**IMPACT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISEE AND SUPERVISOR ON RESEARCH OUTPUT: BUILT ENVIRONMENT STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The built environment can be described as the artificial and natural environments that provide the scenery for human activity such as buildings, parks, and space in which people live, work and procreate on a daily basis (Sharma, 2015). The changes and development in the built environment experienced over the years has led to various tertiary institution establishing a faculty comprising of lecturers and students from various professions such as architecture, estate surveying, quantity surveying, builders, urban and regional planners and land surveyors

One of the requirements for a student graduating from the faculty is the submission of their research dissertation or thesis. A complete research project entails various stages such as introduction, literature review, research methodology, data analysis, and conclusion. For an adequate understanding along with the approval of the various stages of the thesis, a cordial relationship between the student and the lecturer needs to be created where the later approve each stage of the thesis before going to the next stage (Wisker, 2005 & Thompson, *et al*. 2005).

Philips & Pugh (2000) asserted that creating such relationship is difficult because supervisee and supervisor relationship is a multifaceted social encounter which involves two or more parties with both converging and diverging interests. Likewise, Norshasni, *et al*. (2011) posited that supervisee- supervisor relationship is challenging due to diverse needs of both parties involved. The supervisees are concerned about the degree and the job opportunities from the research process. For the supervisors, they are interested in publications, the recognizable achievement of bringing a student's candidature to completion, and the satisfaction after candidature of fostering an independent scholar. Another reason is that in most universities undergraduate students are not informed about the importance of establishing a vital relationship with their supervisors.

The challenges of supervisee and supervisor relationship affect both parties but the impact is often felt more by the supervisee (Malfroy, 2005). Lessing & Schulze (2002) reported that most supervisees are frustrated because of their perception towards the lack of support from their supervisor due to inconsistent contact with their supervisors. That is supervisors are often busy with managerial or lecturing duties, have too many supervisees or they are away from the institution to attend conferences or on sabbatical leave.

Idoniboy (2014) opined that in most Nigerian tertiary institutions supervisor and supervisee relationship is often treated like a slave and master relationship with the supervisee been regarded as the slave. According to studies done by Hallinan (2008), Chepcheing *et al.* (2006) and Mlambo (2011), there is general credence that a human behavior and actions are related to their perception of how they are being treated. This infers that if a supervisee perceives the supervisor-supervisee relationship as irrelevant or a burden they may cultivate a negative or irrational behavior to their project dissertation and the faculty environment. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate the student’s perception of the supervisor-supervisee relationship in their faculty. Against this background, this study will examine the relationship between the supervisees and supervisors and its impact on research projects in the built environment from the student’s perspective using the Student Evaluation of Instruction method (SEI). Although studies such as; Norshasni, *et al*. (2011), Lessing & Schulze (2002), Ives & Rowley (2005) as well as Lin & Cranton (2005) were focused on supervisor and supervisee relationship but their concentration was on postgraduate student and gaps still exist in understanding the reasons most undergraduate students outsource their projects, the most difficult project stage for the students and proposing ways for balancing interest between the supervisee and supervisors and the impact of supervisor and supervisee relationship on student output. Findings from this study will be beneficial to the school authorities in developing a model for ensuring a harmonious supervisee-supervisor relationship, it will also expose the supervisor to their shortcomings regarding their relationship with their supervisee, while the method (SEI) adopted for this study is expected to improve the understanding of supervisee expectations of their supervisors. Finally, this study will add to the knowledge of the present literature in the field of student-lecturer relationship and supervisor-supervisee relationship and acts as an insight for further research to refine and extend the present study.

**2.0 REVIEW OF SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISEE RELATIONSHIP**

**2.1 Essential Skill of the Supervisor and Supervisee for Project Dissertation**

Lin & Cranton (2005) affirmed that project dissertation writing is a collaborative procedure that involves the use of social and academic expertise. This implies that they are some basic skills required of the supervisee and supervisor. In support of this assertion, Lessing & Schulze (2002) opined that undergraduate students need skills regarding finding data and literature, analyze and interpret the data. Likewise, Malfroy (2005) asserted that students also need managerial skills for their time, private duties and create a pair of friends with the same zealousness for project dissertation.

On the other hand, the project supervisor requires various skills but the main assistance a supervisor should render is ensuring that the project dissertation is done according to the prescribed standard. Norshasni, *et al.* (2011) opined that communication and support skills are the essential skills a supervisor should possess with the former involving ability to make observation constructively and the latter requires the capacity to understand the moment when support is needed. For an effective supervisor, he/she must be an experienced researcher and should be knowledgeable of various research methods. Ali, *et al*. (2016) posited that the major skill a supervisor should have is the ability to diversify their roles which involves giving consistent backing to their supervisee, sensitive to supervise limitations while keeping a record of the project dissertation progress. Aside from the skills required of the supervisor Spear (2000) affirmed that for a successful completion of the project the supervisor should be capable of providing a quality advice. Such advice is provided in understanding the project topic choice, research methodology, and writing style. The skill acquisition of the supervisor is as important just like the supervisee because the completion of the work depends on both parties.

**2.2 Factors Hindering Supervisor and Supervisee Relationship**

For an efficient demonstration of skills from both parties, the supervisee should perceive his/her supervisor’s as the closest colleague (McAlpine & Weis, 2000). Thus, supervisee performance can highly be influenced by its relationship with the supervisor. The relationship of a project supervisee and supervisor is often regarded as private spaces in most Nigerian Universities where the former is seen as a slave and the latter is the master. The strain experienced between the supervisor and supervisee of undergraduate student could be related to the assertion of Lessing & Schulze (2002) where the dissertation requirements of an undergraduate and post graduate student’s thesis were distinguished. With the opinion that a post graduate student is just required to produce a more original work and show expertise in the methodological process, while the undergraduate student is taught and spoon feed like a baby on the various research methodology and it's important while providing guidance on when to stop data collection, form of structuring and drafting the project dissertation. Chepcheing, *et al*. (2006) also affirmed that the problem associated with the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee can be related to the inexperience of the supervisee and the inefficient system of the supervisee faculty or department.

Abiddin (2007) opined that the faculty or departmental inefficiency which affects the supervisor and supervisee relationship occurs when a supervisor that is specialized in a certain field of work is allocated to a supervisee working in another area of concentration. The inefficiency in the faculty should be given proper attention as the department and faculties are the crucial locations for learning especially the faculty of the built environment that oversees raising professionals concerned with the change and development of the environment. Frischer & Larsson (2000) opined that time allocated for the duration of project dissertation varies among each faculty with the reason unclear but it may be related to funding available to the faculty. Due to the insufficient funding, most universities seek fund from the community and as well as from the student tuition fees. Idaka & Joshua (2010) affirmed that since the student contributes to the development of the school their opinion deserves to be heard through student evaluation of instruction method. This method forms the basis of the conceptual framework for this study.

**Supervisor**

**Instruction**

 Structure of the project dissertation, type of research method and the data required

**Supervisee**

**Completed project dissertation**

Which contains chapter 1 to 5, references and abstract, among others

Relationship building through passage of non-formal information

Supervisee perception of supervisor

**Project Co-ordinator**

**Student evaluation of instruction** assess the supervisor contribution to the project dissertation

Figure 1; Conceptual framework

Source: Adapted from (Idaka & Joshua, 2009 and Joshua & Joshua, 2003)

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework adopted for this study, the figure also shows the essential roles of both parties (supervisor and supervisee), it depicts that the supervisor as two major roles which are; creating a relationship through the passage of non-formal information and passage of formal information that include details on how to structure the project dissertation. The former role of the supervisor affects the supervisee perception as suggested by Cryer (2000) that supervisee recognizes their supervisors as role models, important friends and motivators after having a harmonious in-formal relationship with their supervisor. Likewise, Hallinan (2008) elucidated that supervisee value and respect their supervisors after adequate relationship and in return lead to greater effort and performance on the part of the supervisee. On the other hand, the major role of the supervisee is to utilize the instruction provided by the supervisor towards producing a completed project dissertation which usually contains five chapters with the first chapter introducing the study and the last chapter presents the conclusion and summary of findings of the project along with recommendations.

The conceptual framework of this study proposes the addition of a third party to the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. The third party could be the project coordinator, head of department or faculty officer that functions as an external guide for the supervisee and the assessor of SEI while giving feedback of the assessment to the supervisors.

**3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts the student evaluation of instruction method (SEI) for evaluating the supervisor and supervisee relationship. Idaka & Joshua (2010) defined SEI as the process requiring the student evaluating the performance of their lecturer. Beran & Violato (2005) describe SEI as the procedure that realizes that the students are the consumer of instruction and thus give them the opportunity to express their opinion and expectations regarding the efficiency of the lecturer’s activity during the semester and the expense to which they were influenced from the lecturer instruction. This study defines SEI as the process that involves the supervisee measuring their supervisor performance and contribution to their project dissertation.

This method has been adopted by studies such as; Idaka & Joshua (2010), Joshua & Joshua (2003) and Chepcheing, *et al.* (2006) for appraising student and lecturer relationship in a tertiary institution with the focus of ensuring the students’ performance. SEI was first adopted by Remmers (1927) who is recognized as the pioneer of SEI. The method is based on the premise that students are the main observer of activities within the tertiary institution because of the nature and operation of the institution and thus, are in the best position to judge the lecturer's effectiveness.

The respondents of the study were selected students of a University located in Lagos state, Nigeria using the final year undergraduate student within the faculty of Built Environment as a case study. The faculty comprises of five departments namely; Estate management, Building, Quantity Surveying, Urban and Regional Planning and Architecture. According to the student enrollment portal on the school website, there are three hundred and fifty students (350) that registered for the final year project dissertation and this number forms the study population. A convenience sampling was used, while the students responded to the questionnaire online using google forms and through personal administration after an ethical approval was received from the faculty offices. A total of three hundred and twelve questionnaires (312) was received and used for the analysis after scrutinizing for errors. The response to the questionnaire was then inputted into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 20.

A quantitative descriptive design was adopted for this study, with a questionnaire design targeted at evaluating the undergraduate supervisee and supervisor relationship. Past Literature such as; Ali, *et al.* (2016), Ives & Rowley, (2005) and Norshani, *et al.* (2011) as shown that supervisor and supervisee relationship are multifaceted involving different dimensions. Thus, this study employs a multivariate statistical tool referred to as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for exploring the dimensions that hinder the supervisor and supervisee relationship. It also employs regression analysis to determine if the supervisee and supervisor relationship has a significant impact on the students’ academic standing.

**4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1 Project Dissertation**

Table 1 presents the student opinion about their project dissertation regarding subcontracting of their project dissertation and the chapter that is frequently subcontracted. The table revealed that more than half (55.4) of the students within the faculty of built environment contract their project dissertation while 44.6% indicated otherwise.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1 project dissertation**  |  |  |  |
|   | Frequency |  Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent |
| **Subcontract project dissertation**  |  |  |  |
| Yes  | 173 | 55.4 | 55.4 |
| No  | 139 | 44.6 | 100 |
| **Total**  | **312** | **100** |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Chapter of project frequently outsourced**  |  |  |  |
| Chapter one | 7 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Chapter four | 84 | 48.6 | 52.6 |
| Chapter four and five  | 48 | 27.7 | 80.3 |
| Chapter one to three | 8 | 4.6 | 85.0 |
| All the chapters  | 26 | 15.0 | 100 |
| **Total**  | **173** | **100** |  |

 Table 1 reveals that chapter four and five which entails data analysis and presentation is the most subcontracted chapter of the student project dissertation. It can be deduced from this finding that most students lack the techniques for data analysis and presentation or the use of software such as SPSS, E-view or STATA for data analysis. However, 15% of the students subcontracted the entire project, 4.6% contract out only chapter one to three and few (4%) sub contract only chapter one.

**4.2 Factors Responsible for Supervisee Subcontracting Their Project Dissertation**

There are twenty-five factors highlighted by this study that is responsible for student subcontracting their project dissertation and was explored using CPA - component principal analysis also referred to as factor analysis. In the analysis, the KMO and Bartlett’s test of sphericity present a good factorability features as shown in Table 2. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity gave a chi-square value of 756.455 at 300 degrees of freedom, significant at 5% confidence level, this, therefore, suggests correlation among the chosen factors.

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett’s Test**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | 0.692 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity: |  |
| Approx. Chi-square | 756.455 |
| Degree of freedom | 300 |
| Significant level | 0.000 |

The principal component analysis shows 3 components (out of possible components) with an eigenvalue of at least 1. The initial components have an eigenvalue of 10.342 while the last component has 1.968 eigenvalues. The variance in percentages explained by each of these components is shown in the third column and their cumulative percentage is presented in the fourth column. The first component has the highest percentage variation of 41.368% while the last component is explained by 7.478%. Altogether, the three components explain 58.293% variation by their linear components.

**Table 3: Total Variance Explained before Rotation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |
| Total | Percent of Variance | Cumulative Percentage of Variance |
| 1 | 10.342 | 41.368 | 41.368 |
| 2 | 2.362 | 9.447 | 50.815 |
| 3 | 1.869 | 7.478 | 58.293 |

The rotated component matrix is presented in table 4 and it shows that the items are loaded at different coefficient on each of the three factors, however, the item with the highest coefficient is considered and determines the name given to the factor. On the first component, ‘difficulty in getting a response to questionnaire’ and absent of online access to library data base for easy access to journals’ have the highest coefficient. The second component has, ‘the topic chosen is not the area of interest’ and ‘Nonchalant attitude of the project supervisor towards the project dissertation’ as the items with the highest coefficient. The third component had, ‘Non availability of the supervisor due to the busy schedule of the supervisor’ and ‘supervisor not accessible outside appointment period when students need help’ as the highly loaded items.

| **Table 4 Rotated component matrix** |
| --- |
|  | Component |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Difficulty in getting response to questionnaires | .814 |  |  |
| Absent of online access to library data base for easy access to journals | .813 |  |  |
| You do not see the usefulness for writing project dissertation | .803 |  |  |
| Social commitment | .802 |  |  |
| No standard guideline for writing project dissertation | .773 |  |  |
| Students are not treated with respect  | .761 |  |  |
| Inadequate internet facilities | .754 |  |  |
| No motivation on the part of the faculty | .706 |  |  |
| Lack of accommodation on campus | .675 |  |  |
| Negative comment from the supervisor | .612 |  |  |
| Poor understanding of the statistical tools used for analysis |  |  |  |
| The topic chosen is not your area of interest  |  | .769 |  |
| Nonchalant attitude of the project supervisor towards the project dissertation  |  | .768 |  |
| Lack of materials for the project  |  | .745 |  |
| Poor leadership skill of the supervisor |  | .733 |  |
| Short time for the project dissertation  |  | .733 |  |
| Late response to students proposals  |  | .689 |  |
| Poor understanding of the project topic |  | .658 |  |
| Too many course work (other subjects) |  | .635 |  |
| Nonavailability of the supervisor due to the busy schedule of the supervisor |  |  | .889 |
| Supervisor not accessible outside appointment period when student needs help |  |  | .854 |
| Absent of seminars and workshops for learning project dissertations |  |  | .726 |
| Absent of a co-supervisor |  |  | .664 |
| Absent of freedom to choose the project supervisor |  |  | .646 |
| The supervisors are not approachable and friendly |  |  | .567 |

The item with the highest coefficient and also the theme presented by the items on the same components, therefore, suggests factor’s name to be given to such component, and in line with this the three components obtained in this analysis are named thus; 1) difficulty in getting access to data and material, 2) supervisor low interest towards project dissertation, 3) Non- availability and unfriendly nature of the supervisor. These are the three factors responsible for the supervisee subcontracting their project dissertation.

**4.3 Supervisor and Supervisee Relationship**

The opinion of the students regarding their relationship with their project supervisor is presented in table 5. The table showed that few (26.9%) of the students have a very good relationship with their project supervisor, and a cumulative of 30.1% indicated that they have a fair/bad relationship with their supervisor.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 5 Relationship with supervisor**  |  |  |  |
|   | Frequency |  Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent |
| Very poor  | 8 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Poor  | 22 | 7.1 | 9.6 |
| Neutral  | 64 | 20.5 | 30.1 |
| Good  | 137 | 43.9 | 74.0 |
| Very good  | 81 | 26.0 | 100 |
| **Total**  | **312** | **100** |  |

**4.4 Factors Capable of Improving Supervisor and Supervisee Relationship**

The students were asked to rate the factors that will improve their relationship with their supervisor with the aid of a five Likert scale from very significant denoted as 5 to not significant represented by 1 and the outcome is presented in table 6. The table shows that they are five most significant factors that will enhance the supervisor and supervisee relationship with a mean score of above 4.5. The factors in order of hierarchy are; easy access to a supervisor, supervisors should be friendly and approachable, prompt response to project proposal and the supervisor should share the student’s research interest.

**Table 6 Factors capable of improving supervisor and supervisee relationship**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Mean** | **Rank**  |
| Easy access to supervisor | 4.67 | 1 |
| Supervisors should be friendly and approachable | 4.65 | 2 |
| Prompt response of project proposal  | 4.56 | 3 |
| Share the student's research interest | 4.51 | 4 |
| Be available when students need help | 4.47 | 5 |
| Ensure that the student's research is manageable in the time available | 4.28 | 6 |
| Ensure that supervision records are written agreed and subsequently filled | 4.14 | 7 |
| Group discussion  | 4.14 | 8 |
| Ability to choose your own supervisor | 4.05 | 9 |
| Help the student in choosing the research topic | 3.95 | 10 |

Other significant factors are the supervisor should be available when the supervisee needs help, ensure that the student's research is manageable in the time available, group discussion, the ability for students to choose their own supervisor, while the supervisor should help the supervisee in choosing the project dissertation topic was rated as less significant.

**4.5 Impact of Student Academic Standing on Their Relationship with Their Supervisor**

This study employs regression analysis to determine if the supervisee and supervisor relationship is affected by the students’ academic standing. The opinion of the students about their relationship with their supervisors enters the regression equation as the dependent variable and the students’ academic standing represents the independent variable.

**Table 4.7 Regression analysis of the impact of students’ academic standing on their relationship with their supervisor**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | B |  | Std. Error | t | p value | Remark |
| (Constant) | 1.558 |  | 0.134 | 11.632 | 0.003 | Sig. |
| Student academic standing  | 0.634 |  | 0.036 | 17.780 | 0.005 |  Sig. |

Dependent variable: opinion of student relationship with their supervisor

The table shows that there is a significant impact on the students’ academic standing on their relationship with their supervisor. The positive value (17.780) implies that a student with a good academic performance record will have a better relationship with his/her project supervisor.

**4.6 Discussion of findings**

**4.6.1 Project dissertation**

The study examines the percentage of student that sub contracts their project and concludes that more than half of the student's sub contract their Project despite been a punishable offense within the faculty. These findings are like study done by Ganqa, (2012) as it concluded that students often subcontract their project due to the pressure from the University to complete at the stipulated time. On the other hand, numerous studies such as (Abiddin & West 2007, McComarck 2004 and Bartlett &Mercer 2001) submitted that student loss of interest towards project dissertation is the main reason for students subcontracting their project.

Beran & Violato (2005) avowed that research methodology is often the most taught aspect of project dissertation writing to the students while neglecting another side of project dissertation writing such as the use of statistical soft wares for data analysis. This opinion is similar to the findings from this study as it revealed that half of the students do not have an adequate knowledge for data analysis due to the poor training about the software required for data analysis hence they sub contract their chapter four and five

This study proceeds further to determine the factor responsible for students subcontracting their project using factor analysis and discovered that they are three most significant factor which is difficulty in getting access to data and material, supervisor low interest towards project dissertation and non-availability and unfriendly nature of the supervisor. These findings are in line with the studies done by (Abiddin, 2007, Lessing &Schulze, 2003 Lumadi, 2008 and Ali, *et al*. 2016) but the only difference is that most of these studies did not acknowledge difficulty in getting access to data as an important factor responsible for students subcontracting their project because the studies were conducted for postgraduate student that are assumed to be more experienced in research but study done by (Wisker, 2012) that examined undergraduate students recognized difficulty to getting access to data as a significant factor.

**4.6.2 Supervisor and supervisee relationship**

(Lessing & Schulze, 2002, Wisker, 2005 and Thompson, *et al.* 2005) declared that the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is the main factor for project writing success. Thus, this study examined the relationship between supervisor and supervisee and discovered that few of the students have a very good relationship with their project supervisor. These findings coincide with the literature from (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, Lessing &Schulze, 2003 and Dietz, *et al.* 2006). The poor relationship was attributed to the traditional form of a single supervisor supervising a research work. Lumadi, (2008) opined that this form of traditional approach often leads to a pull and fight relationship as the supervisee is made to conform to anything just to make the supervisor happy. Notwithstanding the approach used for supervising, Wisker (2005) concluded that students with good academic standing will always have a better relationship with their supervisor as they are able to apprehend faster the requirement for the project dissertation. This assertion agrees with this study finding as it discovers that students with good academic standing have a better relationship with their supervisor.

Regarding the factors capable of improving the supervisor and supervisee relationship the students rated access to a supervisor, supervisors should be friendly and approachable, prompt response to project proposal and the supervisor should share the student’s research interest as the most significant factors. Similar findings were also shared by Ganqa, (2012) but the author emphasized on supervisor’s friendliness as the key factor for having a cordial relationship with the supervisee.

**5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study focused on the impact of the relationship between supervisee and supervisors on research output from the student’s perspective. It concludes that unapproachable and unfriendly nature of the supervisors is the main hindrance for creating smooth and cordial supervisors and supervisee relationship. This supervisor’s attitude as affected the originality of the student’s project dissertation as half of the students subcontracts their project dissertation writing. Lack of standard or regulation for the supervisor role coupled with little interference from the University regarding the supervisor and supervisee relationship are responsible for the supervisor's attitude. Such that the failure of the school regulation creates the environment for an unaccountable behavior by the supervisors that proceeds to a one-sided relationship that the supervisor is the master in control of the decision making while the supervisee accepting the instructions without been privilege to search for clarities and understanding.

The study recommends that the students should be allowed to choose their preferred supervisors rather than automatic allocation system of supervisor done by the faculty. Also, the traditional way of supervising that includes a single supervisor to numerous students should be improved upon to allow the interference of a third party into the supervisor and supervisee relationship that will function as an external guide for the supervisee in the absent of the supervisor. It also recommends that the University should provide a standard procedure stipulating the supervisor and the supervisee role. The supervisors should organize a form of training or workshop for the students on the use of statistical software.

A further research could be conducted on a larger sample sourced from different Universities also a research could be conducted comparing public and private University student’s perspective on the relationship between supervisor and supervisee to ascertain if private university students have a better relationship with their supervisor than public university and its impact on their research output. Also in view of the advancement in technology further research could be carried out on evaluating the impact of blended learning on students’ research output.

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