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# MENTORSHIP: A CATALYST FOR ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL PURSUIT

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**Abstract**

This paper focused on mentorship, a catalyst for enhancing educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours towards educational pursuit. Educational mentorship plays a crucial role in fostering academic growth and promoting the development of students and new teachers. Mentors are positive role models who provides structured guidance and support, offering valuable insights and encouragement to mentees in shaping their perceptions to overcome obstacles and to develop their social and emotional skills. In the paper, necessary concepts like mentorship, educational attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, social and emotional skills of students towards educational pursuit, transformative impact of mentorship and the challenges faced were all reviewed.

**KeyWords:** Mentorship, Educational Attitudes, Beliefs, Behaviours and Challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Educational mentorship programs are pivotal for nurturing academic growth and fostering the development of social and emotional skills among students and new teachers within the system (Jager & Denessen, 2015). These programs offer structured guidance and support from mentors who serve as positive role models, providing valuable insights and encouragement to navigate the educational journey and develop social and emotional competence. Mentorship programs have emerged as powerful tools for cultivating positive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward education among students and new teachers.

Mentors play a critical role in shaping perceptions of education, fostering a sense of purpose, and empowering individuals to overcome obstacles on their educational journey (Phillips-Jones, 2003). Mentoring, akin to coaching, involves teaching the ropes, providing feedback, and pushing mentees to improve performance and potential. The mentor models appropriate behaviors and attitudes, helping mentees establish professional identities and build self-confidence.

There is evidence suggesting that mentoring can influence a range of educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (EABBs) (Lyons & Huebner, 2016). Institutions providing mentoring opportunities to less experienced individuals can better support mentoring relationships and improve EABB outcomes. Mentorship can also help address diversity-related barriers, reducing stereotypes and biases that contribute to negative attitudes and perceptions (Jaeger & Taylor, 2016).

Mentoring programs targeting EABBs are seen as preventive measures against negative school outcomes, promoting positive youth development and fostering resilience (St Vil & Angel, 2018). Positive developmental outcomes associated with EABBs include better grades, increased engagement in school, and enhanced social and emotional skills (Proctor, Linley & Maltby, 2008). Recognizing the importance of promoting positive student development, efforts in these fields aim to not only alleviate problems but also foster long-term social, academic, and economic success.

According to Ebisinkemefa (2022), mentoring sometimes focuses solely on changing EABBs in the mentee without adequately addressing systemic issues that contribute to these behaviors. There's a risk, as Ebisinkemefa argues, that mentors from privileged backgrounds may inadvertently suggest that success is simply a matter of working harder or following the mentor's path.



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The cultural, sociopolitical, and environmental contexts in which students live significantly influence their experiences and benefits from mentoring programs focused on EABB outcomes. Research suggests that mentoring programs can be more effective in addressing EABBs when they prioritize strong relationships and goal-oriented activities, meeting mentees' psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Sanusi (2013) highlights that academic mentorship plays a crucial role in career advancement, organizational development, and the enhancement of education quality. However, many academic staff struggle with lesson delivery and advanced teaching methods, underscoring the importance of mentorship in acquiring these skills (Rosemary & Millie, 2015; Eyitayo, Bamidele & Aremu, 2015). Positive academic mentorship can yield various outcomes such as enhanced school belonging, academic self-efficacy, growth mindset, and academic motivation.

The overarching goals of education systems include student progress, attainment of high school degrees, and reduced dropout rates, which benefit society, the economy, and individuals (Gitschthaler & Nairz-Wirth, 2018). Mentoring programs significantly impact both cognitive and socio-emotional development, setting students on positive developmental trajectories (Werner and Woessmann, 2021).

Effective mentoring requires specific skills beyond common sense. Mentors must possess active listening skills, build trust, provide encouragement, identify goals, and offer corrective feedback (Niehaus, Rudasill & Rakes, 2012). Students mentored in environments where they feel engaged, connected, and supported by peers and teachers are more likely to remain in school and exhibit fewer behavioral challenges. Similarly, teachers perform better and adhere to academic standards when properly mentored (Niehaus, Rudasill & Rakes, 2012).

## General Overview of Mentorship

Mentoring, as described by Allen, Eby, O'Brien, and Lentz (2008), is a traditional relationship wherein a more experienced individual, the mentor, guides and teaches a less experienced person, the mentee, about their job responsibilities, introduces them to contacts and assists in navigating social and personal issues at work. Similarly, Akpotu and Konyefa (2018) define mentoring as a guidance and teaching process provided by an experienced mentor to develop a novice mentee, aimed at enhancing their professional growth and providing psycho-social support.

Kram (1985) characterizes mentorship as a collaborative and reciprocal relationship where the mentor offers guidance, support, and advice to the mentee, serving as a role model, coach, and advocate. This relationship encompasses various dimensions, including career development, personal growth, and psychosocial support (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Mentors assist mentees in navigating educational and career pathways, building confidence, and overcoming challenges, ultimately fostering empowerment and self-efficacy.

In organizational settings, mentoring is often viewed as a professional development program that enhances individuals' and firms' capacity to perform specific work duties, develop skills, and attend to various aspects of proteges' needs (Eyitayo et al., 2015). Mentoring relationships facilitate the exchange of wisdom, skill improvement, and organizational understanding for mentees' career advancement.

## Concept of Education

Education, according to UNESCO (2015), encompasses the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values through formal and informal learning experiences. It involves instruction, exploration, and reflection, leading to intellectual growth, personal development, and social transformation. Positive educational experiences contribute to the cultivation of a lifelong love for learning, curiosity, and critical thinking skills, shaping individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward learning and personal development (Pajares, 1992).

## Concept of Educational Attitudes

Educational attitudes, as defined by Eccles & Wigfield (2002), encompass individuals' feelings, beliefs, and perceptions about education and learning, including their views on school, teachers, subjects, and academic activities. These attitudes significantly influence motivation, engagement, and achievement, with positive attitudes characterized by enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation, while negative attitudes may lead to disengagement or aversion (Martin, 2008). They are shaped by various factors, such as past experiences, socialization, and cultural norms.

## Concept of Educational Belief

Educational beliefs, according to Pajares (1992), are individuals' convictions, assumptions, and values regarding the nature and purpose of education. These beliefs influence perceptions of academic ability, effort, and the role of education in personal and societal development. Beliefs about intelligence and effort, such as a growth mindset, impact academic motivation and achievement (Dweck, 2006), with a growth mindset associated with greater success and resilience.

## Concept of Educational Behaviour

Educational behavior, as described by Zimmerman (2002), comprises actions, choices, and habits related to academic engagement, study habits, and learning strategies. This includes attending classes, participating in discussions, completing assignments, and seeking assistance when necessary. Positive educational behaviors contribute to academic success and learning outcomes, while negative behaviors may hinder progress and achievement (Duffy & Borg, 2004). Effective study skills, time management, and goal-setting are essential components of successful educational behavior.

## Areas Students and Teachers need Mentoring for Enhancing Educational Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviours towards Educational Pursuit

Areas where students and teachers can benefit from mentoring to enhance their educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards educational pursuit encompass various dimensions:



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**Academic Goal Setting**: Mentoring facilitates the setting of realistic academic goals aligned with students' and teachers' interests, abilities, and aspirations. Mentors guide goal identification, action planning, and progress monitoring, fostering motivation and purpose (Zimmerman, 2002).

**Study Skills and Time Management**: Mentoring supports the development of effective study skills and time management strategies. Mentors provide tips, techniques, and resources for efficient studying, organization, and prioritization, enhancing productivity and academic performance (Martin, 2008).

**Growth Mindset Development**: Mentoring promotes the cultivation of a growth mindset, emphasizing that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort and persistence (Dweck, 2006). Mentors encourage embracing challenges, learning from failures, and building resilience.

**Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy**: Mentoring boosts self-confidence and self-efficacy by offering encouragement, affirmation, and positive reinforcement (Allen et al., 2006). Mentors serve as role models, instilling belief in one's abilities and potential for success.

**Emotional Regulation and Stress Management**: Mentoring aids in developing emotional regulation skills and stress management techniques to cope with academic pressures and challenges (Zimmerman, 2002). Mentors provide strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and emotions effectively, promoting well-being and resilience.

**Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving**: Mentoring fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills crucial for academic success and lifelong learning (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). Mentors engage students and teachers in thought-provoking discussions and real-world problem-solving exercises.

**Communication and Collaboration**: Mentoring enhances communication and collaboration skills essential for academic and professional success (Eby et al., 2007). Mentors provide opportunities for practicing effective communication, active listening, and teamwork, fostering positive interpersonal relationships.

**Career Exploration and Development**: Mentoring supports career exploration, guiding students and teachers towards fulfilling career choices (Allen et al., 2006). Mentors offer insights, advice, and networking opportunities to facilitate informed decision-making about future career paths.

## Contribution of Educational Mentorship to the Development of Social and Emotional Skills in Students

1. **Development of Social Skills**

i. **Peer Interaction and Communication**: Educational mentorship promotes meaningful interactions among students and their peers, fostering communication skills. Collaborative activities, discussions, and feedback sessions help students express their thoughts effectively, listen actively, and engage in respectful dialogue, enhancing their social competence (Rhodes, 2005).

ii. **Relationship Building and Empathy**: Mentorship relationships offer students opportunities to form meaningful connections and develop empathy. By understanding different perspectives, students learn to build trusting relationships, resolve conflicts constructively, and demonstrate compassion towards others (DuBois et al., 2011).

iii. **Teamwork and Collaboration**: Mentorship programs often involve collaborative projects requiring students to work towards common goals. Through teamwork experiences, students learn cooperation, compromise, and collective problem-solving, essential skills for academic and professional success (Rhodes, 2005).

2. **Development of Emotional Skills**

i. **Self-Awareness and Reflection**: Educational mentors encourage students to reflect on their thoughts and feelings, fostering self-awareness and emotional intelligence. By exploring strengths, weaknesses, and growth areas, students gain insights into themselves and learn to manage emotions effectively (Jager & Denessen, 2015).

ii. **Stress Management and Resilience**: Mentorship programs equip students with strategies for coping with stress and adversity. Mentors offer guidance on stress management techniques, relaxation exercises, and positive coping mechanisms, empowering students to build resilience (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009).

iii. **Emotional Regulation and Self-Control**: Through mentorship, students learn to recognize and regulate their emotions. Mentors model healthy coping strategies, teach mindfulness techniques, and provide support during emotional distress, helping students cultivate emotional stability and self-discipline (Jager & Denessen, 2015).

## Transformative Impact of Mentorship on Educational Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviours.

Mentorship programs have emerged as potent instruments for nurturing positive attitudes towards education, fostering beliefs in academic success, and encouraging positive learning behaviors, particularly among students. Through guidance, support, and encouragement, mentors play a pivotal role in shaping students' perceptions of education, instilling a sense of purpose, and empowering them to overcome challenges along their educational journey. Rhodes (2005), DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine (2011), as well as Ekpoh and Ukot (2018), highlight transformative impacts of mentorship on educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors:

**Development of Positive Educational Attitudes**: Mentorship cultivates positive attitudes towards education by promoting a growth mindset and emphasizing the value of learning. Mentors inspire students to adopt a positive outlook, embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and foster resilience in their educational



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pursuits. By creating a supportive environment where students feel valued and encouraged, mentors enhance motivation and engagement, fostering a sense of belonging within the educational community.

**Cultivation of Belief in Academic Success**: Mentors serve as role models, demonstrating that academic success is attainable through hard work and perseverance. By sharing their own educational experiences and achievements, mentors inspire students to believe in their own potential and strive for excellence. Personalized guidance on goal setting and achievement reinforces students' belief in their ability to succeed, helping them develop a clear vision for their future and identify pathways for growth.

**Promotion of Positive Learning Behaviors**: Mentorship encourages the development of positive learning behaviors such as curiosity, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. Mentors engage students in meaningful discussions, challenging activities, and reflective exercises that stimulate intellectual curiosity and cultivate a passion for learning. Through mentorship, students acquire effective study habits, time management skills, and organizational strategies, empowering them to take ownership of their learning journey and realize their full potential.

## Impact on Educational Outcomes and Personal Growth

Research has evidenced the significant impact of mentorship programs on educational outcomes, including heightened academic achievement, increased graduation rates, and smoother transitions to post-secondary education (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2005). Mentored students exhibit greater motivation, engagement, and perseverance in their educational endeavors, culminating in long-term benefits in both academic and career success. Notably, mentorship programs prove particularly advantageous for students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds, offering them the essential support and encouragement to surmount barriers to educational attainment (Rhodes, 2005). Thus, by addressing the social, emotional, and academic needs of these students, mentors play a pivotal role in fostering equity and access in education.

As highlighted by Jager and Denessen (2015), the cultivation of social and emotional skills through educational mentorship significantly enhances academic performance. Students endowed with robust social skills and emotional resilience exhibit heightened engagement, motivation, and persistence, leading to enhanced learning outcomes and academic accomplishments. Through mentorship relationships, students develop a sense of belonging, self-assurance, and purpose, empowering them to ardently pursue their aspirations with resilience.

## Challenges Faced by Mentors and Mentees in Mentorship for Enhancing Educational Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors towards Educational Pursuit

Although mentorship programs are instrumental in fostering positive educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors among mentees, both mentors and mentees confront various challenges that may impede the efficacy of mentorship in achieving its desired outcomes. Here are some challenges encountered by mentors and mentees in mentorship for enhancing educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards educational pursuit.

## Challenges Faced by Mentors

**Time Constraints**: Mentors often grapple with time constraints stemming from their professional and personal commitments. Balancing mentoring responsibilities with other obligations can result in inconsistent availability and limited attention to mentoring relationships (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006).

**Lack of Training and Support**: Many mentors receive inadequate formal training or support in their mentoring roles, leading to uncertainty and ineffectiveness in fulfilling their responsibilities (Johnson, 2016). Without proper guidance and resources, mentors may struggle to provide meaningful guidance and support to mentees.

**Communication Barriers**: Effective communication is vital for building trust and rapport between mentors and mentees. However, mentors may encounter communication barriers such as differences in communication styles, cultural backgrounds, or language proficiency, hindering the establishment of a productive mentoring relationship (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007).

## Challenges Faced by Mentees:

**Limited Access to Mentors**: Mentees may encounter difficulties in accessing mentors, particularly in environments with limited resources or support systems. Insufficient mentorship opportunities can hinder mentees from receiving the guidance and support necessary to navigate educational challenges and opportunities (Hawkins & Buchanan, 2019).

**Unrealistic Expectations**: Mentees may harbor unrealistic expectations of their mentors, anticipating solutions to all their problems or guaranteed academic success (Eby et al., 2007). When mentors fail to meet these expectations, mentees may become disillusioned and disengaged from the mentoring relationship.

**Fear of Rejection or Judgment**: Mentees may hesitate to seek help or guidance from mentors due to fear of rejection or judgment. Concerns about appearing incompetent or vulnerable may deter mentees from reaching out to mentors for support, resulting in missed opportunities for growth and development (Johnson, 2016).

## Conclusion

Educational mentorship programs play a crucial role in nurturing social and emotional skills among students, which significantly contributes to their academic achievements and personal development. Through guidance, support, and positive role modeling, mentors assist students in cultivating vital skills such as communication, collaboration, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. These skills not only prepare students for success in their academic endeavors but also equip them with essential tools for navigating various aspects of life beyond the classroom.

Mentorship acts as a catalyst for fostering positive educational attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, thereby empowering students to



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unleash their full potential and attain success in both academic and personal spheres. By instilling positive attitudes towards education, nurturing beliefs in academic prowess, and promoting constructive learning behaviors, mentors serve as inspirations who motivate students to strive for excellence and pursue their educational aspirations with unwavering confidence and determination.

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