

The Opinion of the Academic Staff on the Effect of Mentoring On Students' General Development in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Abuja Nigeria

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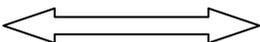
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-----Abstract-----

Mentoring of students has been on in the school for more than two academic sessions without evaluation or seeking the opinion of either the students or staff on its success. Such important effort to the development of the students needs examined to assert successes for its continuation or failures for reorganization of its implementation, hence this study. Planned mentoring programs have flourished as one possible solution to the problems affecting Youths/children, despite the generally accepted belief that only positive effects can result from their implementation. The present study examines the opinion of the academic staff of the school on the effect of mentoring on students' general development in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Abuja Nigeria. 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, therefore, it is recommended that teachers should go extra mile in doing all they can towards the overall development the students and mentors should strive for impeccable character for the success of the mentoring exercise as they train the future Nigerians we hope to trust.. Let us put in our best!

Keywords: opinion, impact, mentoring, cognitive development, affective development, psychomotor development.

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1. Introduction

Mentoring of students has been on in the school for more than two academic sessions without evaluation or seeking the opinion of either the students or staff on its success. Such important effort to the development of the students needs re-examined to assert successes for its continuation or failures for reorganization of its implementation, hence this study. Traditional concept of mentoring is described as older men assisting boys with learning trades or skills, [1]. A more useful and contemporary definition of mentoring is: one-to-one relationship between a pair of unrelated individuals, usually of different ages that is developmental in nature. According to [1] a mentor is an older, more experienced person who seeks to develop the character and competence of a younger person. Mentoring can be categorized into two types: Informal (natural) mentoring and Formal (planned) mentoring [2].

▪ Informal mentoring refers to naturally occurring, supportive relationships children/youths have with older and more experienced individuals such as parents, extended family members, neighbors, teachers, ministers, and others with whom children/youths have regular contact. Informal mentoring involves the provision of general guidance and support and, in some instances, helping a child/youth learn something new. It also promotes students' sense of well-being by challenging the negative opinions they may have of themselves and demonstrating that they can have positive relationships with adults,[3]. The relationship may be short- or

▪ long-term, but in both instances mentoring has a lasting positive impact on the student. Informal mentoring relationships are far more common than formal ones. A survey of mentors found that 83 percent of those responding indicated their relationships with students were established informally, while only 17 percent worked through formal mentor programs, [4]. Natural mentoring occurs through friendship, teaching, coaching, and counseling. Traditionally, certain institutions such as families, churches, neighborhoods, and schools have provided opportunities for natural mentoring. These institutions have changed and thus reduced the ability of adults to provide assistance and guidance to youths. Specifically, there are fewer adults in families because of the increase in single-parent homes and many extended family members do not live in the same town. Neighborhoods have changed and neighbors tend to keep more to them. In addition, higher teacher/student ratio exists in public schools,[5].

▪ Formal (planned) - Formal (planned) mentoring programs emerged because of the decline in informal (natural) mentoring. Formal mentoring involves a structured and intentional approach to offering students those experiences and benefits similar to the ones provided by informal mentors. Such initiatives are often facilitated by an agency or program, dedicated to this purpose and encompass both one-on-one relationships between an adult and the child/youth, or an older more experienced peer and a younger peer, as well as small groups of children/youths working with an adult or older peer on a particular goal. In all instances, mentoring activities take place at regularly scheduled times over an extended period, and are most often only one component of a comprehensive program [6]. Formal mentoring programs place a strong emphasis on positive youth development, reducing the likelihood that students will engage in risky behaviors such as poor school attendance or drug use, and community concerns such as civic engagement and college and career exploration. They can be school-based, community-based, and occasionally workplace-based. The sponsoring entity recruits and trains the mentors, matches them with their mentees, and provides support over the duration of the relationship [7]. Mentoring focuses and motivates students toward achieving learning goals [8]. Youth who perceive high-quality relationships with their mentors experience the best results [9]. Discussing college with mentors, especially those who have attended themselves can generate interest in going to college among students whose parents have not gone to college [10]. Mentors provide students with important information about college preparatory courses, financial aid and the college admissions process, ([11]; [12]). The theory of planned youth mentoring programs is that mentoring can be implemented systematically. Planned mentoring occurs through structured programs in which an adult and a youth are selected and matched through formal processes. The purpose of the programs is to provide the children/youths with assistance and guidance to enable them grow into responsible adults, and to fill the gap created by the diminished opportunity for natural mentoring [1]. Evaluation of mentoring programs is imperative to determine if they offer a possible solution to the problems affecting children/youths. [13] stated that mentoring programs should be evaluated for both their process and impact; however, only a few studies have been completed. Possible reasons for the lack of research are that most program administrators would rather use money and staff resources to provide more services than to complete an evaluation, many programs have not been in operation very long, and potential outcomes are difficult to quantify. Research has focused more on the process of mentoring ([14]; [15]; [16]), especially the formation of the relationships, than the impact of the mentoring. [5] reported positive results in the areas of decreasing alcohol and drug use, improving peer relationships, and improving parent/child relationships.

1.1 Mentoring and Academic Achievement

Research on the impact of mentoring on the academic achievement of children/youths has been conducted with conflicting results. [17] conducted a longitudinal study of 220 students and found that those with mentors completed more years of education. More specifically, men with a mentor completed 17.8 years compared to 15.8 years of education for men without a mentor. Women with a mentor completed 18.1 years compared to 14.9 years for women without a mentor. A major limitation of this study was that the participants were mostly middle class and would not be looked at as children/youths. [16] evaluated the impact of a school-based mentoring program on 86 at-risk tenth grade students. The initial results indicated no differences in the dropout rate or grade point average between the treatment and control groups.

When the differences between those students who were effectively mentored versus those who were ineffectively mentored were evaluated, they found that effectively mentored students had a lower dropout rate than ineffectively mentored students. Effective mentoring was defined by self-report from the student receiving the mentoring. Although differences were found in dropout rates, they were not found for grade point averages. [18] evaluated the academic outcomes of middle school students who were involved in Project Raise, a well financed, multi-faceted, structured program in Baltimore, Maryland, designed to provide mentors and advocates to very high risk children. One of the major goals of the program was improving academic progress. The researchers compared participants in Project Raise with non-participants from the same school. They found two

statistically significant positive effects for students involved in the program. First, there was a reduction of nearly 3% in the school absence rate of youths involved in the program when compared to students in the same school, who did not have a mentor. The authors noted that the absence rate of participants in the program was still higher than the overall district average. Second, students involved in Project Raise received better grades on their report cards than other students at their schools did. Once again these grades were still below the district average. Additional findings indicate that students' participation in Project Raise had no impact on promotion rates and no impact on achievement, measured by scores on the reading and mathematics sections of the California Achievement Test. The study by [18] is significant because it was one of the first to use comparison groups and statistical tests to evaluate the students' school outcomes after they were involved in a well-financed, structured mentor program. The study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters by [5] evaluated the effectiveness of mentors on academic achievement for 959 youths involved in eight Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs (487 youths were in the treatment group and 472 youths were in the control group). Those involved in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs were significantly less likely to skip classes or days of school. The students who had mentors skipped 52% fewer days and 37% fewer classes. The impact was greater for girls in that Little Sisters skipped 84% fewer days of school than did girls in the control group. An additional finding was that girls in the treatment group (i.e., had a mentor) reported 3% better grades than girls in the control group. [5] demonstrated that treatment group members felt more confident of their ability to complete their schoolwork than did control group members and minority girls were most positively impacted. The study also investigated other school-related outcomes such as hours spent each week reading and doing homework, number of times youth visited a college and went to a library, and the number of books read, and found no overall statistically significant differences between the control and treatment group members. To summarize, the research on the impact of planned mentoring on the academic achievement of children/youths had varied results. School absence rates and dropout rates did decline. However, promotion rates and scores on a standardized achievement test did not improve significantly. Also, the effect of mentoring on grade point average showed conflicting results. [18] found significant improvement, while [16] did not. Ours is to assess the impact of mentoring exercise on the students' development in the three domains of development using the opinion of the teachers and students represented in their responses on the questionnaires, having been involved in mentoring exercise for more than two academic sessions now.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the opinion of the academic staff on the impact of mentoring on general development of the students. Specifically, the question is whether involvement in the ongoing mentoring program, has a significant impact on the students' development, as measured by their responses to the questions asked in the questionnaire administered. The hypothesis is that the students, who have mentors, will show greater improvement than those who do not have mentors. Mentors are supposed to provide the extra, individual attention that the students require. Additionally, mentors provide positive role model for the children. These conditions help to reduce some of the developmental risk factors that these students encounter

1.3 Significance of the study

The current study is important because there is neither impact studies on mentoring, nor on the opinion of either the students or the teachers, concerning Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. It will help in improving the mentoring exercise as the mentors, mentees and the school's administrators will now know the areas to improve upon.

1.5 Research Question and Hypotheses

The current study used quantitative method to collect data and the research was guided by the following questions:

- What are the teachers' responses on schools' mentoring exercise regarding each domain?
The following null and alternative hypotheses are also stated:
- H_{01} : There is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on the schools' mentoring exercise regarding cognitive domain.
 H_{11} : There is statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on schools' the mentoring exercise regarding cognitive domain.
- H_{01} : There is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on the schools' mentoring exercise regarding affective domain.
 H_{11} : There is statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on schools' the mentoring exercise regarding affective domain.

- H_{03} : There is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on the schools' mentoring exercise regarding psychomotor domain.
 H_{13} : There is statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on schools' the mentoring exercise regarding psychomotor domain.

2. Methodology

2.1 Population for the study

The study is conducted in a public secondary school Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, in Bwari Area Council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria and the population for the study is all the academic staff of the school.

2.2 Sample and sampling technique

The study covered only Government schools in Bwari Area Council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria and a sample of sixty-six (66) teachers (36 male and 30 females) is selected using simple random sampling ensuring adequate representation of male and female teachers who have been involved in the mentoring exercise.

2.3 Data Collection Method

2.3.1 Instrument

A simple random sampling technique is used to select the teachers. The instrument is questionnaire drawn in sections-A, B and C. having questions on cognitive development, affective development and psychomotor development, respectively A reliability test is carried out to determine the internal consistency of items in the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are 0.79, 0.77 and 0.80 for cognitive development, affective development and psychomotor development respectively. According to [19], alpha value of 0.90 is considered excellent, 0.80 very good and 0.70 acceptable. In this study, the observed variables have acceptable internal consistency for cognitive and affective development and very good internal consistency for psychomotor development.

3. Data Analyses and Discussion

3.1 Procedure for data analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using frequency counts of the subjects' responses to the questionnaire items determined based on teachers' gender and percentage scores. The hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested using chi square (χ^2) analysis. A frequency count of the subject responses to each questionnaire item was carried out. The percentages of response to each of the options were then calculated as shown in tables 1, 2, and 3. Similarly, results of chi-square analysis to test for the research hypotheses (1-3) are reflected in tables 1-3.

Table 1: Teachers' Response: Cognitive Domain

IMPROVEMENT ITEMS	GENDER	NO	%	UND.	%	YES	%	χ^2
Ability to recall facts, definitions, terms principles, etc has been enhanced by mentoring.	MALE	14	38.89	3	8.33	19	52.78	1.839
	FEMALE	11	36.67	1	3.33	18	60.00	
Ability to explain, interpret, etc, situations?	MALE	13	36.11	5	13.89	18	50.00	0.3788
	FEMALE	10	33.33	3	10.00	17	56.67	
Application of what is learnt during mentoring in other ways?	MALE	13	36.11	1	8.33	22	55.56	0.5332
	FEMALE	8	26.67	3	8.33	19	65.00	
Ability to analyze, compare, contrast has been sharpened because of mentoring.	MALE	12	33.33	4	11.11	20	55.56	0.4148
	FEMALE	10	33.33	2	6.67	18	60.00	
Combined (mean) responses	MALE	13	36.11	4	11.11	19	52.78	0.5455
	FEMALE	10	33.33	3	6.67	20	60.00	

Results from table 1 concerning students' Cognitive development indicates that more than 40% (male-38.89% and female-36.67%) of the teachers have not improved agreed on the improved abilities to recall facts, definitions, terms principles, etc, of the students due to mentoring. Only 36.11% of the male and 33.33% of female teachers do not agree that mentoring has contributed in improved abilities to explain, interpret, etc, situations, of the students. Also, 36.11% male and 26.67% of female teachers indicate that mentoring has not helped the students to use what they have learnt in class in other ways. Further, 12 % of male and 10% of female teachers indicate that the abilities of the students to analyze, compare, contrast has not been sharpened because of mentoring, while 55.56% and 60% of male and female teachers, respectively indicate otherwise. Finally, the combined responses for this section, shows that 36.11% of male and 33.33% of female teachers indicate no improvement on cognitive development of the students. Chi-square (χ^2) statistical analyses indicate that all the values are less than critical values of 5.991 at two degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This means, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' views about the students' cognitive development. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers regarding the cognitive development of the students, therefore, is accepted.

Table 2: Teachers' Response-Affective Domain

ITEM	GENDER	NO	%	UND.	%	YES	%	χ^2
Improved punctuality & attendance to lessons?	MALE	11	30.56	2	5.56	23	63.88	0.5549
	FEMALE	7	23.33	3	10.00	20	66.67	
Improvement on honesty, politeness & neatness?	MALE	10	27.78	4	11.11	22	60.11	1.8829
	FEMALE	8	26.67	1	3.33	21	30.00	
Improvement on relationship with the staff & other students improved?	MALE	9	25.00	5	13.89	22	61.11	0.2639
	FEMALE	6	20.00	4	13.33	20	66.67	
Improvement on spirit of co-operation, perseverance, & sense of responsibility?	MALE	12	33.33	3	8.33	21	58.34	1.4643
	FEMALE	6	20.00	3	10.00	21	70.00	
Combined (mean) responses	MALE	11	30.56	4	11.11	21	58.33	0.5126
	FEMALE	7	23.33	3	10.00	20	66.67	

Table 2 above summarizes students' Affective development. It indicates that less than 31% (male- 3.56 % and female-23.33%) do not agree that mentoring has helped the students to improve on punctuality and attendance to lessons. 27.78 % of the male and 26.67 % of female teachers opine that the students have not gained in improving on honesty, politeness and neatness. Also, 25% male and 20% of female teachers indicate that the students' relationship with the staff and other students has not improved. Further, 33.33% of male and 20% of female teachers say that the students have not improved on their spirit of co-operation, perseverance, and sense of responsibility; while 58.34% and 70% of male and female teachers respectively agree that the students have improved. Finally, the combined responses for this section, shows that 30.56% of male and 23.33% of female teachers do not agree that the students have improvement on their affective development. Chi-square (χ^2) statistical analyses indicate that all the values are less than the critical value of 5.991 at two degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This means, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' views about the development of the students on the affective domain. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female teachers is accepted.

Table 3: Teachers' Response: Psychomotor Domain

Item	Gender	NO	%	UND.	%	YES	%	χ^2
Improved hand writing & fluency as a result of mentoring?	MALE	12	33.33	3	8.33	21	58.34	0.8018
	FEMALE	7	23.33	3	10.00	20	56.67	
Improved on games & sports skills due to mentoring?	MALE	9	25.00	4	11.11	23	63.89	0.9311
	FEMALE	5	16.67	5	16.67	20	66.66	
Improved in crafts.	MALE	9	25.00	4	11.11	23	63.89	1.7874
	FEMALE	8	26.67	1	3.33	21	70.00	
Improved handling of tools.	MALE	11	30.56	2	5.56	23	63.88	1.8131
	FEMALE	6	20.00	4	13.33	20	66.67	
Enhanced my drawing & painting skills.	MALE	10	27.78	3	8.33	23	62.89	0.1944
	FEMALE	7	23.33	3	10.00	20	66.67	

Table 3 above presents data on teachers' opinion on the students' psychomotor development. It indicates that the male teachers opine 33.33% no improvement, 8.33% undecided about the students' improvement, while 58.34% agree that the students have improvement regarding their hand writing and fluency. The female teachers' responses on psychomotor development in respect of hand writing and fluency show that 23.33% disagree to the students having improved, 10% undecided, while 56.67% claim that the students have improved. In the case of games and sports, 25% of male teachers indicate a No response, 11.11% undecided, while 63.39% have Yes as response. For female teachers, 16.67% indicated No, 16.67% undecided and 66.66% yes for response. The male teachers' responses on crafts show that 25% answered No, 11.11% undecided while 63.89% gave a Yes response. The female students rate 16.89%, 16.89 % and 66.22% for No, undecided and Yes, respectively. For tools handling, the male teachers indicate thus; 30.56% No, 5.56% and 63.88% for undecided and Yes, respectively. The female teachers' responses are, 23.33%, 10% and 66.67% for No, undecided and Yes, respectively. The statistical analyses show that all the values are less than the critical value of 5.991 at two degrees of freedom and a level of significance of 0.05. This means that there is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' opinion. Hence, we accept the null hypothesis of no significant difference opinion of the teachers in the students' psychomotor development.

3.2 Teachers Interview Results

At the completion of the exercise, six teachers (3-male and 3-female) were randomly selected and interviewed. The questions asked are:

1. Are the students having fun participating in the schools' mentoring exercises?
2. At the completion of the sessions of the schools' mentoring exercises, are you able to detect changes in the students?
3. Are the students excited about the schools' mentoring exercises?
4. Is there a time you notice students become disinterested in the schools' mentoring exercises?
5. Do you think the schools' mentoring exercises is related to real life problems the students encounter?
6. Do you feel the schools' mentoring exercises is relevant to the students' studies?
7. Do you feel the students are more confident handling their problems having been involved in the schools' mentoring exercises?
8. Would you think the students would like to choose their mentor?

Table 4 displays the results of the student interviews:

Table 4: Summary of Teachers' Interview Results

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
T1-m	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
T2-fm	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
T3-fm	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
T4-m	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
T5-m	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
T6-fm	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

T-Teacher (fm-female and m-male)

Y-Yes

N-No

Q-Question

It is indicated that students had fun participating in the schools' mentoring exercises. Also indicated is that the schools' mentoring exercises is related to real life problems. Lastly, it is opined that the school's mentoring is relevant to the students' studies and that they (students) felt more confident handling their problems and having been involved in the schools' mentoring exercises. One response that we found interesting is that the students who became disinterested at some point during the schools' mentoring exercises, all did so for essentially for reasons not connected with mentoring. Another interesting aspect of the responses is that regardless of who the mentors are, all the students felt more confident handling their problems. The students may be allowed choice of their mentors.

3.3 Findings

Based on the results of the study, the following findings are made:

- There is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on the schools' mentoring exercise regarding the three domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains).
- Most of students in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria, have gained from the mentoring exercise.

- The interviews show that the students realise the importance of mentoring and would gain more should they take the activity more seriously and practice adequately.

4. Conclusions

This study is a survey on the opinion of the teachers of Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Abuja Nigeria, on the impact of mentoring exercise on the students' general development. Three sixty-six (66-36 male and 30 female) teachers participated in completing the questionnaires used for the study. They are asked to indicate their opinion on how the mentoring exercise has imparted on the students' general development. The study shows that most of students in Government Comprehensive Secondary School Bwari, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria, have gained from the mentoring exercise. Their ability to practice what they have been taught could be a predominant factor. The interviews show that the students realise the importance of mentoring and would gain more should they take the activity seriously. Finally, there is no statistical significant difference between male and female teachers' responses on the schools' mentoring exercise regarding three domains of development.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made among others:

- Mentors and mentees should put more effort towards achieving higher percentage of success if not hundred percent.
- Mentoring should be broad based so that successful people in all works of life will be invited to mentor the students.
- There should be a clear cut curriculum for mentoring as it is the practice in other parts of the world and should include visitations and civic education.
- There should be room for flexibility in mentoring where mentees will be allowed to choose their mentors. However, mentees should strive to co-operate with the mentors they have.
- Mentors should strive for impeccable character for the success of the mentoring exercise.

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