

# TUTORING: THE PLACE OF PERSONALITY AND GENDER

I. Tenebe, P. Emenike, D. Omole, B. Ayobami, I. Oniemayin

Covenant University (NIGERIA)

## Abstract

The issue of tutoring in places of learning is becoming significant to study as students tend to prefer a particular personality irrespective of the gender (male or female) among teachers. This choice appears to have effect on the academic performance of students. However, it is perceived that interest in a subject could be a function of attraction to the subject tutor. Therefore, this study captures the role of personality and gender in the selection of tutor and its effect on student's performance in engineering. Additionally, other factors that could lead to these issues, such as: method of teaching, mentoring ability, communication skills were looked into. This was achieved through the use of a well-structured questionnaire and personal interviews for proper conclusion on the subject matter. The data collected was statistically analyzed with SPSS 21 and results shows that there is dire need for places of higher learning to increase or encourage good personality in tutoring as it will improve academic performance in return. Also, there should be continuity and proper monitoring of mentoring as well as teaching pedagogy. Inclusive learning should be encouraged to harvest good performance of students.

Keywords: Tutor, Tutoring, Mentoring, Academic Performance, Pedagogy.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of tutoring in places of learning is becoming significant to study as students tend to prefer a particular personality irrespective of the gender (male or female) among teachers. This choice appears to have effect on the academic performance of students. Barrows (1992) defined Tutors as leaders, facilitators, and coaches of their tutorials.

Education involves human relationships, therefore Interpersonal and pedagogical skills are fundamental requirements for good tutoring. The personality and gender of a tutor are major factor affecting how tutors communicate and deals with students, and yet it is a largely unexplored context in student performance evaluation.

Several major reviews of such studies have appeared in the educational literature in recent years (Devin-Sheehan *et al.*, 1976; Ellson, 1976; Fitz-Gibbon, 1977; Rosenshine & Furst, 1969). Each of the reviews concluded that tutoring programs can contribute to the academic growth of the children who receive the tutoring and probably to the growth of the children who provide the tutoring as well. However, two of the reviews (Ellson, 1976; Rosenshine & Furst, 1969) reported that these contributions had been clearly demonstrated only for well-structured and cognitively oriented programs.

Aspects of tutors' role in tutorials encompass answering queries, clarifying points, diagnosing misconceptions, providing alternative explanations, assisting students to relate material to their individual situations, and helping with the application and practice of principles. Another important aspect of tutors' role is that of assisting students to become independent learners. With tutor guidance, students can be encouraged to dig deeper and to explore the unknown to support their ideas, thoughts, comments, and feelings. How tutors teach is critical to learning, and how they create and foster learning environments that promote creative thinking and problem-solving skills in students is of vital importance. Tutors are leaders, facilitators, and coaches of their tutorials (Barrows, 1992). These approaches encourage students to study issues from contrasting views. An innovative tutor can create ways to build mutual successes between themselves and students. Therefore tutors must be able to tolerate new ideas and differences of opinion. They must also be willing to venture fresh avenues of teaching and learning, and consider what triggers, inspires, and motivates students' intellectual and individual interests (Barrows, 1992).

Tonelson (1981) suggests that teacher personality can affect student learning outcomes via the psychological environment of the classroom. Research indicates that a teacher's motivating style is an important educational construct (Deci *et al.*, 1981a; Ryan and Grolnick, 1986) because it affects students' developmental and academic outcomes (Deci and Ryan, 1987; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier,

and Ryan, 1991; Reeve, 1996). The teacher's goal is to control students' goals and behaviour toward a prescribed end. (Deci *et al.*, 1981b). With this claims, it has prompted the research.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in a Private University in South-West Nigeria. With a well-structured questionnaire, quantitative data was obtained and the responses were analyzed using SPSS 21 Software. Questions were asked which spans across but not limited to teaching style of your favorite teacher if they have one and if gender has effect on selection. More so, Focused Group Discussion was conducted with selected students based on their responses and also with Lecturers and teachers thereby obtaining real time information on the subject matter and detailed reasons for their responses were harvested.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

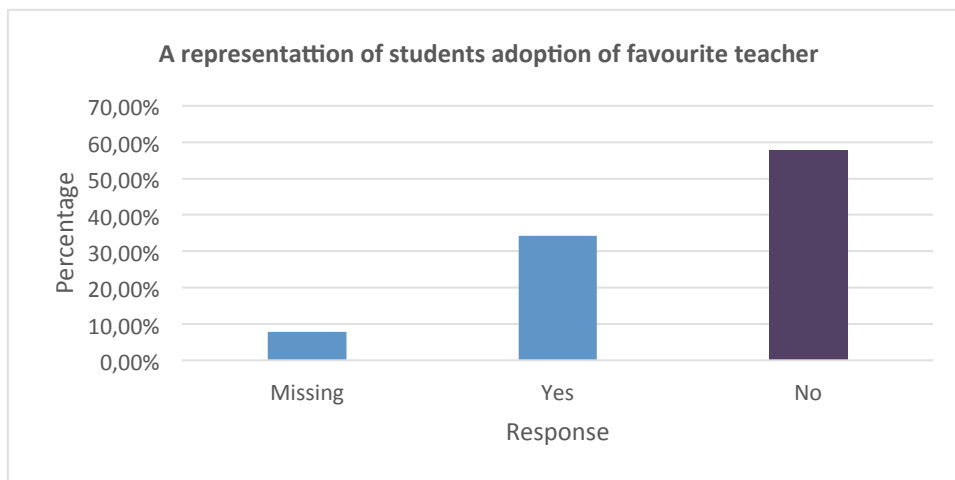


Fig. 1: Showing students who had favorite teachers

From the Fig.1 above, over one-third of responses obtained had favorite teacher, while just above half the response gotten either had no favorite teacher or decided to be indifferent towards the question. This is shown by the "NO" response. Also, when asked if gender had influence regarding favorite tutor selection, over three quarter agreed that their selection was not biased towards gender. This is illustrated in the Fig. 2 below.

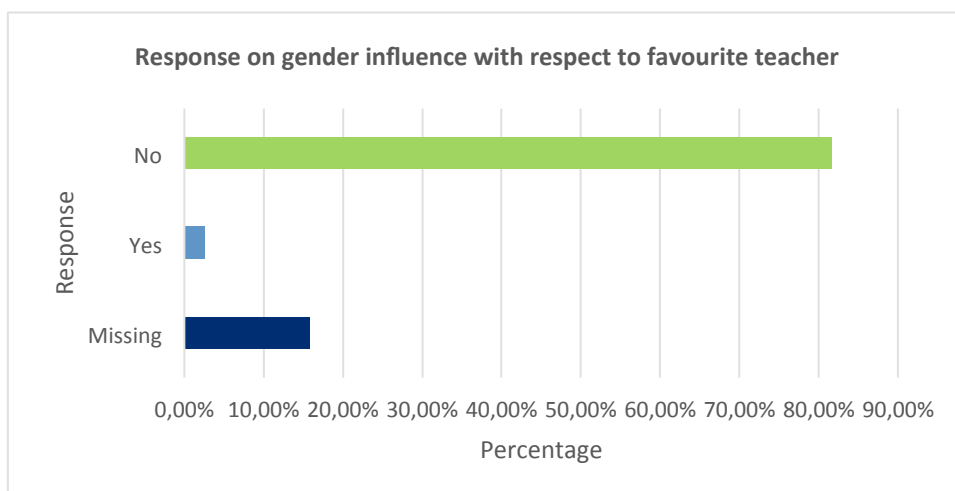


Fig. 2: Showing gender influence in the selection of favorite teacher

Yet again, the fig. below shows the response from the students whether or not their teacher had a better teaching style. In this case, the percentage was even. From the survey, more of the numbers of 'NO' responses were as a result of the student who did not have favorite teachers. That obviously increased the response. But by and large, we may then infer that from the survey, many of the respondent agreed that their favorite teacher had better teaching style than others. Consequently, it was obtained from the study that the teaching style included but not limited to the humorous nature of the tutor, the ability to bring into light real time and real life experiences, transferring class room to learning environment and making the student inclusive during teaching with the mindset that everyone is learning.

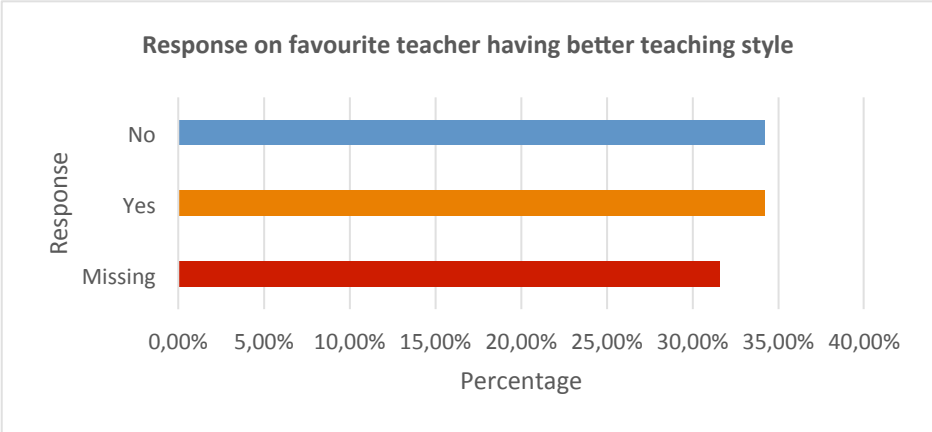


Fig.3: Showing the response of better teaching style of favorite teacher

In the fig.4 below, the level of performance of student that had not just a favorite tutor, but a tutor that had a better teaching style was assessed. The scale for assessment were from 'Very good-Excellent', 'Good-Very Good', 'Stagnant', 'Poor Good' and 'Very poor-Poor'. From the graph, only scales from 'Good-Very Good' and 'Very Good-Excellent' were captured for those were the only scales chosen by the respondent. It showed that over one-sixth and close to two-fifth had academic performance changing to the positive. Ie moving to Very Good and Excellent. This explained that the teaching style imbibed affected positively the academic performance of the students. Furthermore, worthy to note is the missing cases. They seem to be more with the obvious reasons that those questions were unanswered by some of the students as they never admitted they had a favorite teacher or tutor. The reason may not be far-fetched. The researched revealed that in terms of relationship, there is no cordial relationship between the students and the tutor and that has kept the distance between them far apart, with this factor having its own negative effect.

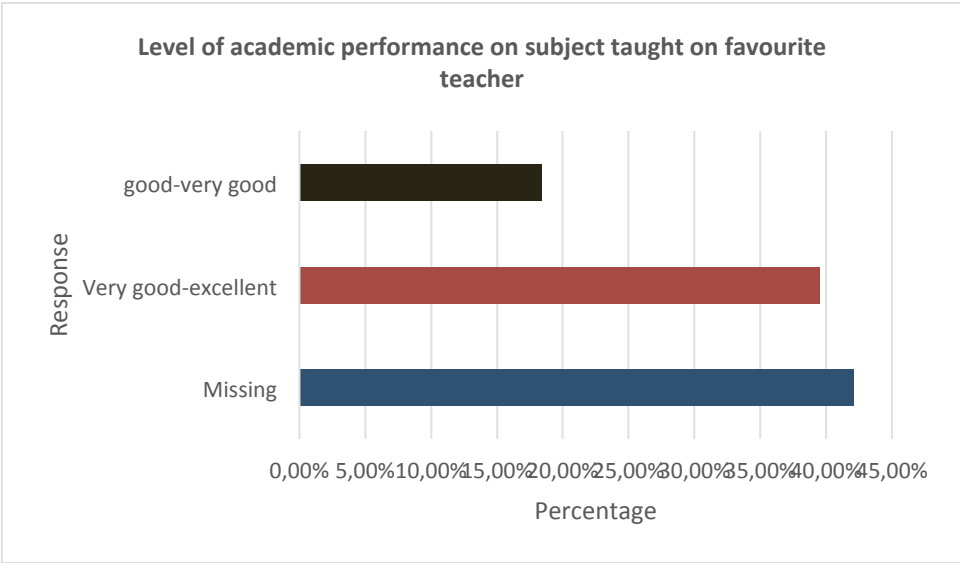


Fig.4: Showing the level of academic performance on course taught by favorite tutor

## 4 RECOMMEDATION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, the place of personality and gender was looked into in a private University in South West Nigeria as it affects tutoring. The result in general showed that gender had no role to play as effective tutoring is concerned. In addition, it captured that when the proper tutoring skill or attitude is imbibed, it helps to yield better academic performance of students and this has to be continuous or consistent. Although this attitude varies from tutor to tutor as it showed in this research. It is suggested that there should be this integration among tutors, to discussion their methods and experiences together on how knowledge can be properly transferred. This will help make tutor alike, thereby giving room for new discoveries and leading to knowledge dissemination progress, as they should be more bothered on how to teach and not just what to teach.

In conclusion, there should be a cordial relationship between students and their tutor as it has shown that the absence of this leaves a deficit in academic performance and inclusive learning process. Tutors should assume effectively the role of mentors and the classroom should be seen more like a learning environment whereby the students are allowed to express themselves properly without fear thereby increasing further inclusive learning.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors appreciates the Management of Covenant University for their support during this research. Also, the contributions of Etu, Tosin, Joshua and David (all present final year students of the department of Civil Engineering, Covenant University) for their time during the distribution of the questionnaires to students.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Barrows, H. S. (1992). *The Tutorial Process*. Springfield: Southern Illinois University of Medicine.
- [2] Deci, E. L., and Ryan, R. M. (1987). The Support of Autonomy and the Control of Behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, 1024 – 1037.
- [3] Deci, E. L., Nezlek, J., and Sheinman, L. (1981b). Characteristics of the Rewarder and Intrinsic Motivation of the Rewardee. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 40, 1 – 10.
- [4] Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier L. G., and Ryan, R. M. (1991). Motivation and Education: The Self-Determination Perspective. *Educational Psychologist* 26, 325 – 346.
- [5] Devin-Sheehan, L., Feldman, R. S., & Allen, V. L. (1976). Research on children tutoring children: A critical review. *Review of Educational Research* 46, 355-385.
- [6] Ellson, D. G. (1976) *Tutoring*. In N. Gage (Ed.). *The psychology of teaching methods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [7] Fitz-Gibbon, C. T. (1977). *An analysis of the literature of cross-age tutoring*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 148 807).
- [8] Grolnick, W. S., and Ryan, R. M. (1987). Autonomy in Children's Learning: An experimental and individual difference investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 890 – 898.
- [9] Reeve, J. (1996). *Motivating Others: Nurturing inner motivational resources*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon
- [10] Rosenshine, B., & Furst, N. (1969). *The effects of tutoring upon pupil achievement: A research review*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1969. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 064 462).
- [11] Tonelson, S. W. (1981). The Importance of Teacher Self-Concept to Create a Healthy Psychological Environment for Learning. *Education* 102, 96 – 100.