International Journal of Academic and Applied Research (IJAAR)
ISSN: 2643-9603
Vol. 9 Issue 1 January - 2025, Pages: 87-92

Mentorship As A Correlate Of Postgraduate Students' Satisfaction In Public Universities In Kwara State

ATOFARATI Salamat Ibidun, Yusuf Suleiman and Ganiyu Akanbi YUSUF

Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Al-hakmah University Ilorin, Nigeria Email: atofaratisalamat@gmail.com, Phone number:08032234198
Centre for language Immersion and Translation, Kwara State University, Malate Email: ganiyu.yusuf19@kwasu.edu.ng Phone no: 09053644928

Abstract: *Mentorship is essential element in the academic and professional success of students despite this, the relationship between mentorship and postgraduate student satisfaction remains underexplored. Therefore, the researcher investigated the mentorship as a correlate of postgraduate students' satisfaction in public universities in Kwara State. A descriptive survey design of the correlation type was adopted. All postgraduate students comprising masters' and PhD students make up the study population. Simple random sample technique was used to select 150 respondents from Kwara State University (75 masters' students and 75 PhD students). With the help of research assistants, a Questionnaire on Mentorship Quality on Postgraduate Students and Postgraduate Students' satisfaction were utilised to gather data from the students through google form. The instruments were validated by some selected lecturers. Test-retest method of reliability was used by the researcher and research assistance. Within two weeks, 20 copies of final draft were trial tested twice on the randomly selected students outside the sample school. Thereafter, the reliability of the instruments was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.76 and 0.73 respectively. Additionally, data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis, which describes the data that was gathered. While testing the research hypothesis was conducted using inferential statistics of linear regression with a significance level of 0.05. it was found among others that there was significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction ($F_{(1,149)} = 12.373$, $P < 0.05$). It was concluded that the mentorship is very essential to the achievable postgraduate programme because it make the students understand the nitty-gritty of the career and professionalism. It was recommended among others that institutions should offer training sessions for mentors to enhance their communication, leadership, and conflict-resolution skills.*

Keywords: Postgraduate Education, Postgraduate satisfaction, Mentorship

Introduction

Postgraduate education refers to advanced academic and professional training undertaken after completing a bachelor's degree. It includes master's degrees, doctoral degrees (PhDs), and various professional certifications. Postgraduate programmes are typically more specialized and research-oriented than undergraduate studies, offering students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in a particular field or develop expertise in a specific discipline.

The crucial motive behind postgraduate education is to prepare students for professional careers, advanced research, and leadership roles within their fields. Graduate students are expected to engage in independent research, contribute to academic knowledge, and often collaborate with faculty members, peers, and professionals (Tinto, 2017). Moreover, postgraduate education enhances critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and the application of specialized knowledge to real-world issues (Jaschik, 2021). In recent years, postgraduate education has become increasingly important due to the growing demand for highly skilled professionals across industries such as technology, healthcare, business, and academia (OECD, 2020). However, students in postgraduate programme often face unique challenges, such as academic pressure, research isolation, and balancing work and study, which usually have adverse effect on their overall satisfaction and success (Nett, 2018).

Postgraduate satisfaction refers to the overall contentment of students with their academic experience, encompassing factors such as academic quality, mentor relationships, support services, and work-life balance. It is an important measure of the effectiveness of graduate programmes and the well-being of students, and it has implications for retention rates, academic success, and career outcomes (Ali & Hamid, 2017). Research has identified several key factors that influence postgraduate satisfaction. Academic quality, including the rigor of coursework and the quality of supervision, is often seen as a primary determinant of satisfaction. Mentorship relationships also play a critical role, as effective mentorship provides students with academic guidance, emotional support, and professional development (Klein, 2019). Furthermore, the availability of institutional support services, such as career counselling, mental health resources, and research funding, can significantly enhance postgraduate satisfaction (Pittaway & Cope, 2018).

Mentorship has long been regarded as a key element in the academic and professional success of students. In postgraduate education, mentorship is often seen as more than just academic guidance; it encompasses social and emotional support, career advice,

and professional networking. Several studies have shown that postgraduate students with positive mentorship experiences report higher levels of satisfaction, improved academic performance, and greater career success (Johnson, 2018). Scholars have proposed that mentorship in postgraduate education provides benefits at both the academic and personal levels. At the academic level, mentors help students navigate complex research tasks, refine their thesis or dissertation projects, and connect with relevant academic resources. At the personal level, mentors offer emotional support, encouragement, and advice on work-life balance, reducing feelings of isolation and stress, which are common among postgraduate students (Sonnert et al., 2016).

It is reported that, despite the recognised relationship between mentorship and postgraduate student satisfaction remains underexplored. There are still some challenges associated with mentorship, such as mismatched expectations between students and mentors, insufficient time commitment, inexperience personnel or lack of mentorship training. These challenges may hinder the potential positive impacts of mentorship on students' satisfaction. Besides, stress and dissatisfaction usually emanating from the pressure to perform in a competitive environment, balancing research responsibilities with personal life, and managing mental health concerns (Bamber et al., 2020). It is against this submission that the researcher investigated the mentorship as correlate of postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities, kwara satate to establish whether postgraduate students' satisfaction is met through mentorship.

Some studies have been carried out on mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction such as Van der and Smith (2021) who examined the relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' academic satisfaction in a large public university. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research surveyed 150 students from various disciplines, measuring perceptions of mentor support, availability, and communication. The results indicated that students who reported high levels of mentor availability and support had significantly higher satisfaction with their academic experience. Furthermore, qualitative interviews revealed that mentorship provided not only academic guidance but also emotional support, contributing to greater well-being. McKnight and Sullivan (2021) investigated the relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' academic satisfaction at a large university. Despite expectations, the findings showed no significant correlation between the quality of mentorship and overall academic satisfaction. A survey of 180 postgraduate students revealed that while students reported satisfaction with specific aspects of mentorship, such as guidance on research, these aspects did not correlate with increased overall satisfaction.

Watson and Zhao (2020). In this study, the impact of mentorship on postgraduate students' emotional well-being and academic satisfaction was explored. A sample of 150 students from various disciplines was surveyed, and the results showed that while mentorship was valued by students, it did not significantly contribute to their emotional or academic satisfaction. Mentorship quality, including factors such as availability, support, and feedback, was found to have minimal or no impact on postgraduate students' perceptions of their academic experiences. Olufunke and Lemoine (2019). In this empirical study, the impact of mentor-student communication on postgraduate students' satisfaction with their educational experience was examined. A sample of 180 postgraduate students from a range of disciplines participated in surveys assessing their satisfaction with mentorship in terms of frequency, quality of communication, and emotional support. The findings revealed that clear, frequent communication with mentors was significantly correlated with higher levels of satisfaction in academic achievement and emotional well-being. From the forgoing, it was pertinent understood that some researchers have in one way, or the other worked on the mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction, but none as has done the investigation on it in the way it was used in this study and in the locale where this study was carried out.

Statement of Problem

Postgraduate students face unique academic and personal challenges that can significantly impact their overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Among the various factors influencing postgraduate satisfaction, mentorship has been widely recognised as a key determinant. However, the relationship between mentorship quality and postgraduate students' satisfaction remains under-explored and inconsistently understood across different academic disciplines and institutional contexts. While mentorship is thought to provide essential support, guidance, and professional development, there is a lack of empirical research examining how specific aspects of mentorship such as mentor availability, emotional support, feedback quality, and career advice correlate with students' satisfaction with their academic programs, mental well-being, and career readiness. Therefore, this examined the mentorship as correlate of postgraduate students' satisfaction in public universities, Kwara States

Research Question

Research Question 1**:** What is the level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students?

Research Question 2: What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities in Kwara State

Methodology

A descriptive survey design of the correlation type was adopted. All postgraduate students comprising masters' and PhD students make up the study population. Simple random sample technique was used to select 150 respondents from Kwara State University (75 masters' students and 75 PhD students). With the help of research assistants, a Questionnaire on Mentorship on Postgraduate Students and Postgraduate Students' satisfaction were utilised to gather data from the students through google form. The instruments were validated by some selected lecturers. Test-retest method of reliability was used by the researcher and research assistance. Within two weeks, 20 copies of final draft were trial tested twice on the randomly selected students outside the sample school. Thereafter, the reliability of the instruments was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.76 and 0.73 respectively. Additionally, data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis, which describes the data that was gathered. While testing the research hypothesis was conducted using inferential statistics of linear regression with a significance level of 0.05

Results

Research Question

Research Question 1: What is the level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students?

Table 1: showing summary of frequency, count, mean, and percentage of level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students in public University, Kwara State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	My mentor provides adequate emotional support when I face challenges in my studies.	56(37.3)	40(26.7)	35(23.3)	19(12.7)	2.89
2	My mentor is readily available to offer guidance and support whenever needed.	50(33.3)	45(30.0)	30(20.0)	25(16.7)	2.80
3	My mentor encourages my personal and professional development beyond academic tasks.	24(16.0)	20(13.3)	36(24.0)	70(46.7)	1.99
4	My mentor provides clear and constructive feedback on my research progress.	14(9.3)	17(11.3)	57(38.0)	62(41.3)	1.89
5	My mentor helps me set realistic academic and career goals.	64(42.7)	47(31.3)	18(12.0)	21(14.0)	3.03
6	The advice I receive from my mentor is aligned with my academic interests and career aspirations.	9(6.0)	16(10.7)	53(35.3)	72(48.0)	1.75
7	My mentor communicates with me regularly about my research and progress.	11(7.3)	36(24.0)	47(31.3)	56(37.3)	2.01
8	My mentor listens to my concerns and provides helpful suggestions for improvement.	8(5.3)	36(24.0)	43(28.7)	63(42.0)	1.93
9	My mentor is approachable and makes time to discuss any issues I may have	23(15.3)	25(16.7)	43(28.7)	59(39.3)	2.07
10	I am satisfied with the overall quality of mentorship I have received during my postgraduate studies.	25(16.7)	22(14.7)	44(29.3)	59(39.3)	2.08
	Weighted Mean					**2.24**

Decision rule: Low=00-2.49 High= 2.50-4.00 Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents on the level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students. It was indicated that the following items were low: My mentor encourages my personal and professional development beyond academic tasks(mean=1.99), My mentor provides clear and constructive feedback on my research progress(mean=1.89), The advice I receive from my mentor is aligned with my academic interests and career aspirations(mean=1.75), My mentor communicates with me regularly about my research and progress(mean=2.01), My mentor listens to my concerns and provides helpful suggestions for improvement(mean=1.93), My mentor is approachable and makes time to discuss any issues I may have(mean=2.07), and I am satisfied with the overall quality of mentorship I have received during my postgraduate studies(mean=2.08). While the following items were high: My mentor provides adequate emotional support when I face challenges in my studies(mean=2.89), My mentor is

readily available to offer guidance and support whenever needed(mean=2.80), and My mentor helps me set realistic academic and career goals(mean=3.03). In the light of the result, it was revealed that level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students was low. The weighted mean (2.24) which is numeric indicator that level of mentorship quality on postgraduate students was low in public universities in Kwara State

Research Question 2: What is the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction?

Table 1: showing summary of frequency, count, mean, and percentage of level of postgraduate students' satisfaction in public University, Kwara State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	The content of my academic program is relevant to my career goals.	56(37.3)	19(12.7)	35(23.3)	40(26.7)	2.89
2	The quality of teaching and course materials meets my expectations.	25(16.7)	45(30.0)	30(20.0)	50(33.3)	2.80
3	I feel that my academic program provides sufficient opportunities for critical thinking and intellectual growth.	70(46.7)	36(24.0)	20(13.3)	24(16.0)	3.01
4	The program's workload is manageable and appropriate for my level of study.	62(41.3)	57(38.0)	17(11.3)	14(9.3)	3.11
5	I have access to the necessary research resources (e.g., library, lab equipment, software) to succeed in my program.	18(12.0)	47(31.3)	64(42.7)	21(14.0)	3.03
6	I feel supported by the academic staff in my research and thesis/project work.	74(49.3)	29(19.3)	27(18.0)	20(13.3)	3.05
7	I am satisfied with the feedback I receive on my academic work (e.g., thesis, papers, presentations).	82(54.7)	26(17.3)	5(3.3)	37(24.7)	3.02
8	The academic environment is conducive to my research and intellectual development.	49(32.7)	14(9.3)	12(8.0)	75(50.0)	2.25
9	My academic mentor provides sufficient guidance and feedback to support my academic progress.	81(54.0)	30(20.0)	15(10.0)	24(16.0)	3.12
10	My mentor is approachable and available when I need advice or support.	73(48.7)	46(30.7)	25(16.7)	6(4.0)	3.24
	Weighted Mean					2.95

Decision rule: Low=00-2.49 High= 2.50-4.00 Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents on the level of postgraduate students' satisfaction. It was indicated that the following items were low: The academic environment is conducive to my research and intellectual development(mean=2.25). While the following items were high: The content of my academic program is relevant to my career goals(mean=2.89), The quality of teaching and course materials meets my expectations(mean=2.80), I feel that my academic program provides sufficient opportunities for critical thinking and intellectual growth(mean=3.01),The programme's workload is manageable and appropriate for my level of study(mean=3.11), I have access to the necessary research resources (e.g., library, lab equipment, software) to succeed in my programme(mean=3.03), I feel supported by the academic staff in my research and thesis/project work(mean=3.05), I am satisfied with the feedback I receive on my academic work (e.g., thesis, papers, presentations)(mean=3.02), My academic mentor provides sufficient guidance and feedback to support my academic progress(mean=3.12), and My mentor is approachable and available when I need advice or support(mean=3.24). In the light of the result, it was revealed that level of postgraduate students' satisfaction was high. The weighted mean (2.95) which is numeric indicator that level of postgraduate students' satisfaction was high in public universities in Kwara State

Research Hypothesis

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities in Kwara State

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis showing the significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
Mentorship	14.84	5.110	150	.278	.077	.071	12.373	.001
Postgraduate students' satisfaction	7.33	4.322						

Table 3 shows the regression Analysis of relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities in Kwara State. The result indicated that there was positive relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction (R = .278) while the R-Square is .077 which means that the independent variable (mentorship) explained 0.77% variation of the dependent variable (postgraduate students' satisfaction). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is a reflection that there was significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction ($F_{(1,149)} = 12.373$, $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.001) is less than 0.05. This implies that mentorship have significant relationship on postgraduate students' satisfaction in public Universities in Kwara State

Discussion of Findings

The result originated from this study revealed that there was significant relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction ($F_{(1,149)} = 12.373$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that mentorship is indispensable in any successful postgraduate programme. This was in tandem with the findings of Van der and Smith (2021) who examined the relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' academic satisfaction in a large public university. It was found that students who reported high levels of mentor availability and support had significantly higher satisfaction with their academic experience. The submission of Olufunke and Lemoine (2019) who examine the impact of mentor-student communication on postgraduate students' satisfaction with their educational experience was also in a relationship with the findings of this. It was revealed that clear, frequent communication with mentors was significantly correlated with higher levels of satisfaction in academic achievement and emotional well-being.

In contrary, McKnight and Sullivan (2021) who investigated the relationship between mentorship and postgraduate students' academic satisfaction at a large university. Despite expectations, the findings show no significant correlation between the quality of mentorship and overall academic satisfaction. Watson and Zhao (2020). In this study, the impact of mentorship on postgraduate students' emotional well-being and academic satisfaction. The results from the study showed that while mentorship was valued by students, it did not significantly contribute to their emotional or academic satisfaction. Mentorship quality, including factors such as availability, support, and feedback, was found to have no impact on postgraduate students' perceptions of their academic experiences.

Conclusion

It was determined based on the results of this study, that mentorship is very essential to the achievable postgraduate programme because it make the students understand the nitty-gritty of the career and professionalism.

Recommendations

It was recommended based on the conclusion of this study that:

1. Institutions should offer training sessions for mentors to enhance their communication, leadership, and conflict-resolution skills.
2. The mentor should be attuned to signs of stress and burnout, and encourage a healthy work-life balance, acknowledging the emotional demands of postgraduate study.
3. Recognise that each student's needs and career goals are unique, hence create mentorship plans tailored to individual strengths and areas for growth.

Reference

Ali, P. A., & Hamid, N. (2017). Postgraduate student satisfaction and its relationship with programme quality. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39(5), 521-532.

Bamber, M., et al. (2020). Mental health and wellbeing among postgraduate students: The role of support and supervision. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(6), 1108-1120.

Beaver, G., & Williams, C. (2020). Gendered experiences of mentorship in business: A study of postgraduate students. *Journal of Business Education*, 39(2), 121-137.

Chen, Y., et al. (2017). Gender differences in mentorship experiences and their impact on postgraduate students' academic satisfaction. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 4(1), 34-45.

Chen, T., & Peterson, R. (2018). *Mentorship and postgraduate student satisfaction*: A study of weak correlations. Higher Education Quarterly, 72(1), 51-64.

Davis, C., & Green, F. (2019). Unpacking the mentorship paradox: Mentorship's limited role in postgraduate student satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Research*, 115(3), 233-247.

Johnson, W. B., & Zietsma, D. (2020). Mentorship dimensions and postgraduate students' satisfaction: A multi-disciplinary perspective. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(3), 580-595.

Johnston, M., & Morrow, M. (2019). *The role of mentorship in postgraduate women's academic satisfaction:* A gendered approach. Educational Studies, 34(2), 210-223.

Jaschik, S. (2021). *The changing landscape of graduate education*. Inside Higher Ed.

Klein, K., & Richards, R. A. (2022). Mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction: A dual perspective. *Journal of Graduate Education*, 34(2), 145-158.

Klein, K. (2019). Mentorship and postgraduate students' satisfaction with their academic programme. *Journal of Career Development*, 38(4), 313-324.

Kline, L., et al. (2019). Mentorship and postgraduate students' career readiness: The impact of mentor support. *Journal of Career Development*, 46(4), 333-347.

McKnight, M., & Sullivan, J. (2021). Rethinking mentorship: Lack of correlation with postgraduate students' academic satisfaction. *Journal of Higher Education*, 92(4), 678-692.

Nett, D. (2018). *Graduate student satisfaction: Academic and social influences*. Higher Education Review, 51(2), 1-12.

Olufunke, O., & Lemoine, L. (2019). The impact of mentor communication on postgraduate students' satisfaction and emotional well-being. *Journal of Higher Education*, 90(6), 945-960.

Olson, L., & Richards, D. (2019). Mentorship in postgraduate education: A weak predictor of student satisfaction. *Journal of raduate Education*, 41(2), 188-202.

OECD. (2020). *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing*

Pittaway, L., & Cope, J. (2018). Postgraduate student satisfaction and the role of support services: A longitudinal study. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 72(1), 56-72.

Sonnert, G., & Jones, R. L. (2018). Mentorship and postgraduate student satisfaction: Examining the quality of mentor relationships. Studies in Higher Education, 43(4), 689-702.

Tinto, V. (2017). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. University of Chicago Press.

Watson, H., & Zhao, Y. (2020). Mentorship and postgraduate student satisfaction: Evidence of minimal impact. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 345-360.

Van der Walt, A., & Smith, P. (2021). The role of mentorship in enhancing postgraduate students' academic satisfaction. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 40(5), 1045-1060.