

INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIC MENTORING ON AGRICULTURE UNDERGRADUATES' ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study assessed influence of academic mentoring on agriculture undergraduate's academic activities in Rivers State. Two-stage sampling procedure was used to select sample for the study. Data was collected with the aid of questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics namely percentages, frequency and mean. The result of the socio-economic characteristic of undergraduate students showed that there were more female students (75%) than male students (25%) with an average age of 25years. Only 10% applied to faculty of agriculture at entry while the other 90% were admitted into faculty of agriculture as a result of inability to secure admission in choice course (75%), change of mind (18), parents influence (1.9%) and the university choice of placement (6%). Majority, (92%) of the students has heard about mentoring but has moderate knowledge (66%) about it. Almost all the students (98%) agreed that it is necessary for students to have academic mentors and believe it is beneficial to their academic performance (99%). As regards effectiveness of academic mentoring in the universities, the students agreed that academic mentoring in the universities is not effective ($\bar{x}=2.5$). The major influence of academic mentoring on the agriculture students' performance is that academic mentoring equips them to better tackle their academic challenges ($\bar{x}=2.5$) as well as get needed support for improvement in their academic activities ($\bar{x}=2.5$) while major challenges faced in academic mentoring includes lack of structure to checkmate excesses on both staff and students ($\bar{x}= 3.3$) and lack of reward system or incentives for successful mentoring relationship ($\bar{x}= 3.3$). There is therefore need to educate new students on the important role their course advisers play in their academic progress during their orientation into the school and faculty. This will help to increase their visits to their course adviser hence obtain proper guidance in the academic progress. Also, having a formal mentoring structure embedded in the school academic policy with defined reward system will go a long way in making the mentoring relationship more effective.

Keywords: Mentoring, Agriculture Students, Influence, Motivation

Introduction

Universities are complex institutions with distinctive culture, where students face several challenges at the early stages to adapt to a new environment. Transition from secondary school to tertiary institution is one of the most challenging phases in the educational life of undergraduate students. The period is

mostly characterized by loss of friends, inadequate filial attachment, peer pressure, misplaced priority, increased anxiety and feelings of isolation and depression. Academic mentoring programs have been developed in an effort to prevent the problems typically associated with the transition from secondary school to tertiary

institutions. Planned mentoring program has been touted as solutions to various problems affecting youths such as; increased drug and alcohol use, teenage pregnancy, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, increase in juvenile crime etc. Because at-risk youth are more likely to experience failure or drop out, school psychologists, educators, counselors, and parents continue to look for effective interventions for both school-related and non-school-related problems affecting this group of people. Proponents of mentoring programs hypothesize that mentoring programs could be part of the answer to these problems (Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001).

Popoola, Adesopo and Ajayi, (2013) described academic mentoring as a process in which a more experienced person help a less experience one achieves their potentials. This definition is similar to that of Bozeman and Feeney (2007) and portrays academic mentoring as a process that is intended to assist students to realize their academic goals. It is a decision-making activity which aids student in realizing their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchange with a mentor. Consequently, academic mentoring is a critical component of career development and success. The goal of student mentoring is to help students involved in the mentoring program to gain the skills and confidence to be responsible for their own futures (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Academic mentoring therefore facilitates the integration of a student into the fabric of the department, cultivation of essential professional and social networks in

students, aids students in acquiring core research competencies, and paves the way for placement in the work force upon graduation. Information is critical to the success of academic mentoring. An important element of the mentoring relationship is access and utilization of information. Academic mentoring is concerned with conveying and interpreting information about rules, requirements, and policies of the university by a faculty member to facilitate the development of a student. It focuses on the career goals and educational plan of the student. Academic mentoring help students create and facilitate educational, social, and career networks as a basis for optimum integration within and outside the university environment. It requires a willingness to share, listen and provide advice in a flexible relationship shaped by the needs of the mentee.

Statement of Problem

The importance of mentoring in academic environment cannot be over emphasized. It is usually a one-to-one relationship between an older person a (mentor) and a younger one (mentee or protégé) with the aim of improving the chances of the younger one achieving his or her goals, by linking him or her to resources and support not otherwise available. The role of the mentor is to pass on knowledge, experience and judgment, and/or to provide guidance and support to the mentee or protégée. Mentoring can offer psychosocial support for changes in behaviour, attitudes and ambitions. Universities are grooming ground for young intellectuals. Arokoyu (2015) noted that the intellectual challenge

of Nigeria today is hinged on the growing concern with regards to the current state of academic knowledge preparation programmes in higher institutions. This is crucial as the level of problems requiring intellectual knowledge has greatly multiplied such that there is lack of congruence amongst what exist, what is known, and the capacity to know and act.

There is therefore an important need for students to have a holistic training in their university education. The Nairobi Report, (2009) noted that there is always a wall between the young and established researchers in most academic environment. This wall is often too difficult to breach and so ideas fail to cascade down to younger ones. It is therefore very important to establish structures like mentoring that will contribute to breaching the gap between the experienced and less experienced hence ensuring retaining of academic cultures in the universities.

Though formal mentoring structures may not exist in universities in Rivers State, however bearing in mind the importance of mentoring, these universities have demonstrated strong commitment to achievement of mentoring goals. This is shown in some of the credible documents of the universities. For instance, the University of Port Harcourt in their General Regulations and Statement of Academic Policies (2016), section 9 on Academic Advisers, stated that every head of department shall assign every student to an academic adviser who is a member of the academic staff who will advise him/her on academic matters. It noted that academic advisers are expected to follow their students' academic progress and

provide counseling to them. It also noted that both undergraduate and Postgraduate Students are to be assigned to supervisors for their projects, dissertations and theses supervisions, whose duty it is to guide them in their research and research related activities. Academic mentoring between lecturers and students do not only impact on the academic activities of the students. It goes further to contribute in building the student's overall capacity in his/her field of study. Through mentoring, students receive guidance on their field of study hence have a better understanding regarding their field of study. This is very important especially with the agricultural students. Ifeanyi-obi and Ewurum (2019) found that majority of the students studying agriculture in Universities in Rivers state did not apply to faculty of agriculture initially but got admitted into agricultural courses as a result of not being able to get their choice course. This might be one of the major factors contributing to agriculture students not desiring to pursue a career in agriculture upon graduation as found by Olatunji, Oporum and Ifeanyi-obi (2012). This elicit the importance of mentoring such students to help them understand and appreciate their course of course hence further their career in agriculture upon graduation. Furthermore, insufficient number of skilled personnel in the agricultural sector has been one of the militating factors facing agricultural production in the country (Agbamu, 2015). This is as a result of massive exodus of agricultural graduates upon graduation into other sectors of the economy. Poor understanding of their course of study contributes to this unwillingness to practice agriculture upon graduation

(Ifeanyi-obi &Ewurum, 2019) hence the need for mentoring. Agbamu (2015) noted that even the few available ones do not possess sufficient capacity in their area of specialization as a result of poor training received. This elicit more the need for mentoring agricultural students as to properly guide them during the school training. Notwithstanding the importance of mentoring particularly in agriculture, researchers have rarely undertaken evidenced based studies to address the effectiveness of existing mentoring relationships in the academic settings especially in agriculture. In the few studies that exist, criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring programme are either not reported or not quantifiable especially in Rivers State. Although the correlation between mentorship and student-lecturer relationship is widely recognized, the pathways of influence responsible for this relationship remain unclear. It is against this background that this study seeks to assess the influence of academic mentoring on agriculture undergraduate's academic activities in Rivers state.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Determine the demographic characteristics of agriculture undergraduates in Rivers State?
2. Found out the ways agriculture undergraduates perceive the effectiveness of academic mentoring in the study area?
3. Investigate the influences of academic mentoring on academic activities of agriculture undergraduates?
4. Determine the qualities should an academic mentor possess for mentoring relationship to be effective?
5. Investigate the challenges to effective academic mentoring on agriculture undergraduate's academic activities in Rivers state?

Methodology

This study was carried out in Rivers State. Rivers states lies between Longitude $6^{\circ} 50' 70^{\circ} 50'$ East of the Greenwich meridian and Latitude $5^{\circ} 05' 06'$ North of the Equator with a mean annual rainfall which ranges from 4,700mm on the coast to about 1,700mm.

The state occupies low land level area of Niger Delta area with dense and thick tropical rainforest vegetation. It is characterized by high atmospheric (ambient) temperature that ranges between 25°c to 38°c .

The population of the study comprised all final year agriculture undergraduate in Universities in Rivers State that have Faculty of Agriculture. These are Rivers state University, Nkpolu, University of Port Harcourt, Choba and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. Only final year students in these universities were used because they have stayed long enough to experience mentoring both from academic advisers and project supervisors.

Two-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. The first stage comprised of random selection of two out of the three universities that have Faculty of Agriculture namely University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University. The second stage comprised the proportionate

random selection of 50% of the final year students in the faculty of Agriculture from the two selected Universities giving a total

of 270 agriculture students for the study. This is shown in table 1 below:

Table1. Population and sample size for the study

S/N	Department	University of port Harcourt		Rivers State University	
		Noof students in the dept	No used for the study	No of students in the dept	No used for the study
1	Agricultural Economics and Extension	108	54	26	13
2	Crop and soil science	68	34	19	9
3	Animal science	62	31	16	8
4	Forestry and wildlife	42	21	28	14
5	Fishery	36	18	28	14
6	Food science			45	23
7	Home science			11	6
8	Agricultural extension			51	25
	Total	316	158	224	112
	Total used	158+112 = 270			

Questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data collected for the study namely, frequency counts, percentages and mean.

Result and Discussion

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Agriculture Undergraduates

The result of the socio-economic characteristic of undergraduate student showed that there were more female students (75%) than male student (25%). The average age of the student was found to be 25years indicating that the students were matured enough to make right choice for themselves. Only 10% applied to faculty of agriculture at entry while the other 90% were admitted into faculty of agriculture as a result of inability to secure admission in choice course (75%), change of mind (18), parents influence (1.9%) and the university admitting them to their preferred area (6%). It is interesting to

found that notwithstanding the student's not choosing agriculture at entry, majority (85%) of them are now satisfied with the agriculture course they are studying and wish to remain in agriculture course even if given opportunity to change course (70%). This change of mind may be as a result of better orientation and understanding of the agricultural course they are studying since many of them had wrong notion of agriculture before gaining admission into the faculty of agriculture due to poor social prestige ascribed to agriculture in the society. Ifeanyi-obi and Ewurum (2019) found that society perception of career in agriculture, poor prestige or status ascribed to agricultural career, peer pressure, family and environmental factors all affect student's career aspiration in agriculture.

Majority (92%) of the students have heard about mentoring but have moderate knowledge (66%) about it. Almost all the students (98%) agreed that it is necessary for students to have academic mentors and believe it is beneficial to their academic performance (99%). It is surprising to find that despite the students consenting to the importance of mentoring to their academic performance, relatively high number

(47%) of them have never met with their course adviser as a result of non-availability of their course advisers (31%), course adviser not giving them attention when visited (14%), not having any need to see their course adviser (25%), course adviser's unwillingness to attend to them (14%) and their visit to their course adviser adds no value to their academic life (15%).

Table 2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-economic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	68	25	
Female	203	75	
Age			
20-24	127	47	
25-29	135	50	
30 and above	8	3	25
What course did you apply for at entry			
Agricultural course	27	10.0	
Non- agriculture course	243	90.0	
If your answer to question 4 above is non-agriculture course, what was your reason for changing to agriculture			
Inability to secure admission in my choice course	182	75.0	
Change of mind	43	18.1	
Parents influence	4	1.9	
Sponsor mandate	0	0	
Others (I just saw my name in another department I never choose)	14	6.0	
Having been in the agricultural course for the past four years, are you satisfied with your course of study			
YES	230	85.0	
NO	40	15.0	
If given an opportunity to choose what course to study now, will you remain in agriculture or go for non-agriculture course			
I will remain in agriculture	189	70.0	
I will go for non-agriculture course	81	30.0	
Have you ever heard about mentoring			
Yes	249	92.0	
No	21	8.0	

If your answer to question 8 is yes, grade your knowledge on mentoring

Very little	14	6.1
Little	19	7.9
Moderate	163	66.3
High	53	21.7

Do you think it is necessary for student to have academic mentors

Yes	264	97.9
No	6	2.1

Do you think mentoring is of any benefits to your academic performance

Yes	267	98.9
No	3	1.1

Have you ever met with your course adviser

Yes	142	52.7
No	128	47.3

If your answer to 12 above is No, what is the reason

Course adviser is not always available	40	31.3
He does not give me attention anytime I go to visit him	18	14.3
I don't have need to see him	32	24.8
His unwillingness to attend to me makes me not want to see him	18	14.3
My visiting him adds no value to my academic life	20	15.3

If your answer to question 12 is yes, how many times do u visit him in a semester

1	28	19.8
2	31	21.8
3	35	24.7
4	23	16.3
5 and above	25	17.4

Source: Field survey, 2019

Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Mentoring on Academic Activities of Agriculture Undergraduates

Result in Table 3 showed that out of the fourteen statements used to capture the effectiveness of mentoring in universities in Rivers State, the agriculture undergraduates agreed to only four. The students agreed that their project supervisor guides them on their academic

progress ($\bar{x}=2.7$), nonchalant attitude of student towards their academics discourages lecturers from mentoring them ($\bar{x}=2.5$) and the non-defined structure of mentoring in the universities affects the effectiveness of mentoring ($\bar{x}=2.5$). On the overall, the agriculture students agreed that academic mentoring in the universities used is not effective ($\bar{x}=2.5$). Contrary to

the result of this study, Maschela and Mabika (2017) found academic mentoring to be effective and very beneficial to students especially at lower level. The ineffectiveness of academic mentoring in universities in Rivers state could be ascribed to the fact that the academic mentoring in those universities do not have a defined structure hence mentoring relationship is left at the discretion of the mentors and mentees. The ineffectiveness of mentoring could have negative effect on the agricultural system bearing in mind that most of the students in the faculty of agriculture gained admission in the faculty

as a result of their not being able to gain admission in their preferred course (Ifeanyi-obi & Ewurum, 2019) hence the need to mentor them as a way of giving them the right orientation about agriculture. This is very important to prepare them towards choosing a career in agriculture. When students do not have the right orientation about agriculture, they tend to choose career outside agriculture upon graduation [Olatunji, Oporum & Ifeanyi-obi, (2012)] hence contributing to reduced workforce in the agricultural sector.

Table 3. Perceived effectiveness of academic mentoring on academic activities of agriculture undergraduates

Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remark
My course adviser is never around to attend to me	14 (5.3)	54 (20.0)	94 (34.7)	108 (40.0)	1.9*	
My course adviser even when around does not have time to attend to me	17 (6.3)	43 (42.1)	96 (35.8)	114 (42.1)	1.9*	
Mentoring activity in the faculty of agriculture does not have any structure in terms time of meeting	68 (25.3)	85 (31.6)	63 (23.2)	54 (20.0)	2.5**	
The advice of my course adviser does not properly guide me in solving my academic problems	17 (6.3)	43 (15.8)	122 (45.3)	88 (32.6)	1.8*	
My course adviser does not seem to be abreast of the university academic policy as to guide me properly	17 (6.3)	34 (12.6)	105 (38.9)	114 (42.1)	1.8*	
I do not benefit much from the mentoring relationship between me and my lecturers	23 (8.4)	51 (18.9)	94 (34.7)	102 (37.9)	2.0*	
Most lecturers do not have time to attend to me for any purpose outside the course they teach me	74 (27.4)	111 (35.8)	60 (24.6)	20 (12.6)	2.2*	
Most lecturers seem not to be abreast of the university academic policy as to advise me properly	79 (29.3)	111 (41.1)	60 (22.2)	20 (7.4)	2.0*	
My project supervisor attends to me only on issues concerning my project work	73 (27.0)	49 (18.3)	79 (29.2)	69 (25.5)	2.3*	
My project supervisor also guides me on my academic progress	40 (14.7)	74 (27.4)	77 (28.4)	80 (29.5)	2.7**	
Nonchalant attitude of students towards their academics discourages lecturers interest in mentoring them	60 (22.1)	65 (24.2)	79 (29.3)	66 (24.4)	2.5**	

Students do not keep to time schedule with their course advisers	48 (17.9)	105 (38.9)	88 (32.6)	29 (10.6)	2.3*
Academic mentoring in the faculty of agriculture is generally effective	71 (26.3)	71 (26.3)	97 (35.8)	31 (11.6)	2.3*
Academic mentoring in the faculty of agriculture is generally ineffective	45 (16.8)	97 (35.8)	57 (21.1)	71 (26.3)	2.5**

Source: Field survey, 2019: * means disagreement; ** means agreement

Influence of academic mentoring on academic activities of agriculture undergraduate

Result in Table 4 show the result of the influence of academic mentoring on academic activities of the agriculture undergraduate in Universities in Rivers State. The students agreed that academic mentoring equips them to better tackle their academic challenges ($\bar{x}=2.5$) and also get needed support for improvement in their academic activities through mentoring ($\bar{x}=2.5$). Generally, they agreed that through academic mentoring their academic performance has improved ($\bar{x}=2.5$). It is surprising to find that academic mentoring did not help students in their

first year to better understand the university policy ($\bar{x}=2.2$) nor adapt to the university study environment ($\bar{x}=2.3$). This may be as a result of the fact that many of the students in their first year do not even understand the need for their academic advisers not to talk of visiting them. Ekechukwu, (2015) stated that mentors provide support, advice, encouragement, and even friendship to students, academic/peer mentoring improve students and would-be-teachers retention rates. They noted that even mentors benefit from the mentor/mentee relationship.

Table 4. Influence of academic mentoring on academic activities of agriculture undergraduate

Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remark
In my first year of study, academic mentoring helped me better understand the university academic policy.	40 (14.8)	65 (24.2)	77 (28.4)	88 (32.6)	2.2*	
It helped me adapt to the university study environment faster	40 (14.7)	68 (25.3)	63 (23.2)	99 (36.8)	2.3*	
Mentors provide me with the needed support for improvement in my academic activities	31 (11.6)	102 (36.8)	48 (17.9)	91 (33.7)	2.5**	
I get tips on how to improve my reading habit through academic mentoring	28 (10.5)	122 (45.3)	54 (20.0)	65 (24.2)	2.4*	
Academic mentoring equips me to better tackle my academic challenges	26 (9.5)	139 (51.6)	37 (13.7)	69 (25.5)	2.5**	
I get tips on how to arrange my personal study time table through academic mentoring	31 (11.6)	105 (38.9)	51 (18.9)	83 (30.6)	2.4*	
Generally, through academic mentoring my academic performance has improved	37 (13.7)	116 (43.1)	48 (17.9)	68 (25.3)	2.5**	

Source: Field survey, 2019: *Means Disagreement, ** Means Agreement

Major Qualities of an Academic Mentor that will Enhance Monitoring Effectiveness

The result in Table 5 showed that the agriculture students agreed to all the 13-statement used to capture the qualities of an academic mentor. They mainly agreed that academic mentors must have good communication skills ($\bar{x}=3.7$), be a good listener ($\bar{x}=3.7$), be a patient individual ($\bar{x}=3.7$), lead by example ($\bar{x}=3.7$) and be ready to devote time for mentoring activity ($\bar{x}=3.7$).

Ekechukwu, (2015) noted that for mentoring relationship to be effective, mentors need to possess some basic qualities that will enhance the mentoring activities. In same vein, Adesope, Nte and Ifeanyi-obi, (2019) in their assessment of mentorship needs of early career lecturers in University of Port Harcourt found that early careers lecturers want mentors that listen (100%), give advice (100%), lead by example (100%), and give them opportunity to show what they know (100%).

Table 5. Major qualities of an academic mentor that will enhance monitoring effectiveness

Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	remarks
Academic mentors must have good communication skills	202 (74.7)	65 (24.2)	3 (1.1)	0 (0.00)	3.7**	
He/she must be a good listener	205 (75.8)	65 (24.2)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.7**	
Must be patient	193 (71.6)	77 (28.4)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.7**	
Academic mentor must be very knowledgeable in the university's academic policy	162 (60.0)	108 (40.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.6**	
Must be knowledgeable in all universities policy	136 (50.5)	122 (45.3)	0 (0.00)	11 (4.2)	3.4**	
Must lead by example	199 (73.6)	68 (25.3)	3 (1.1)	0 (0.00)	3.7**	
Must be able to admit his/her limitations	61 (64.2)	33 (34.7)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.1)	3.6**	
Must afford mentee opportunity to take initiatives	133 (49.4)	123 (45.3)	0 (0.00)	14 (5.3)	3.4**	
Must have challenging accomplishments	94 (34.7)	139 (51.6)	0 (0.00)	37 (13.7)	3.2**	
Must be knowledgeable in his/her area of specialization	188 (69.4)	79 (29.5)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.1)	3.6**	
Must be skilled in research conduct	162 (60.0)	102 (37.8)	3 (1.1)	3 (1.1)	3.5**	
Must be ready to devote time for mentoring activity	193 (71.5)	74 (27.4)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.1)	3.7**	
Must possess practical skill/experience in his/her area of specialization	188 (69.5)	82 (30.5)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3.6**	

Source: Field survey, 2019: *means disagreement ** means agreement

Challenges of academic mentoring on agriculture undergraduate's academic activities in Rivers State

The agriculture undergraduate agreed to all the 12 statements used to capture the challenges faced in academic mentoring in the study area. From the results, the major challenges faced in academic mentoring includes lack of structure to checkmate excesses on both staff and students (\bar{x} = 3.3), lack of reward system or incentives for successful mentoring relationship (\bar{x} = 3.3), lack of defined mentoring objectives in the university's academic policy (\bar{x} = 3.1), lack of understanding of the benefits of mentoring on the side of the student's (\bar{x} = 3.1) and

work overload on the side of the academic mentors giving them no space for mentoring activities (\bar{x} = 3.1). Ifeanyi-obi and Enyindah, (2015) found that incentives and good reward system motivates lecturers to higher performance in the duties. This is to say that when lecturers are motivated, they could perform better. Defined organizational structure and objectives facilitate effectiveness and help to reduce conflict aswell as duplication of duty in any organization. Lack of defined structure and objective could be seen to be a major challenge in mentoring relationship in the study area.

Table 6. Challenges of Academic Mentoring on Agriculture Undergraduate's Academic Activities in Rivers State

Statement	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	remarks
Mentoring objectives are not well spelt out in the university's academic policy	105 (38.9)	111 (41.1)	9 (3.2)	45 (16.8)	3.1**	
Duties and responsibilities of academic mentors are not well defined	83 (31.6)	117 (43.2)	11 (4.2)	57 (21.0)	3.0**	
Nonchalant attitude of Course advisers to discharge their duties	71 (26.3)	119 (44.2)	9 (3.2)	71 (26.3)	2.9**	
Nonchalant attitude of other lecturers towards mentoring students	68 (25.2)	117 (43.2)	6 (2.1)	80 (29.5)	2.9**	
Lack of mentoring skills on the side of the lecturers	82 (30.5)	114 (42.1)	9 (3.2)	65 (24.2)	3.0**	
Student's unwillingness to meet their course advisers	102 (37.9)	91 (33.7)	23 (8.4)	54 (20.0)	3.0**	
Students unwillingness to be mentored	63 (23.2)	105 (38.9)	26 (9.5)	77 (28.4)	2.7**	
Lack of understanding of the benefits of mentoring on the side of the student's	85 (31.6)	148 (54.7)	9 (3.2)	28 (10.5)	3.1**	
Lack of a defined formal mentoring structure in the university	91 (33.7)	142 (52.6)	3 (1.1)	34 (12.6)	3.1**	
Work overload on the side of the academic mentors giving them no space for mentoring activities	99 (36.8)	114 (42.1)	12 (4.3)	45 (16.8)	3.1**	
Lack of monitoring and evaluation structure to checkmate excesses on both staff and students	114 (42.1)	136 (50.5)	3 (1.1)	17 (6.3)	3.3**	
Lack of reward system or incentives for successful mentoring relationship	136 (50.5)	94 (34.7)	12 (4.3)	28 (10.5)	3.3**	

Source: Field survey, 2019: **means agreement *means disagreement

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research concludes that academic mentoring in the study area is not yet effective. Lack of defined structures and objectives could be the major responsible factors for this. In addition, work overload on the side of the academic mentors giving them no space for mentoring activities and lack of reward system or incentives for successful mentoring relationship constitute major challenge on the side of the mentor's effectiveness.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were:

1. There is an important need to institutionalize mentoring relationship in the university. This will ensure there is defined structure and objectives as well as evaluation mechanism put in place. All these will ensure effectiveness of mentoring relationship in the universities.
2. There is a need to educate new students on the important role their course advisers play in the academic progress during their orientation into the school and faculty. This will help to increase their visits to their course adviser hence obtain proper guide in the academic progress.
3. There is a need to have a reward system for successful mentoring relationship as this will motivate others to put in more effort in mentoring activities.
4. Seminars and training workshops should be held to educate and encourage student on the need to have academic mentors and the benefits associated with it. Work load on the

part of the lectures that have mentoring responsibilities should be reduced in order to avail them the time to carry out their mentoring activities effectively.

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