

Impact of Supervisors' Characteristics on Quality Research Project Supervision of Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract: This study investigated the impact of supervisors' characteristics on quality supervision of pre-teachers research project. The study adopted a mixed-methods design to data collection and analysis. The quantitative part of the study employed a descriptive survey approach to assess pre-teachers' opinions and trends using a questionnaire titled impact of supervisors' characteristics on quality research project supervision of pre-service teachers. Unstructured Interview approach was used to collect data for the qualitative part of this study. The sample consists of seventy four male and fifty six female students making a total number of one hundred and twenty students that participated in the study. The students were randomly selected from two purposively selected tertiary institutions running education programmes in Lagos state. The reliability coefficients of the questionnaire using Cronbach' approach was 0.95 and its face validity was determined by three experienced University educators and two seasoned senior secondary teachers. Data on the two research questions raised were answered using descriptive bar graphs. Simple regression was used to test the only hypothesis raised. The results obtained revealed that of supervisors' characteristics identified, open-mindedness, praise of students and support to students had high contributions to the quality of pre-teacher research project supervision. Also, students' perception on the quality of pre-teachers' research project supervision differ from that of their female counterpart. The study concluded that supervisor's characteristics play major role in the quality supervision of pre-service teachers' research project.

Keywords: Perception, Pre-service Teachers, Quality, Research Project, Supervision, Supervisors' Characteristics and Open-mindedness.



Background to the study

In Nigeria, students in higher institution are required to offer some courses as one of the conditions for the successful attainment of tertiary education. Among tertiary institutions classified by the education authority in Nigeria are the college of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. However, pre-service teachers who are found in Colleges of Education and Faculty of Education in Universities are expected to register and pass research

project course as a condition for their graduation from such higher education. Students undertaking research project in their final year of studentship are assigned to supervisors whose responsibility is to mentor them point of satisfaction. Students' research project supervisors responsibility also include guiding his/her students on arriving as an appropriate title, write the research project report as well as provide information that will climate or reduce barriers to students' efforts in this

regard is with the learning of other subject as opined by (Mills, undated).

Thus, the role of the supervisor is very important because pre-service teachers' experience may not be strong enough to take them through the process of research project conduct and write-up. This observation is supported by [5] with the submission that supervisors play important role in research project supervision because it is the crucial entry point to research culture and guiding research students. They added that lack of good or quality student-supervisor relationship may affect students' ability in the conduct and report writing of research project, especially at the beginning of research journey. To ensure success of the conduct and report writing of research project, quality supervisors should be given attentions because supervision is a key to determine the successful or failure to students in research study [6]. This is supported by [1] with the statement that supervision is a central process for the successful compilation of undergraduate research project. It is imperative to state that the process of supervising pre-service teachers project is influenced by many factors such as social setting, the personality of the supervisor and the student, the relationship developed between them, the expertise of the supervisor, and the problems that are varied among students [2]. In fact, personal characteristics and attitudes of supervisors are also factors of much concern in effective supervision of graduate research projects [3]. In describing a good supervisor, [11] noted that he/she should be one who is approachable and friendly, supportive and of positive attitude, open

mindful, prepared to acknowledge error, organised and thorough, and stimulating and conveys enthusiasm for research. For effective research project supervision to take place. Supervisors must possess the following characteristics: approachable, friendly, supportive, have positive attitude, open-mindedness, prepared to acknowledge error, organised and thorough [4]. If students must accomplish the task of completing their research project, they must have a cordial relationship with their supervisors because of the important role he/she plays and for them to benefit from the personal characteristics of the supervisors.

Gender is also a factor that influences supervisory relationship. Gender power relation between women and men is very important in determining the success or failure for research study [5]. In a study conducted by [12] in mentioning relationship, they found that cross-gender mentoring will receive more benefit in the amount of psychosocial support compared to same gender mentoring. Another factor to be considered is time which is significant in maintaining the interpersonal relationship between supervisors and supervisee [8]. Supervisory time plays important role for students to clarify, discuss and solve their problems in research. However, some supervisors do not pull their responsibilities. They tend to spend more time in their own stuffs rather than on their students.

This study therefore investigated some of the potential factors that impact or influence quality supervision in order to identify the gaps that may exist as well as

proffer solution towards ameliorate the problem.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed through interaction among the final year students in Lagos state tertiary institutions that many of them develop cold attitude or phobia towards project writing due to ineffective supervision and lack of attention from their supervisors. Also observed is the delay which research project students experience in completing the project. Some factors which have to do with research project supervisors personal characteristics could make students develop poor attitude towards the conduct as well as writing the report of their research project.

Therefore, this study investigated the impact of supervisors' personal characteristics on the quality of pre-service students' research project supervision. Furthermore, the study investigated the gender difference in the perception of students in respect of quality research project supervision.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate supervisor's personal characteristics that influence Pre-service teachers research project quality supervision. The study will specifically investigate the:

1. extent to which each supervisor's personal characteristics influence Pre-service teachers research project quality supervision?
2. gender difference in supervisor's personal characteristics that

influence Pre-service teachers research project quality supervision?

Research questions

1. To what extent do supervisor's characteristics impact on Pre-service teachers' research project quality supervision?
2. Is there any gender difference in supervisor's personal characteristics that impact on Pre-service teachers' research project quality supervision?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in supervisor's personal characteristics that impact on Pre-service teachers' research project quality supervision.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods design to data collection and analysis. Mixed methods design is made up of both quantitative and qualitative research methods which are integrated into the final analysis. The quantitative part of the study employed a descriptive survey approach to assess pre-teachers' opinions and trends using a questionnaire titled Pre-service Teachers' Perception of Supervisor's Characteristics that influence Quality Research Project Supervision. Unstructured Interview approach was used to collect data for the qualitative part of this study. The schedule has a set of questions such as: from

your experience in respect of your interaction with the supervisor of your project, what aspect of the supervision would you like to improve?, Were you satisfied with the quality of supervision you received?. The sample consists of seventy four male and fifty six female students making a total number of one hundred and twenty students that participated in the study. The students were randomly selected from two purposively sampled tertiary institutions in Lagos state of Nigeria. Ten students each were selected from six Science Education and Social Science Education courses of the tertiary institutions. Two instruments namely: Pre-service Teachers' Perception of Supervisor's Characteristics that influence Quality Research Project Supervision (PTPSCQRPS) Questionnaire and Unstructured Interview Schedule. Section A required the students to supply their biographic data. Section B consists of items which are meant to measure the perception of the students on the quality of research project supervision they received from their supervisor. The items in section B were grouped under the subheads: relationship with supervisor, research culture, professional development and feedback from supervisor. The reliability coefficients of the questionnaire using Cronbach' approach was 0.95 and its face validity was determined by three experienced university educators and two seasoned Senior Secondary teachers Also, the structured interview schedule consists of two questions that are related to the study. Data on the two research questions raised were answered using descriptive bar graphs. Simple regression was used to test the only

hypothesis raised. The qualitative data analysis was done through thematic approach code and analysis of students' responses to the structured interview. The data were transcribed verbatim using the narrative technique. The unstructured interview of the students was used to compliment field notes from observations.

Research question 1: To what extent do supervisor's personal characteristics impact Pre-service teachers research project quality supervision?

To answer this research question, bar graph was employed. The bar graph is shown in figure 1.

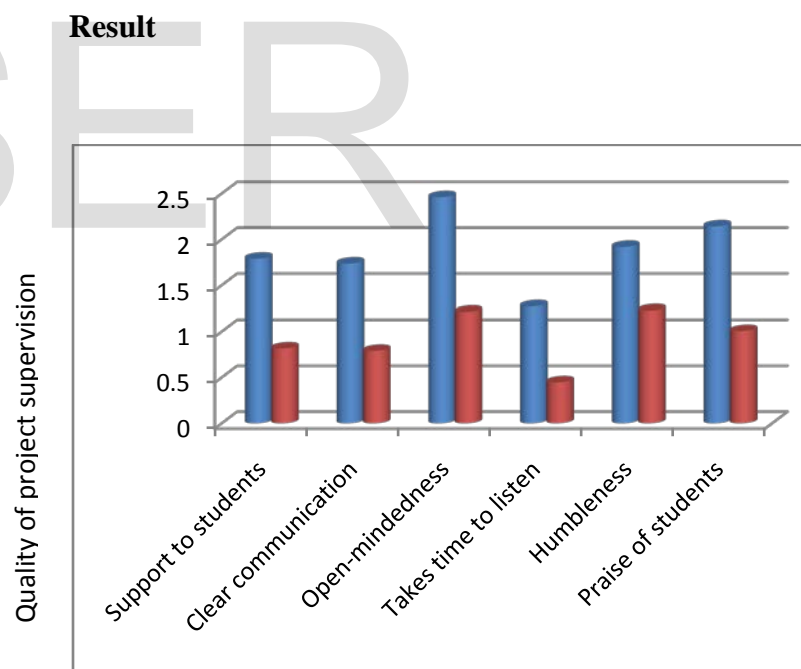


Figure 1 revealed the extent to which supervisor's personal characteristics impact on quality research project supervision.

In Figure 1, the bar graphs show the level of impact of supervisor's personal characteristics on pre-service teachers'

quality research project supervision. Research project supervisor's open-mindedness is the highest contributor to the quality supervision followed by praise of student, humbleness, support to student, clear communication, takes time to listen respectively.

quality research project supervision as perceived by male and female students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the contribution of each supervisor's characteristics impacting on pre-service research project supervision quality.

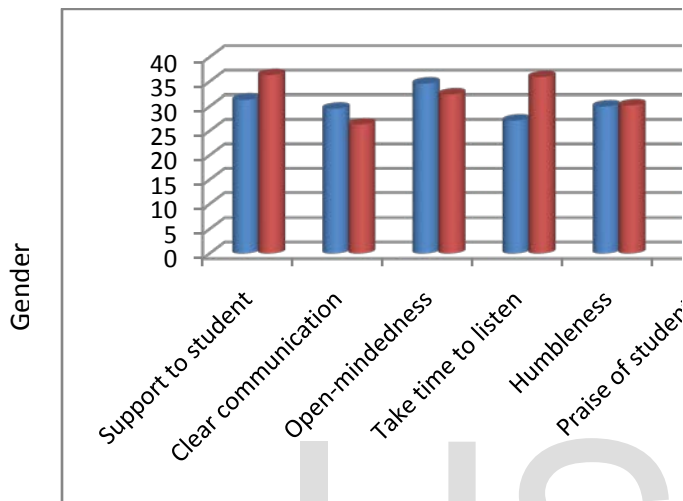


Figure 2: revealed the level of impact of supervisor's personal characteristics on pre-service teachers' quality research project supervision based on gender.

The bar graphs in figure 2 shows supervisor's personal characteristics for

Table 3a: *Simple Regression Analysis of Supervisor's Characteristics Impact on Pre-teachers' Research project Quality Supervision.*

Change Statistics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1.	.745 ^a	.554	.538	1.23485	.554	33.799	6	163	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Support to students, Clear communication, Open-mindedness, Time to listen, Humbleness, Praise of students
The model summary in Table 3a shows that 74.5% of the variance in the criterion variable (quality of supervision) was due to all the predictors (independent variables). The R square indicated that if the sample size is increased, 55.4% of the variance would have been predicted.

Table 3b: *Simple Regression Analysis of Supervisor’s characteristics that impact on Pre-service teachers’ research project quality supervision.*

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardise Coefficients		Standardizes	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1. (Constant)	129	.697		4.487	.000
Support to student	.229	.189	.103	1.211	.228
Clear communication	1.006	.126	.436	7.993	.000
Open-mindedness	.853	.080	.569	10.617	.000
Takes time to listen	.181	.302	.004	.597	.551
Humbleness .145	.103	.098	.1412	.160	
Praise of students	.970	.140	.537	6.929	.000

Dependent Variable: Quality of supervision Note. * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; N = 229

Table 3b shows the relative significant level of contribution of the impact of supervisor’s characteristics on pre-teachers quality research project supervision. The result reveals that clear communication, open-mindedness and praise of students made significant contributions to quality research project supervision. However, the contribution made by supervisor’s characteristics such as support to students, time taken to listen to students and humbleness did not make significant

contributions to quality research project supervision.

Result

This study investigated pre-teachers’ perception of factors influencing quality research project supervision. The results obtained revealed that of the factors identified, open-mindedness, praise of students and support to students had high

contributions to the quality of pre-teacher research project supervision. This finding is in agreement with that of [11] who described good supervisor as someone who is approachable, friendly, supportive, with good attitude, open-minded, prepared to acknowledge error, organised and thorough, and stimulating and conveys enthusiasm for research. Furthermore, [7] enunciated that when supervisors have personal relationship with their students, they will feel accepted and feel free and safe to discuss and understood. Also, the results showed that male students' perception on the quality of pre-teachers' research project supervision differ from that of their female counterpart. This finding is not in agreement with that of [3] which found that there were no significant differences between graduate students' perceptions towards their supervisors and effective supervision based on gender. The difference in the findings could be due to

Furthermore, factors such as clear communication, open-mindedness, and praise of students have significant contribution to the quality of pre-teacher research project while support to student, takes time to listen and humbleness do not have significant contribution. These attributes of quality research project supervision are the ingredient of effective students' project supervision. This finding is consistent with to those of [10],[11]. They are of the opinion that good supervisors must be approachable, friendly, open-minded as well as being thorough and organised.

The results of the semi-structured interviews of the students revealed expressions corroborated the above quantitative results. Generally, the students were not satisfied by the kind of treatment they get from their research project supervisors. The students believe that supervisors personal characteristics are important factor that make research project students experience unnecessary delay in completing their project. Although, not all the students who participated in the study expressed dissatisfaction on the quality of research project supervision, those who expressed satisfaction are in the minority.

Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of pre-service teachers on the factors that contribute to the quality of research project. In order to accomplish the purpose set for this study; the researcher used a mixed method approach which was made up of both descriptive survey and unstructured interview schedule. The qualitative and quantitative methods were used separately, maintained and integrated into the final analysis. Two instruments namely: Pre-service Teacher' Perceived Factors of Quality Research Project Supervision (PTPFQRPS) Questionnaire and Unstructured Interview Schedule. The result revealed that some personal characteristics of research project supervisor were identified with each factor contributing to the quality of research project supervision. Also, there was gender difference in the contribution level of each identified factors on quality research project supervision.

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