The Cost Elements of Mentoring to the Student Teacher: The Moderating Role of Mentees' Gender and the Location of Schools of Attachment

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Abstract

This study examined the moderating role of gender of mentees and the location of schools of attachment and its impact on the cost of the mentoring process. The cross-sectional and descriptive survey designs were blended to address the stated objectives along with the quantitative approach. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 810 mentees (477 males and 333 females) for the analyses. Frequencies, percentages, two-way ANOVA and predictive margins were used for the analyses. The major cost areas identified were accommodation, feeding, utility bills, transportation and stationery. Generally, the results indicated that, with exception of utility (electricity and water), gender and location individually explained the magnitude of the cost of the mentoring programme on the mentees but their joint effect did not. Specifically, more mentees in the urban areas irrespective of gender spent more on accommodation than mentees in the rural areas. Nonetheless, males in the urban areas spent more on accommodation than females in the urban areas and females in both the rural and urban areas spent more on utility bills and feeding than the male mentees. It was also observed that location of school of attachment did not significantly influence the payment of utility bills. The study concluded that with exception of accommodation and stationery; the female mentees felt the cost of the mentoring process in the areas of utility and feeding than the males. The study recommended that: the government pays special allowance to the student teachers during the mentoring session but the females' package should be higher than the males and the school authorities should provide decent accommodation for all mentees posted to their schools.

Keywords: Cost Element; Location of School of Attachment; Mentee's Gender; Moderating Role of Gender and Student Teacher Mentoring.

INTRODUCTION

In the view of Bozeman and Feeney (2007) "Mentoring is a process for the formal and informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career and professional development. Mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face for a sustained period of time between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)". The terms can be modified in terms of definition to suit different organisational needs (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). In the Ghanaian context, the term mentoring can be applied to the teaching practice

models of colleges of education based on the fact that the process involves an experience trained teacher (mentor) and a green student teacher (mentee). The process can at best be considered as a form of formal mentoring since the process occurs under the supervision of assigned Link Tutors of colleges of Education and a Lead Mentors at the schools of attachment.

As part of the curriculum for Diploma/Degree in Basic Education programme, student teachers are to spend their final year on attachments at various basic schools in the catchment areas of the respective colleges. Here, these student teachers are assigned to schools of attachment to under study trained and well experienced teachers for their professional development (T-Tel, 2016). This is referred to as the mentoring session of the programme. This period constitutes a major focal point in the teacher training programme, in that, the students then cease to be under the direct control of the college. They assume the responsibility of catering for themselves in terms of feeding, accommodation, payment of utility bills, transportation, stationery and other cost they cared less of while at the college. The mentoring programme among colleges in Ghana is uniform across gender and location. That is, students can be posted to rural or urban areas irrespective of gender and no special incentives exist in any of the localities under the programme. The students continue to receive their allowance as they were doing when they were in their colleges. The question still remains as to whether special allowance is required for the students during the mentoring period and if so, should it be uniform across gender and location. The policy direction on these issues requires some inputs from the research communities and academia as a whole. That is, does expenditure pattern differ significantly across gender and location beyond lifestyle choice of the respective genders? If so, which ground bears the greater grudge of these costs and how do these cost impact on the smooth running of the mentoring programme in Ghana?

It has already been established that expenditure pattern differs across gender in the traditional household setting (Lancaster, Maitra and Ray, 2008). Maharana and Ladusingh (2014) observed a wide gender disparity in food and health care expenditure, with that of males being higher than that of their female counterparts; the gap, however, is narrowing with time. The case of student teachers may not follow the general observation strictly and hence requires further assessment from the empirical perspective. That is, as cohort, are there genuine reasons for female student teachers to spend more than their colleague male student teachers and in which areas? Empirical literature concentrated more on food expenditure patterns of males and females but the mentoring programme exposes student teachers to other cost aside the two. The current study expanded the domain of expenditure to include accommodation, utility bills, stationery and transportation.

There were enough reasons to expect that cost patterns of male and female teachers could be moderated by the location as to whether the locality of attachment school is rural or urban. The available literature indicate that location is a significant predictor of expenditure patterns of individuals (Ahmad, 2015; Pateman, 2011; Obayelu, Okoruwa & Ajani, 2011). Ahmad (2015) asserted that the cost of food consumption expenditure patterns in the rural areas differ significantly from that of urban areas. Pateman (2011) observed that though rents in rural areas may be less than that of urban areas, the rural residence still finds rents less affordable than urban residence. Obayelu et al. (2011) also indicated that food expenditure dominates the expenditure of both rural and urban households. Marshall and Bollman (1999) concluded that "Location is an important factor in looking at spending patterns of households; where you are located impacts your household expenditure pattern" (p.1). Marshall and Bollman (1999) again found out that rural households on the average spend more on food, private transportation and long-distance telephone services than their urban counterparts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cost refers to all resources that must be sacrificed for production or a process to take place (Villar & Strong, 2010). Cost moves beyond finacial commitment to include other non-finnacil commitement, such as time and space in the school enviroment. The cost of mentoring student teachers in a one-year teaching practice as in the case of Ghana, is spread across stakeholders from the state through the colleges of education, the schools of attachement, the community, mentors and the student-teachers. The available literature mostly focus on cost of the mentoring programme on the state or the college to the neglect of the other three stakeholders. The issue of cost to the mentor and mentees, however, remains key component to the smooth runing of the prgramme. That is, the mentors and mentees are two important stakeholders in the mentoring process whose expenditure cannot be overlooked. Costs may be either one-time or ongoing. In its simple form, cost-benefit analysis is carried out using only actual financial costs and financial benefits. A more sophisticated approach attempts to put a financial value on intangible costs and benefits, a process that can be highly subjective (Villar & Strong, 2010). Villar and Strong reiterated that the growing demand for the scarce educational budgets make it necessary to assess the cost component of mentoring against the benefits and alternative models to make justifiable cause for the duration and modalities of the current mode of mentoring student teachers.

The major financial cost areas considered for mentees were feeding, accommodation, transportation, stationery and utility bills (water and electricity). The assessment of cost to the mentors was examined as the likely additional cost to them as a result of engaging in the mentoring process due to the presence of the mentees. Crumpton (2014) suggested that the costs of a mentoring programme can be varied and sometimes not clearly identified but the following areas can be considered in the cost identification:

Time spent (technically salaries) mentoring or being mentored and not performing other duties; any specialised training provided for the mentors to increase their mentoring skills; Logistical costs of facilities for meetings, refreshments or food, travel if appropriate and recruitment if needed; Administrative costs of scheduling and/or use of materials to support the process; and Any other cost associated with not performing the action of a formal mentoring programme or framework support for informal activities (Crumpton, 2014, p. 3)

Crumpton (2014) alluded to both financial and non-financial cost as well as explicit and implicit cost of the mentoring programme. That is, both mentors and mentees have opportunity cost (forgone alternative) for mentoring that must be taken into consideration in a holistic mentoring programme. The opportunity or real cost of mentoring to the mentor can include the alternative action they could take with the time spent on the mentees as well as instructional time loss due to the mentee's presence. A mentee's opportunity cost may include the content knowledge loss due to the need to apply the little learnt into real classroom environment as well as the extra time spent traveling between schools of attachment and the college. Though the extent of the implicit or opportunity cost can be gauged, the imputed financial cost was beyond the scope of the current studies which focused more on the explicit (financial) cost of mentoring.

Perhaps, the most important benefit of a student teacher mentoring is the need for a succession plane for the teaching profession since any cohort of mentees are the future teachers and mentors for the service. Empirical evidence supported the need to mentor the mentees if they are indeed the future teachers because mentoring has positive effects on the teaching competencies (Simon & Wardlow, 1989). A very critical aspect of the issue of cost to the mentee is that their participation in the mentoring process is more of a requirement than benefits. Hence, the more challenges they encounter during the process without

adequate support mechanism may results in participation without involvement. It is against the background of facing the challenge of cost that the gender of the mentees and location of the school of attachment has become important. The main purpose of the current study seeks to examine the cost components of the mentoring process to the mentees with special reference to the role their gender and the location of the school of attachment play in the generation of such cost.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional and descriptive survey designs were blended to address the stated objectives along with the quantitative approach. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 810 mentees (477 males and 333 females) for the analyses. Frequencies, percentages, two-way ANOVA and predictive margins were used for the analyses. The study was delimited to Central-Western Zone Colleges of Education in Ghana. Ghana has been zoned into five zones but the Central-Western zone was sampled as a cluster. The questionnaires were personally delivered to the mentees and maximum of four weeks was used for the administration of questionnaires in the four colleges of education selected for the study. This amounted to spending on the average, one weeks in each college namely Komenda College of Education, Foso College of Education, Waiwso College of Education and Enchi College of Education. Ghana Statistical Service (2014) defines a rural area as a town/community with a population less than 5,000 and all other areas are considered urban. To avoid doubt on what is rural or urban, the schools of attachment within and in the immediate environment around the district or municipal capital along with the town in which the college was located and the major town of each traditional area within the district or municipal areas were purposively sampled as urban. Evidence gathered from the Teaching Practice Unit of the colleges suggested that more mentees were conveniently posted to rural areas since most of the communities in the catchment areas of the colleges were rural communities.

The 210 schools of attachments comprised 53 urban and 157 rural schools. The rural to urban school ratio was estimated to be about 3 to 1 respectively. This proportion was used to sample 75% of the schools of attachment from the rural areas and 25% from the urban areas. The inclusion and exclusion criterion for a school of attachment was that the school must have at least 4 mentees present at the time of data collection. Hence, in the second stage, a minimum of 4 mentees and maximum of 8 mentees were selected from any single school of attachment. The selection of more than 8 mentees was dependent on whether the school was attached (Primary and JHS) or a primary school with double-stream under single head teacher. The total of 136 schools of attachment with 34 from the urban areas and 102 from the rural areas were selected. Since the mentee population was not evenly distributed across the schools of attachment, the final sample comprised 280 mentees from the urban area representing 35% and 530 mentees from the rural areas, representing 65% of the total sample involved in the study. The reason for the over-sample in the urban areas could be explained that most of the schools in the urban areas were attached or double streams. Gender distribution was maintained at 60% for males and 40% females as estimated from the initial sample. The selection of final units of analysis was done with the simple random sampling technique using the mentee population in the respective schools of attachment at the time of data collection based on the mentee's distribution.

In this study, the decision to achieve validity began from the selection and development of questions on the test items. Items on the questionnaire were carefully selected based on the previous studies, and in line with the objectives to ensure that the questions were relevant to the issues under consideration. Closely related to validity of test item, is the level of reliability of the item. A test item is said to be reliable when it can be used by different

researchers under stable conditions, with consistent results and the results not varying (Neuman, 2003). To improve the reliability of the research instruments, the Cronbach alpha was used to test the outcome of the pre-tested research instruments after which, questions found to fall short of internal validity were redesigned to improve the final outcome on reliability. According to Namdeo and Rout (2016), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges between 0 and 1 such that, closer values to 1.0 indicates greater internal consistency of the items on the scale. The rule of thumb provided by Namdeo and Rout (2016) states that, if the value of alpha is greater than 0.9 then the consistency is classified as Excellent, between 0.8 and 0.9 is Very Good, between 0.7 and 0.8 is Good, between 0.6 and 0.7 is Acceptable, between 0.5 and 0.6 is Questionable and less than 0.5 is Unacceptable. The results of reliability test of the questionnaire of this study based on the Cronbach's alpha test was 0.7906. A total of 840 questionnaires were administered to the student teachers. However, 810 valid questionnaires were retrieved, representing 96.42% response rate. This success rate was achieved as a result of personal administration of the instruments to the respondents.

Ethical consideration is very significance in every research, and this study cannot be left out (Kaewkungwal & Adams, 2019). Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) identified the major ethical issues in research as informed consent, beneficence (do not harm), respect for anonymity and confidentiality and respect for privacy. The researcher made all efforts to uphold all the aforementioned ethics. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire adequate information regarding the purpose and objectives of the study were clearly explained to respondents. Critical ethical issues such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, avoidance of deceptive practices, provision of the right to participate and withdraw, honesty and integrity were fully complied with. All the respondents were above 18 years and by the 1992 Ghanaian Republican Constitution, have the capacity to consent to being part of the study or otherwise. The questions posed to respondents were also evaluated to avoid the tendency of posing any physical, emotional or psychological threat to the respondents. The study ensured that every secondary material used was properly acknowledged. Data obtained was carefully protected and results were presented in all honesty. This was to strive hard to achieve high scores on the scale of value free research (Saunders, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to identify the role the gender of the mentees and the location of the schools of attachment play in the level of financial cost associated with the mentoring process to the mentee. The two dichotomous variables (gender and location) were combined to produce a categorical variable with four factors as males serving in rural areas, females serving in rural areas, males serving in urban areas and females serving in urban areas. The resultant gender-location variable had the distribution as presented in Figure 1.

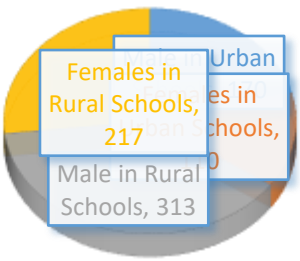

Figure 1: Distribution of Mentees' Gender by Location
Source: Field Survey (2020)

The results suggested that there were 280 mentees (170 males and 110 females) serving in urban areas while 530 (313 males and 217 females) served in rural areas. In all the locations, the male mentees dominated the female mentees. The analysis was done with these variables as a measure of the joint effects of gender and location of schools of attachment. Figure 2 presents the information on arrangement of accommodation by student teachers (mentees) based on their gender and the location of the school of attachment.

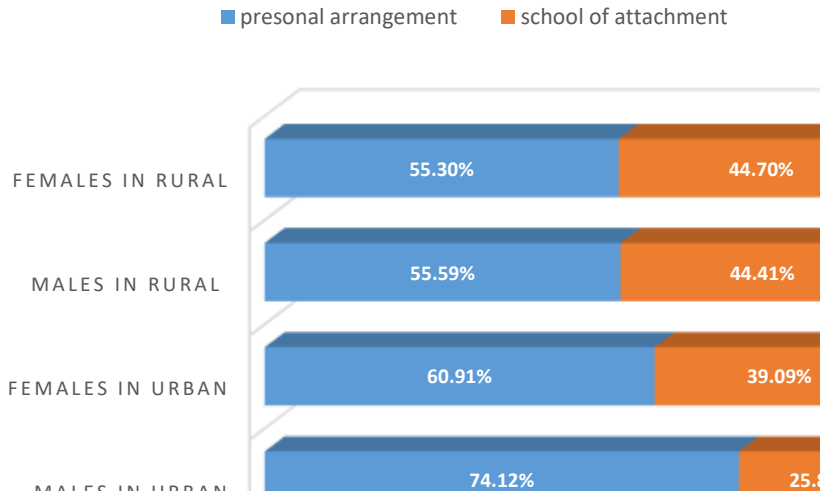

Figure 5: Accommodation Arrangements Based on Gender and Location
Source: Field Survey (2020)

The results as presented in Figure 2, suggest that 55.30% of the female mentees serving in the rural areas made their own arrangements for their accommodation needs, while 55.59% of the male mentees made their own arrangement. In the case of schools in the urban areas, 60.91% of the female mentees and 74.12% of the male mentees made their own arrangement for their accommodation. The general observation was that more mentees in the urban areas, irrespective of gender, made their own arrangement for their accommodation than those serving in the rural areas. It was also observed that males in the urban areas spent more on accommodation than females in the urban areas.

Table 1 presents the two-way ANOVA estimates of the mentees' sex, location and their interaction on the payment of utility bills. The multivariate normality test results suggested that the null hypothesis of symmetric distribution could not be rejected at the 5% significance level (Doornik-Hansen: chi2(2) = 5.688, Prob>chi2 = 0.0582>0.05). The robust variance test also found variance across sex (W0 = 2.8171187, df (1, 42), Pr > F = 0.10069038>0.05) and location (W0 = 2.3859939, df(1, 42), Pr > F = 0.1299293>0.05) to be homogenous at the 5% significance level. The R-square and the adjusted R-squares were moderately good and closer to each other which suggested that though there were likely other important variables that explain cost of mentoring, the sex of the mentees and the location of school of attachment are two of them.

Table 1: Two-Way ANOVA Estimations of Sex and Location on Utility Bills

Number of obs = 810				**R-squared= 0.4962**	
Root MSE = 13.8646				**Adj R squared=0.4959**	
Source	**Partial SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**	**Prob>F**
Model	1877.1591	3	625.7197	3.26	0.0314
Gender	1342.0227	1	1342.0227	6.98	0.0117
Location	96.022727	1	96.022727	0.50	0.4838
sex#location	439.11364	1	439.11364	2.28	0.1385
Residual	7689.0909	806	192.22727		
Total	9566.25	809	222.47093		

Sources: Field Survey (2020)

The results presented in Table 1, indicated that the payment of utility bills (F=0.50, P>F=0.4838>0.05) did not depend on the location of the school of attachment, but depended on the gender of the mentee (F=6.98, P>F=0.0117<0.05). The payment of utility bills as well did not depend on the joint effects of gender and location (F=2.28, P>F=0.1385>0.05).

The predictive margin means presented in Table 2 suggested that if all the mentees were serving in the urban areas, then the average utility bill would have been GHS20.14, but it would have been GHS19.63 if all the mentees were serving in the rural areas. Both means converge to GHS20.00 which explained why the contrast results rejected any statistical significance between the average utility bill in the urban and rural areas. The results on gender found the predictive margin mean for male students to be about GHS19.00 while that of females was about GHS20.77 which indicated that female mentees spend significantly higher than male mentees on utility bill.

Table 2: Margin Means of Utility Bills Based on Gender and Location of Mentees

	Delta-method				**[95%Conf. Interval**	
Variable	**Margin**	**Std. Err.**	**T**	**P>t**	**Low**	**Upper**
Location						
Urban (U)	20.14	0.784	25.69	0.000	18.6001	21.67619
Rural (R)	19.63	0.570	34.46	0.000	18.5161	20.75265
Gender						
Male (M)	19.1588	.5967898	32.10	0.000	17.98735	20.33024
Female (F)	20.76754	.7253829	28.63	0.000	19.34368	22.1914
Location#Gender						
U M	18.70647	1.005849	18.60	0.000	16.73208	20.68086
U F	22.25091	1.250435	17.79	0.000	19.79642	24.7054
R M	19.39776	.7412849	26.17	0.000	17.94269	20.85284
R F	19.98387	.8902817	22.45	0.000	18.23633	21.73142

Sources: Field Survey (2020)

The two-way factorial ANOVA results comparison of mean expenditure on food based on gender and location was fixed after which the margin and contrast results were retrieved for further analysis. The contrast results were presented in Table 3 and the results indicated that gender and location independently explained the feeding cost of the mentees, but their interaction did not.

Table 3: Contrast of the Difference in Feeding Cost Across Gender and Location

Variables	Df	F	P>F
Location	1	6.65	0.0101
Gender	1	4.75	0.0296
Location#gender	1	2.70	0.1007
Denominator	806	-	-

Sources: Field Survey (2020)

The predictive margin means of Gender and Location and their interaction was presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Margin Means of Feeding Based on Gender and Location of Mentees

	Delta-method Margin	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval
Location						
Urban (U)	11.39231	.1922149	59.27	0.000	11.01501	11.76961
Rural (R)	10.63694	.2644987	40.22	0.000	10.11775	11.15613
Gender						
Male (M)	10.76904	.2013537	53.48	0.000	10.3738	11.16428
Female (F)	11.66611	.2447403	47.67	0.000	11.18571	12.14651
Location#gender						
U M	10.56471	.3393681	31.13	0.000	9.898556	11.23086
U F	10.74364	.4218899	25.47	0.000	9.915504	11.57177
R M	10.877	.2501056	43.49	0.000	10.38606	11.36793
R F	12.15346	.3003763	40.46	0.000	11.56384	12.74307

Sources: Field survey (2020)

The margin means, as presented in Table 4, suggest that the average food expenditure in the urban areas was significantly higher than that of the rural areas (urban mean=11.39231, rural mean=10.63694). Further, the results indicated that the female mentees had higher margin mean expenditure on food than the male mentees (Female mean=11.66611, Male mean=10.76904). The interactive effects, however, were not statistically significant at explaining expenditure on feeding.

The results indicated that more mentees in the urban areas, irrespective of gender, provided for their own accommodation than mentees in the rural areas. Nonetheless, more males in the urban areas provided for their own accommodation than females in the urban areas. The observations could be explained that urban accommodation might be hard to find by the schools of attachment. However, the school administrations were more likely to consider females first in any limited accommodation they could provide. In some cases, the school authorities fell on the natives of the communities of attachment who had vacant accommodations in the town, but lived in cities for accommodation for the mentees. The school authorities in rural communities could sometimes even access these apartments for free once these landlords were briefed or recognised the benefits of the mentoring process to their community, but the same could not be said of the urban areas (Garau, 2015). Latham and Fifield (1993) had long observed statistically significant difference in the expenditure patterns in rural and urban areas. The fact that urban areas had higher cost of living as compared to rural, especially for food and accommodation, was not farfetched (Eduful and Hooper, 2019). The mentees in an urban area only got caught-up in this higher cost of living based on the location of their schools of attachment.

Furthermore, the finding that females, both in the rural and urban, paid more on utility bills and feeding than the male mentees, could be explained by the possibility that the females used more gadgets for cooking and storage of food than males that were consistent with our cultural predispositions. There were also the cultural demands for some female mentees to provide food for male mentees which would eventually increase their feeding cost over that of the male mentees. Gender and location therefore significantly explained the cost patterns of the mentees in the study area. Location of school of attachment did not significantly influence the amount of utility bills paid which confirmed that utility bill prices were not determined in the open market where population density and cost of living could influence. Ghana has a billing system for utility bills, such as water and electricity which depends on the level of usage not location of usage (Public Utility Regulatory Commission, 2018). Therefore, if a mentee in the rural area uses more electricity or water than those in urban areas, he or she will have to pay more for the services consumed.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of the study led to the concussion that mentees in the urban areas, irrespective of gender, provided for their own accommodation and spent more om accommodation than mentees in the rural areas. The study also concluded that with exception of accommodation and stationery; the female mentees felt the cost of the mentoring process in the areas of utility and feeding than the males mentees.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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