools' mentoring program has made positive impact on the general development of students. The chi-square analyses indicate no significant difference between male and female teachers' opinion on cognitive development, affective development and psychomotor development of the students. Proponents of mentoring programs hypothesize that mentoring programs could be part of the answer to the problems of children. Justifiably, young people who perceived high quality relationship with their mentors experience the best results. Further, results of a number of empirical/quantitative studies have shown that mentorship significantly and positively affected and improved the academic performance, experience and productivity of students and thus enhanced academic excellence (Pfund, 2016). Furthermore, the finding conforms with the findings of Udom, Okoedion and Okolie (2020) [10] which found that there is a positive and significant relationship between mentorship and academic excellence. The result also revealed that mentorship does have a significant impact on academic excellence in University of Benin. Also, Oyinlo and Oyinlo (2015) is in support of the present study as it reported that academic achievement and self-concept were discovered to be gender sensitive. More so, some problems discovered were that male students had greater time to play outside school while female students were always engaged with domestic work that will guide their future.

Data relating to research question 2 reveals that secondary school students in rural areas disagreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. In the same

vein, students in urban areas agreed to the items raised on their perception of the influence of academic mentoring on academic achievement in secondary schools. For the hypothesis tested, a significant difference exists in the mean rating of secondary school students in rural and urban areas on the influence of academic mentoring on their academic achievement in secondary schools. This finding is supported by the finding of Adepoju and Oluchukwu (2011) ^[1] which revealed that there was a marked difference in the performance of students in urban and rural schools at the SSCE with impressive means scores obtained in urban schools. The findings of this study conform with Afolabi, Faleye Adeola (2015) ^[2] which showed that 86.5% of academic staffs were involved in mentoring relationship and 93.5% of academic staff had a favourable perception of mentoring. The study concluded that most academic staff in the university were involved in mentoring relationship and perceive mentoring as a veritable mean of academic development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions presented, it was concluded that academic mentoring is an act and a process which involves one-on one coaching of students to enhance academic achievement in learning environment. Classroom training is sometimes poorly coordinated with practical learning on the job. Nevertheless, creating a productive learning environment that empowers and improves the quality of education is one of the hopeful ways to increase quality assurance in education. Hence academic mentoring is a preferred way to increased academic performance and improve quality of education in Nigeria. Our school set-up should as a matter of urgency include academic mentorship in her programme to increase and sustain growth and development of the system.

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