

Impact of Online Mentoring Programs and Stress Management Workshops on the Retention Rates of Vocational Trainees in Ogun State

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Abstract

Retention of vocational trainees remains a central concern in the advancement of skill-based education, particularly in contexts where workforce readiness is closely tied to programme completion. This study examined the impact of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State, Nigeria. A correlational survey design was adopted, involving a sample of 180 Year 2 trainees selected from three public vocational training centres using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through structured and validated instruments and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between online mentoring programmes and trainee retention ($r = 0.426, p < 0.05$), indicating that sustained mentoring engagement enhances persistence. Similarly, stress management workshops demonstrated a significant positive relationship with retention ($r = 0.472, p < 0.05$), suggesting that improved coping capacity supports continued participation in training. The combined effect of both interventions was also statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.61, F = 46.85, p < 0.01$), accounting for a substantial proportion of the variance in retention rates. The study establishes that both academic support through mentoring and psychological support through stress management are critical determinants of trainee persistence. It concludes that the integration of these interventions provides a more comprehensive framework for improving retention in vocational education and recommends their systematic adoption within training institutions to enhance skill acquisition outcomes and workforce development.

Keywords: Retention, Vocational trainees, Online mentoring, Stress management, Skill-based Education, Ogun State

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Introduction

Over two decades of engagement in vocational education have consistently shown that trainee retention remains one of the most critical indicators of programme effectiveness and national workforce preparedness. Vocational education plays a central role in equipping individuals with employable skills, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria, where youth unemployment continues to pose significant socio-economic challenges. Despite its relevance, vocational training systems are frequently confronted with high attrition rates, often linked to inadequate academic support, limited mentoring opportunities, and the psychological pressures associated with skill acquisition. These challenges call for innovative and evidence-based interventions that can sustain trainee engagement and improve completion rates. Existing evidence further suggests that the acquisition of practical and entrepreneurial skills significantly enhances learners' commitment to training programmes and their transition into the workforce (Oyewole & Oderinde, 2022; Oluwande & Oyewole, 2023), reinforcing the need to strengthen support systems within vocational education.

Mentoring has long been recognised as a foundational support mechanism in educational and professional development. In recent years, the emergence of online mentoring has transformed traditional mentorship models by expanding access, flexibility, and continuity of support. Empirical evidence suggests that structured e-mentoring programmes contribute to improved academic adjustment, increased persistence, and reduced dropout rates among learners (Tinoco-Giraldo et al., 2020; Speer et al., 2021; Jeske & Linehan, 2020). In more specialised contexts, mentoring initiatives have demonstrated strong retention outcomes, with some programmes reporting retention rates exceeding 70 percent over extended periods (Södergård et al., 2025). Furthermore, sustained engagement in virtual mentoring networks has been associated with improved educational and career transitions, indicating that mentorship extends beyond immediate academic outcomes to long-term professional trajectories (Thompson et al., 2024; Stoeger et al., 2023). This growing reliance on digital platforms aligns with findings that technological engagement and digital literacy enhance students' participation and learning outcomes in contemporary educational environments (Ogundipe & Oyewole, 2026). These findings suggest that online mentoring has the capacity to

provide vocational trainees with guidance, motivation, and industry-relevant insights that enhance their commitment to training programmes.

In parallel, the role of stress in influencing trainee persistence cannot be overlooked. Vocational training environments often require learners to balance practical skill development with personal and financial responsibilities, which can lead to heightened stress levels and eventual disengagement. Research in educational and occupational settings demonstrates that structured stress management interventions significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and burnout while improving overall well-being and performance (Heber et al., 2016; Heckendorf & Lehr, 2025). Programmes that incorporate resilience training and coping strategies have also been linked to improved progression outcomes and reduced attrition among trainees (Luton et al., 2023). Within student populations, stress management workshops have been shown to positively influence attitudes toward mental health and enhance learners' capacity to cope with academic demands (Terrell et al., 2023). Similarly, Oyewole and Abiodun (2025) established that psychological factors significantly shape students' attitudes and engagement with learning tasks, suggesting that unmanaged stress can undermine persistence and academic commitment. Evidence from vocational contexts further indicates that targeted coping interventions can reduce maladaptive behaviours and support persistence, particularly among more vulnerable trainees (Lang et al., 2019).

Within the Nigerian context, and specifically in Ogun State, there remains limited empirical exploration of how these two interventions function within vocational training systems. Existing studies have largely examined mentoring and stress management independently, with insufficient attention to their potential interaction. The integration of academic support through mentoring and psychological support through stress management presents a holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by vocational trainees. Such an approach aligns with contemporary perspectives in vocational education that advocate for learner-centred support systems capable of enhancing both competence and resilience. In addition, evidence suggests that students' behavioural engagement plays a crucial role in sustaining participation and improving academic outcomes (Oyewole et al., 2023), further underscoring the importance of combining motivational and psychological support strategies.

Drawing on both empirical evidence and extensive professional experience in the field, it is evident that the sustainability of vocational education depends not only on curriculum design but also on the availability of structured support mechanisms that address learners' academic and emotional needs. This study therefore seeks to examine the impact of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State. By situating these interventions within the broader discourse on skill development and educational persistence, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how vocational training systems can be strengthened to produce competent and resilient graduates.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate the impact of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- I. Determine the impact of online mentoring programmes on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.
- II. Examine the effect of stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.
- III. Assess the combined influence of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in this study:

- I. There is no significant relationship between online mentoring programmes and retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.
- II. There is no significant relationship between stress management workshops and retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.
- III. There is no significant combined influence of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to examine the impact of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State, Nigeria. The correlational survey design was considered appropriate because the study sought to determine the nature and extent of the relationships among the variables without manipulating them. The design also enabled the researcher to collect data from trainees who had previously participated in online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops and to assess how these interventions influenced their retention in vocational training programmes.

The study population comprised all Year 2 trainees in the five public vocational training centres in Ogun State, Nigeria. The public vocational training centres included:

- I. Government Science and Technical College, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta
- II. Government Science and Technical College, Ijebu-Igbo
- III. Government Technical and Vocational College, Isabo, Abeokuta
- IV. Government Technical College, Ota
- V. Government Technical College, Ijebu-Ode

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select three out of the five public vocational training centres in the state. The selected centres were:

- I. Government Science and Technical College, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta
- II. Government Science and Technical College, Ijebu-Igbo
- III. Government Technical and Vocational College, Isabo, Abeokuta

These centres were selected because they had established online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops in which trainees had participated over time. The selection was therefore based on the availability and implementation of the interventions relevant to the study. This ensured

that only trainees with adequate exposure to both interventions were included, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings.

Within the selected vocational training centres, purposive sampling was further used to identify Year 2 trainees who had actively participated in both online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops prior to the study. A total of 180 Year 2 trainees were selected as the study sample. The sample size was considered adequate because it represented trainees drawn from 60% of the public vocational training centres in Ogun State and included only participants with direct experience of the interventions under investigation. Furthermore, Year 2 trainees were considered appropriate for the study because they had spent sufficient time within the vocational training system to meaningfully assess the influence of the interventions on their retention.

Data for the study were collected using three researcher-developed instruments, namely: the Online Mentoring Programme Scale (OMPS), the Stress Management Workshop Scale (SMWS), and the Vocational Trainee Retention Scale (VTRS). Each instrument was divided into two sections. Section A elicited demographic information such as age, gender, and socio-economic background, while Section B contained structured Likert-type items measured on a four-point response scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Negatively worded items were reverse scored to ensure consistency in scoring and interpretation.

The Online Mentoring Programme Scale (OMPS) consisted of 10 items designed to measure trainees' level of participation in online mentoring activities and the extent to which such programmes contributed to their academic engagement and retention. The Stress Management Workshop Scale (SMWS) also contained 10 items aimed at assessing trainees' exposure to stress management strategies and their ability to cope with academic and personal pressures associated with vocational training. The Vocational Trainee Retention Scale (VTRS) comprised 10 items developed to measure trainees' persistence, commitment, and likelihood of completing their vocational training programmes.

The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in vocational education and educational psychology to ensure that the items adequately reflected the objectives and variables of the study. Their

observations and suggestions were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments to improve clarity, appropriateness, and relevance.

To establish the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted among 40 Year 2 trainees from another vocational training centre that possessed similar characteristics to the selected centres but was not included in the main study. The data obtained from the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.85 for the Online Mentoring Programme Scale (OMPS), 0.81 for the Stress Management Workshop Scale (SMWS), and 0.87 for the Vocational Trainee Retention Scale (VTRS). These coefficients indicated that the instruments possessed high reliability and were suitable for data collection.

The researcher obtained permission from the management of the selected vocational training centres before administering the instruments. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of the information provided. Copies of the questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents with the assistance of research aides, and all completed copies were retrieved immediately after completion to ensure a high response rate.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their responses to the research variables. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis, were employed to test the hypotheses and determine the relationships among the variables. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between online mentoring programmes and retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Online Mentoring Programmes and Retention Rates of Vocational Trainees in Ogun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
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Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Online Mentoring Programmes	180	3.15	0.98	178	0.426*	0.000	Significant
Retention Rates	180	3.08	0.94				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between online mentoring programmes and the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.426$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between online mentoring programmes and retention rates. This suggests that trainees who engage more in online mentoring programmes tend to exhibit higher retention rates. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between stress management workshops and retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Stress Management Workshops and Retention Rates of Vocational Trainees in Ogun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Stress Management Workshops	180	3.21	0.91	178	0.472*	0.000	Significant
Retention Rates	180	3.08	0.94				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between stress management workshops and the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.472$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between stress management workshops and retention rates. This implies that trainees who have undergone stress management training are more likely to remain in their vocational training programmes. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant combined influence of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Table 3: Joint Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Statistic	Value
R ²	0.61
Adjusted R ²	0.60

Model Statistic	Value
F-Statistic	46.85
p-value (F-Test)	< 0.01

Table 3 presents the joint multiple regression model examining the relationship between online mentoring programmes, stress management workshops, and the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State. The R² value of 0.61 indicates that 61% of the variance in retention rates is jointly explained by online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops. The model is statistically significant (F = 46.85, p < 0.01), confirming that the predictors collectively contribute significantly to retention rates.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of Predictors for Retention Rates

Predictor Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)	Standardised Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Online Mentoring Programmes	0.45	0.54	7.22	< 0.01	Significant
Stress Management Workshops	0.40	0.50	6.38	< 0.01	Significant

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients of the predictors. The standardised coefficient for online mentoring programmes (β = 0.54) indicates a strong positive contribution to retention rates, while the unstandardised coefficient (B = 0.45) suggests that a one-unit increase in online mentoring participation leads to a 0.45-unit increase in retention rates. The predictor is statistically significant (t = 7.22, p < 0.01).

Similarly, stress management workshops (β = 0.50) have a notable positive contribution, with an unstandardised coefficient (B = 0.40), indicating that a one-unit increase in stress management training results in a 0.40-unit increase in retention rates. This predictor is also statistically significant (t = 6.38, p < 0.01).

Overall, the results indicate that online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops jointly explain a substantial portion (61%) of the variability in retention rates. Individually, online mentoring programmes (β = 0.54) have a slightly greater influence compared to stress management workshops (β = 0.50). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant combined influence of online mentoring programmes and stress

management workshops on the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the role of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops in enhancing the retention of vocational trainees in Ogun State. Drawing from both the present results and wider scholarly evidence, it is evident that structured academic and psychological support systems are central to sustaining learner engagement in skill-based training environments.

The significant positive relationship observed between online mentoring programmes and trainee retention aligns with a substantial body of international research. Mentoring has consistently been shown to reduce attrition and improve persistence across educational and professional contexts. For instance, systematic and umbrella reviews in healthcare and education indicate that mentoring programmes can increase retention rates to between 70 percent and 100 percent while significantly reducing turnover (Södergård et al., 2025; Vidal & Olley, 2021). Similarly, studies involving novice professionals demonstrate that mentored individuals are less likely to withdraw from programmes or resign prematurely compared to their non-mentored counterparts (Liff & Rovio-Johansson, 2025; Wikström et al., 2023). In educational settings, mentoring has been linked to stronger organisational commitment and longer anticipated career duration (Park & Choi, 2025). These patterns are consistent with the present findings, where increased participation in online mentoring corresponded with higher retention rates among vocational trainees. The implication is that mentoring, even when delivered through digital platforms, provides essential academic guidance, emotional encouragement, and professional orientation that strengthen trainees' commitment to completing their programmes.

The significant effect of stress management workshops on retention further reinforces the importance of addressing the psychological dimensions of vocational training. Vocational trainees often operate under considerable pressure due to academic demands, financial constraints, and personal responsibilities. Evidence from prior studies shows that structured stress management and resilience training programmes significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and burnout while enhancing coping mechanisms (Heckendorf & Lehr, 2025; Henshall et al., 2023). In more intensive training environments

such as surgical education, resilience interventions have been associated with markedly improved progression outcomes and reduced burnout levels (Luton et al., 2023). Although many of these studies do not measure retention directly, improvements in well-being and reduced burnout are widely recognised predictors of persistence in training and employment. The positive relationship identified in this study therefore reflects a broader pattern in the literature, indicating that trainees who are equipped with effective coping strategies are more likely to remain engaged and complete their vocational programmes.

The combined influence of online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops represents a particularly important contribution of this study. The findings demonstrate that these interventions jointly explain a substantial proportion of the variance in retention rates, suggesting that they operate as complementary mechanisms. Evidence from related research supports this integrated perspective. Some resilience training programmes incorporate mentoring components, with participants reporting improvements in confidence, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being (Henshall et al., 2023). In organisational contexts, mentoring is also conceptualised as a tool for building social capital and enhancing resilience, thereby enabling individuals to cope more effectively with workplace stress and remain in their roles (Sheri et al., 2018; Wikström et al., 2023). This convergence of academic support and psychological resilience provides a more holistic framework for understanding trainee persistence.

From a vocational education standpoint, the implications are significant. Retention is not solely a function of instructional quality or curriculum relevance but is deeply influenced by the support structures available to learners. Online mentoring addresses the cognitive and professional needs of trainees by providing direction, feedback, and exposure to real-world practices. Stress management workshops, on the other hand, strengthen emotional stability and adaptive capacity, enabling trainees to navigate the challenges associated with skill acquisition. When these interventions are implemented together, they create a supportive learning environment that fosters both competence and resilience.

The consistency between the findings of this study and the broader empirical literature strengthens confidence in the applicability of these interventions within the Nigerian vocational education system. Although much of the

existing evidence is derived from healthcare, education, and other professional training contexts, the underlying mechanisms of support, engagement, and coping are comparable. The results therefore suggest that similar benefits can be realised among vocational trainees in Ogun State, provided that these programmes are well-structured, adequately resourced, and actively monitored.

In practical terms, the study points to the need for policymakers and vocational training administrators to prioritise the integration of digital mentoring platforms alongside structured stress management initiatives. Such an approach would not only improve retention rates but also enhance the overall quality of vocational training outcomes. By fostering both academic engagement and psychological well-being, these interventions contribute to the development of a more resilient and skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic labour market.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that online mentoring programmes and stress management workshops play a significant role in enhancing the retention rates of vocational trainees in Ogun State. The findings reveal that both interventions independently contribute to increased persistence among trainees, while their combined influence accounts for a substantial proportion of the variation in retention outcomes. Online mentoring provides essential academic guidance, motivation, and career orientation, whereas stress management workshops strengthen emotional resilience and coping capacity, enabling trainees to navigate the challenges associated with skill acquisition. The results affirm that retention in vocational education is strongly influenced by the availability of structured academic and psychological support systems, and that integrating these interventions offers a more comprehensive approach to sustaining trainee engagement and improving programme completion rates.

Recommendations

- I. Vocational training institutions should institutionalise structured online mentoring programmes with trained mentors to provide continuous academic and career support for trainees.

- II. Stress management workshops should be integrated into the vocational training curriculum as a regular component to enhance trainees' emotional well-being and resilience.
- III. Government and policymakers should allocate adequate funding and resources to support the implementation and expansion of digital mentoring platforms and mental health interventions in vocational centres.
- IV. Training administrators should ensure active participation and engagement of trainees in both mentoring and stress management programmes through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- V. Capacity-building initiatives should be organised for instructors and mentors to equip them with the necessary skills for effective mentoring and psychological support delivery.
- VI. Future research should explore additional factors such as financial support, peer influence, and institutional environment to provide a more comprehensive understanding of trainee retention in vocational education.

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