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Knowledge and Utilization of Mentorship among Student Nurses in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

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Abstract

Mentoring is one of the major ways of promoting development of human capacity in nursing profession because it supports academic success and clinical competence in nursing education, but evidence on its organisation, knowledge and utilisation among undergraduate student nurses is limited. This study assessed knowledge and utilisation of mentorship among student nurses in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey was used on a target population of 626 student nurses in Years 2 to 5. A sample of 268 was determined with Taro Yamane's formula and 10% attrition. Of the 268 questionnaires distributed, 255 were retrieved and analysed (95.1% response rate). Multi-stage sampling was used. Data were collected with a self-structured questionnaire (reliability coefficient 0.82). Data was analysed with SPSS using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, chi-square and Pearson correlation at the 0.05 significance level. Respondents were predominantly female (85.5%) and aged 18–25 years (91.8%). Knowledge of mentorship was high (mean = 7.64 ± 0.92). Only 61 (23.9%) had an assigned mentor, while 194 (76.1%) did not, also 67.1% had never met a mentor. Utilization of mentorship was low, (mean = 2.41± 0.83). Study concluded that student nurses have high mentorship knowledge but this was not translated to utilisation. Structured mentor–mentee programme with trained mentors, clear objectives, regular meetings and monitoring is recommended.

Keywords: Knowledge, utilisation, mentorship, student, nurses.

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing education plays a vital role in shaping future nurses and ensuring that they are prepared to meet the challenges of the profession. Nursing is a profession that requires extensive education with special knowledge, skill and preparation. Before now, nursing education was focused on teaching, and knowledge that would enable a nurse to practice in hospital setting (Olorunfemi, 2019). Today, nursing knowledge has evolved in response to new scientific knowledge, advance in technology, cultural, political and socioeconomic changes in society. Currently, nursing curriculum emphasize on critical thinking, and evidence-based practice to diagnose and treat patients, application of nursing and supporting knowledge to health promotion, health maintenance, and health restoration as provided in both community and hospital settings (Ramesh & Mina, 2022).

The nursing training programme is comprised of a combination of theoretical and practical learning disseminated in class and clinical areas, respectively (Kholofelo, 2024). Globally, Nurses are backbone of health system. Nurses are expected to care for people in the safest, most efficient way possible. To provide high quality care, nurses must be competent in many skill sets. They must not only maintain their skills but also attain new skills because of changes in healthcare (Health Stream, 2023).The insufficient skill of the newly-graduated nurses exerts and adverse effect on the whole population and leads to the wastage of time and energy and presses the hospital (ANA, 2023) Mentorship and preceptorship are the most frequently discussed and applied clinical teaching models (Su *et al.,* 2021; Lestari *et al.,* 2021).

The need to develop high skilled nurses in clinical area, academia and nursing research, has been a key issue currently faced by many nurses. One major way of promoting development of human capacity in nursing profession is through mentoring (ANA, 2023) Practical training makes up a sizeable portion of the

nursing degree education and offers students the chance to develop essential practical skills (Ephraim, 2021). Nursing students complete this component of their development in actual clinical settings under the supervision of licensed nurses (mentor) (Hakro & Mathew, 2020).

Mentoring can be referred to as a method of enhancing Professional growth, organizational and human resource development, and an act or process of helping and giving advice to a younger or less experienced person, especially in a job or at school'. It *calls for skills of questioning, listening, clarifying, creates* collaborative learning relationship that proceeds through stages and its primary goal is to help a less experienced person to acquire the essential competences needed for success in that chosen career (Chartered Institute of Professional Development ((CIPD), 2024). It does not involve instruction or measurement. Instead, the key activity is building a relationship based on critical but non-judgmental support and encouragement on the mentor's side; and a commitment to making use of this from the person being mentored (mentee).

Mentorship is a powerful force that has the ability to shape individuals' lives and careers in profound ways (Pat, 2023). It serves as a guiding light that illuminates the pathway to personal and professional growth and a valuable tool for turning one's vision into reality (Addakano, 2020). Mentors are expected to guide and advise their mentees, helping them build a successful career or gain a solid footing within their organization and or profession (Association for Talent Development (ATD), 2024). Mentoring is a relationship in which a person with more experience supports another person to help them develop skills, knowledge, and experience they need to progress in the life pursuits (Stuart, 2021).

Mentoring is a reciprocal and collaborative at-will relationship that most often occurs between a senior and junior employee for the purpose of the mentee's growth, learning, and career development (Association for Talent Development ((ATD), 2024). Mentoring has influence or effect on action or behaviour of mentee to change and achieve its potential. Effective mentorship relies on strong mentor-mentee relationships, characterized by trust, communication, and mutual respect". Person (mentor) one who possess the knowledge and experience provides a guide, support, and trains a mentee and facilitates the personal and professional growth and development by promoting an effective relationship (O'Brien, 2019). Mentorship is an integral part of the qualified nurse's (mentor) role that supports learning and professional development (Pat, 2023). Non effective mentorship does not enhance performance and thereby jeopardizing Patients health. The implementation of a planned mentoring program can make more knowledgeable, skilled and new ability to enhance performance (Oliver & Aggleto, (2002), in Rusnani *et al,* (2021). People with mentors perform better, advance in their career faster and even experience more work-life satisfaction (Karacay & Karadag, 2019), because it enables them to experience a smooth actualization of their development and improve job performance. This approach increases interest in the profession, enhances self-confidence, reduces stress, anxiety and improves mentees' knowledge and skills (Lavoie-Tremblay, (2019).

There are glaring evidence that mentorship has led to the expansion of professional networks, provided career development opportunities, and improved the self-confidence of young nurses (mentees), although mentorship is not new to nursing, little is known about the state of mentorship in nursing in Nigeria (Adebayo et al, 2023). 'The nursing profession in Nigeria needs mentorship to enable her professional transitional roles, job satisfaction, and job retention as it continues to promotes sociability, emotional well-being, and the acquisition of new skills of her members (Olorunfemi, 2019). In the light of this revelation, this study seeks to assess membership on Academic Performances among student Nurses in Department of Nursing, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative research method using a cross-sectional descriptive survey approach. A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from student nurses. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe the level of knowledge and utilization of mentorship among the studied population at a single point in time.

Population for the Study

The target population for the study comprised of all student nurses in Levels 2 to 5 (Years 2 to 5) in the Department of Nursing Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The population distribution was as follows:

Population of student nurses from 200 levels to 500 level

Table 1

S/N	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1	130	250	160	86

Grand total =626

Sample Size

The sample size of 241 was determined using Taro Yamane formula. Yamane's sample size calculation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = Number in population
e = Confidence interval
n = Sample size

n = 626 / (1+626(0.05)^2)
n = 626 / (1+626(0.0025)
n = 626 / (1+ 1.565)
n = 606 / 2.565
n = 244.25
n= 244
Adding 10% attrition to give room for non-responses, that is, 24 + 24 = 268
Therefore, n = 268. The sample size for this study is **268**

Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. Stratified random sampling with proportionate allocation was used because the population was heterogeneous across academic levels, and students within each level were more similar to one another than to students in other levels. Stratification also reduces sampling error and improves the generalizability of findings.

First stage: The population was stratified into four strata according to year of study: Year 2 (Level 2), Year 3 (Level 3), Year 4 (Level 4), and Year 5 (Level 5).

Second stage: Proportionate stratified sampling was used to determine the number of respondents required from each stratum.

Third stage: Simple random sampling (balloting without replacement) was used to select the required number of respondents from each stratum until the allocated sample size for that stratum was reached. This process lasted approximately two weeks.

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution

Institutions	Year of study	Population	Sample selected
Rivers State University (RSU)	Year two	130	56
	Year three	250	107
	Year four	160	68
	Year five	86	37
Total		**626**	**268**

Method of Data Analysis

The obtained data was collated, coded, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any item with criterion mean of 2. 50 and above was accepted, while any item below 2.50 was rejected. For the inferential statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All analyses were done using SPSS version 26.0.

Ethical Consideration

Researchers sought for and obtained approval from ethical committee of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, rivers State University with registered no: RSU/RBMS/REC/26/471. Study procedures, purpose of the research were explained to the participants and they were reassured of the confidentiality of all information given and benefits of carrying out this research. They were also informed that they are free to withdraw if they are no longer interested in the study and they will not be punished.

RESULTS

Table 3: Questionnaire Distribution

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Number Administered	268	100%
Number Retrieved	255	95.1%
Number Used	255	95.1%

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The above table shows the frequency distribution and percentile rate of the copies of questionnaire distributed, number retrieved and the number used.

Table 4: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 255)

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	**37**	**14.5**
Female	**218**	**85.5**
Age Group		
≤ 25 years	**234**	**91.8**
26–35 years	**16**	**6.3**
36–45 years	**3**	**1.2**
Above 45 years	**2**	**0.8**
Year of Study		
Year 1–2	**105**	**41.2**
Year 3–4	**150**	**58.8**

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Currently has Assigned Mentor		
Yes	**61**	**23.9**
No	**194**	**76.1**
Frequency of Meeting Mentor		
Weekly	**36**	**14.1**
Monthly	**7**	**2.7**
Occasionally	**41**	**16.1**
Never	**171**	**67.1**
Total	**255**	**100.0**

Source: Survey Data, 2026

The above table presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 255 student nurses who participated in the study. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents were female, accounting for 218 (85.5%), while 37 (14.5%) were male. This indicates that the nursing programme was predominantly composed of female students.

Table 5: Overall Level of Knowledge of Mentorship (N = 255)

Knowledge level	Score (out of 9)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor	0–6	16	6.3
Good	7–9	239	93.7
Total		255	100.0

Table 5 presents the level of knowledge of mentorship among the 255 student nurses surveyed. The findings indicate that respondents demonstrated a high level of knowledge regarding mentorship as 252 (98.8%) respondents correctly identified mentorship as a relationship in which a more experienced person supports a less experienced person,

Table 6: Utilization Level Score

Level	Mean range	Meaning
Low utilization	1.00 – 2.49	Below criterion mean 2.50
Moderate utilization	2.50 – 3.49	At or above criterion, not high
High utilization	3.50 – 4.00	High utilization

Availability and accessibility of mentorship programme in the institution recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 2.41, SD = 0.83) and was rated as low utilization.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level of knowledge of Mentorship among Student Nurses in the studied setting

Student nurses demonstrated high knowledge of mentorship, which did not differ significantly by gender, age, year of study, type of institution, assigned-mentor status or frequency of meeting a mentor (all $p > .05$).

This result gives credence to that of other studies; Joana et al (2025), Nowell et al. (2023), Ani et al. (2023) and Abodunde (2018) which reported high level of knowledge of mentorship in their various studies. However, this finding contrasts with Kolawole et al. (2019), who reported low knowledge of the mentor–mentee relationship among student nurses in Yola (57.4% low knowledge) together with a negative attitude toward the relationship.

Utilization of mentorship among Student Nurses in the studied setting

Utilization was low, this agrees with Ani *et al.,* (2023), Ughasoro *et al.,* (2022), and with Nowell *et al.,* (2023), who reported that many nursing schools lack formal mentorship programmes and that existing schemes are informal, uneven and poorly evaluated.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that although student nurses demonstrate high mentorship knowledge this has not been translated into utilisation of mentorship programme.

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Authors' Contributions

Both authors worked as a team to prepare, construct and edit the instrument as well its distribution until the final stage of the research.

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