



# **Mentoring and Its Influence on Career Development of Academic Members of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria**

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### **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigates the impact of mentoring on career development among academic members. Specifically, the study examines the means of fostering mentoring relationships and the challenges experienced by both mentors (Senior Academic Members) and Mentees (Junior Academic Members) in Nigerian tertiary institutions. One hundred academic staffs of University of Ibadan that have at least four years of teaching experience were purposively selected from the various faculties, while 60 academic staffs of the Polytechnic, Ibadan that have at least five years of teaching experience were purposively selected from the various faculties, totaling 160 respondents as a sample size for the study. Structured questionnaire was used to collect the data, while both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Result reveals that mentoring that exists in Nigerian tertiary institutions are mostly informal in nature, but has significant influence on career development of academics. However, this study indicates most of academic members have not benefited from mentoring due to the challenges embedded in mentoring. The study, therefore, recommends that management of tertiary institutions should seek to encourage mentors and mentees to develop strong relational quality as key component of successful mentorship.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Raising academic standards in Nigerian tertiary institutions has generated increasing concern in recent times; particularly due to the Universities' seeming inability to compete favourably with their counterparts worldwide. As part of measures to tackle this problem, finding ways of improving the productivity of academics is seen as a vital step in the right direction [1]. Mentoring has been acknowledged by the researchers and scholars as a germane avenue through which professional skills can be acquired, for developmental purposes and effective career development and productivity by young academics [2,3,4,5]. According to [6], the role of mentoring in human resource development greatly affects the lives of both mentors and mentees. Mentoring creates many career consequences in the workplace, such as career development and progress, increased promotions, compensation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. [7] also argue that mentoring programs have benefited many successful careers in business, industry, and education.

Increase of students' enrolment in Nigerian tertiary institutions on yearly basis calls for more qualified personnel that will provide qualitative teaching, research and services that can compete with its peers in the Western world. [8] argues that one way to maintain academic standards and performance is mentoring. In the same vein, [1] also affirm that mentoring is a veritable tool to academic standards and performance. However, previous studies reveal that benefits of mentoring have not been acknowledged by both scholars and their institutions [9,10,11]. The consequent of this has led to low productivity and decline in the quality of teaching in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. The management of the institutions is therefore under pressure to embrace mentors and mentees relationship as key component of successful mentorship. This will reduce the shortcoming experienced by the institutions in terms of human resource capacity building needed for the achievement of their visions.

Pertinent questions are as follows:

1. What are the means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members?

2. What are the perceived barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting?
3. What are the challenges experienced by mentees in mentoring relationships?
4. To what extent does mentoring influences career development of academic members?

### 1.1 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of mentoring on career development among academic members of selected tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- To identify the means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members.
- To find out the perceived barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting.
- To identify challenges experienced by mentees in mentoring relationships.
- To examine the extent to which mentoring influence carrier development of academic members.

### 1.2 Research Hypothesis

$H_0$ : Mentoring has no significant influence on career development of Academic Staff of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria.

$H_1$ : Mentoring has significant influence on career development of Academic Staff of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Mentoring

According to [12], mentoring was first highlighted in the epic story of 'The Odyssey'. Odysseus told his loyal and experienced friend, Mentor, to educate his son, about the tips of handling challenging lifestyles before he left for the Trojan War. Based on this story, mentoring was traditionally viewed as an important field of education, where a mentor was regarded as an

old man who possessed wisdom and could be trusted to educate young men who had little experience [12]. Later, researchers, scholars and professionals interpret the concept of mentoring and practice of mentoring programs in line with the development of organizations in the current era of globalization [8,13,14,15].

Mentoring was traditionally viewed as an important field of education and/or counseling, where a mentor was regarded as an old man who possessed wisdom and could be trusted to educate young men who had little experience [12]. The word mentor, according to [16], is defined as "a wise, loyal advisor, a teacher or coach." [17] define mentoring as 'off line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking. A mentoring is also defined as, "a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies [18,19]." This definition allows for the possibility that a mentor may be younger than a mentee. Before exploring the role mentoring plays in business organizations and the problem of unsuccessfully matching mentors and mentees, we should consider the historical uses of the concept in apprenticeship programs and teacher retention programs. Both of these areas have utilized the mentoring concept for learning and job support.

The concepts of mentoring and formal mentor programs are familiar to many in educational institutions and apprenticeship programs. Mentoring programs exist for new teachers, youth-at-risk, and in the higher education setting for faculty and students. The role of formal mentor programs in business organizations, however, is not as common as it is in education. A review of the literature shows studies on mentoring in the workplace are mostly limited to the past 25 years. The fact that mentoring is considered as an innovation in performance improvement in organizations [19] suggests that mentoring programs are fairly new in the workplace. A mentor is therefore someone who helps another person through an important transition such as coping with a new situation like a new job or a major change in personal circumstances or in career development or personal growth. The person being helped is often called the 'learner' or the 'mentee'.

### **2.1.1 Forms of mentoring**

**Multiple Mentoring:** The literature on mentoring suggests that individuals develop more than one mentoring relationship in the course of their careers [1]. [20] originally proposed that individuals rely upon not just one but multiple mentors for developmental support. A mentee may maintain a peer-like relationship with a former mentor, while at the same time developing a new mentoring relationship with a different mentor. [21] also support the existence of multiple mentoring relationships and proposed that having multiple mentors may enhance mentoring outcomes. Their results suggest that experiencing multiple mentoring relations may result in greater organizational commitment, job satisfaction, career expectations, increased perceptions of alternative employment, and lower ambiguity about one's work.

**Team Mentoring:** Team mentoring occurs when the leader serves as a team mentor and develops the team through career coaching, psychosocial support, and role modelling [22]. In team mentoring, the expertise resident in one individual is made available to multiple mentees at the same time [23]. [22] notes that team mentoring also involves a responsibility for each team member to support the learning being promoted by the team mentor through peer mentoring. Thus, team mentoring is both dyadic and group focused with mentoring ties between both the team leader and each team member and among team members themselves.

**E-Mentoring:** E-mentoring uses electronic means as the primary channel of communication between the mentor and the protégé [24]. E-mentoring relationships are maintained through various electronic media, including e-mail, chat, or the Web, whereas the traditional mentoring relationships are created and nurtured by frequent face-to-face contact between the mentor and the protégé. E-mentoring literature is still evolving and there is yet to be an empirical analysis that compares face-to-face and computer mediated mentoring relationships.

### **2.2 Career Development**

Career development refers to a developmental process extending over almost the entire life span, through which persons develop the

capacity for and engage in work as part of their total life style [25]. According to [1], career development involves training on new skills, moving to higher job responsibilities, making a career change within the same organization, moving to a different organization or starting one's own business. [19] sees career development as a dynamic process that requires individuals to engage in the ongoing assessment, analysis, and synthesis of information about the world of work and self. In similar study, [8] describes career development as a developmental process extending over almost the entire life span, through which persons develop the capacity for and engage in work as part of their total life style. Career development and advancement are believed to be influenced by a variety of personal characteristics; however, evidence suggests that environmental and organizational factors also play a significant part in the academic career development process [26]. [27] argues that in choosing a career, people prefer jobs where they can be around others who are like them. They search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities, while taking on enjoyable problems and roles [1].

### 3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Few available studies on relationship between mentoring and career development have mixed results. For instance, [1] examine the impact of mentoring on career development of academics in Nigerian universities. A survey of two hundred (200) participants was carried out, while the generated data was analyzed with linear regression analysis. The result shows that mentoring is significantly and positively influenced career development of academics. [12] also examine the direct effect of a mentoring program on individuals' advancement using a 153 usable questionnaire gathered from employees who have worked in a public university in East Malaysia. Data was analyzed with the aid of regression analysis and result showed that mentoring is positively and significantly correlated with individuals' career development.

[28] also examine the role of informal mentoring in the career success of first-line bank managers. Data were collected from 510 first-line bank managers through a survey of 10 banks in four central business districts of Lagos State, Nigeria. Results of hierarchical regression analysis

revealed that informal mentoring accounts for a significant proportion of the variance in career success. The work of [29] also agrees with the previous studies that properly implemented formal and informal mentoring program activities (e.g., friendship, social support, role modelling, acceptance and participation) have been a determinant of individuals' advancement, such as career development and psychosocial support. More also the studies of [30,31,32,33,34] and [35] find out that mentoring programme was associated with career development.

However, the studies of [36,37] and [38] have contrary opinions. They find that there is no significant relationship between mentoring and career development. Also, [29] and [39] also confirm that influence of mentoring type on individuals' personal advancement was not clear. These inconsistencies in results are a justification for the present study.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** The study used descriptive cross-sectional research design to allow the researcher to integrate literature review, in-depth interviews, pilot study and survey questionnaires as a major procedure to gather less bias data [40,41].

**Sample Selection:** University of Ibadan and The Polytechnic, Ibadan was selected through Purposive technique. The choice of these institutions is based on the fact that they were the first established University and Polytechnic in South Western Nigeria. Hundred academic staff members of university of Ibadan that have at least four years of teaching experience were purposively selected from the various faculties, while sixty academic staff members of the Polytechnic, Ibadan that have at least five years of teaching experience were purposively selected from the various faculties, totaling one hundred and sixty respondents as a sample size for the study.

**Data Collection Instruments:** A structured questionnaire that was developed and validated by [8,42] and [12] were adopted for this study.

**Reliability and Validity of the Instruments:** Test – retest method was used in order to establish the reliability of these instruments. In order to confirm the validities of the instruments,

the instruments used in this study were submitted to a panel of experts for validation.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Data were analyzed with the aid of mean, standard deviation and linear regression. Criterion mean of 3 was used for interpretation of mean. Criterion mean of 3 was generated by adding the total assigned values of the responses and dividing by the total number of responses ( $5+4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15/5 = 3$ ). Thus any mean score up to 3 and above was interpreted as acceptable by respondents while 2.99 and below is adjudged rejected by the respondents. Grand mean value was used to determine the significant level of acceptance. Grand mean is the average value of total mean.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the summary of the descriptive statistics of data from the respondents that participated in the study. One hundred and sixty copies of structured questionnaire were administered to respondents, out of which 100 responses were received, representing 62.5% retrieval rate.

Table 1 shows a grand mean value of 4.184 which is above the criterion mean of 3. This shows that respondents agreed that the above listed items are the means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members in tertiary institutions. Furthermore, a grand mean of 4.184 shows significant level of acceptance of

the items as means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members in tertiary institutions. Results indicate that mutual respect and reverence for academic feats, resolve to share resources and experience, appreciation of the need to mentor or be mentored, joint research, publications, teaching and conference/workshop attendance and approaching senior colleagues with development problems are major means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members with mean value of 4.8818, 4.6182, 4.3273, and 4.2545 respectively. However, request to be mentor or mentees an academic has least mean value of 3.0910. This study is in line with the findings of [8].

Table 2 reveals a grand mean of 4.3732, which is above the criterion mean of 3. This implies that respondents agreed that the above listed items are the perceived barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting in Nigeria. Moreover, a grand mean of 4.3732 shows significant level of acceptance of the items as barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting in Nigeria. Results show that branding of mentors as spearheads of cliques and mentees as favoured was most perceived barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting in Nigeria. The result is similar to the study of [8] that branding of mentors as spearheads of cliques and protégés as favoured is a daunting challenge to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting.

**Table 1. Means of fostering mentoring relationships among academic members**

| Statement  | Mean         | Standard deviation | Remark   |
|--|--------------|--------------------|----------|
| Mutual respect and reverence for academic feats, resolve to share resources and experience | 4.881        | .3514              | Accepted |
| Personal decision/conscious effort to establish a link with a potential mentor or protégé  | 4.054        | .9170              | Accepted |
| Appreciation of the need to mentor or be mentored  | 4.618        | .5415              | Accepted |
| Joint research, publications, teaching and conference/workshop attendance                  | 4.327        | .6787              | Accepted |
| Approaching senior colleagues with development problems                                    | 4.254        | .7594              | Accepted |
| Provision of academic leadership by senior members   | 4.063        | .9313              | Accepted |
| Request to be mentor or mentees of an academic   | 3.091        | .9394              | Accepted |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>  | <b>4.184</b> |                    |          |

Table 3 shows the challenges experienced by Mentees (Junior Academic Members) in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Results indicate that inadequate opportunity to speak freely about their ideas, inadequate attention from mentor and balancing conviction with expectations of a mentor are major areas junior academic members experience challenges with Mean value of 4.9398, 4.7229 and, 4.5060, respectively. The study is consistent with [1,30] and [8] that major areas protégés experience challenges are inability to measure up to a

mentor's standard, inadequate attention from mentor, balancing conviction with expectations of a mentor, inadequate opportunity to speak freely about their ideas, fear of being branded as 'anointed' and the pressure of deadlines.

### 5.1 Hypothesis Testing

$H_0$ : Mentoring has no significant influence on career development of Academic Staff of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 2. Perceived barriers to the maintenance of mentor role in academic setting**

| Statement  | Mean          | SD      | Remark   |
|--|---------------|---------|----------|
| Branding of mentors as spearheads of cliques and mentees as favoured | 4.9296        | .25768  | Accepted |
| Lack of fund   | 4.3803        | .48891  | Accepted |
| laziness and unresponsive attitude of mentees                        | 4.7042        | .45964  | Accepted |
| lack of trust  | 4.4225        | .73020  | Accepted |
| Lack of a formal structure to foster mentoring                       | 4.2817        | .67998  | Accepted |
| Self-withdrawal of junior members                                    | 3.9859        | .97823  | Accepted |
| Pressure of administrative duties                                    | 4.1127        | 1.10259 | Accepted |
| Lack of reverence by juniors for the expertise of seniors            | 4.1690        | .79257  | Accepted |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>  | <b>4.3732</b> |         |          |

**Table 3. Challenges experienced by Mentees (Junior Academic Members)**

| Statement   | Mean          | SD      | Remark   |
|---|---------------|---------|----------|
| Inadequate opportunity to speak freely about their ideas          | 4.9398        | .23938  | Accepted |
| Inability to measure up to a mentor's standard                    | 4.3253        | .47134  | Accepted |
| Inadequate attention from mentor                                  | 4.7229        | .45029  | Accepted |
| Balancing conviction with expectations of a mentor                | 4.5060        | .70492  | Accepted |
| Fear of being branded as 'anointed' and the pressure of deadlines | 4.3012        | .65769  | Accepted |
| Sexual exploitation or harassment                                 | 4.1325        | .97244  | Accepted |
| Poor matching and/or relationship problems                        | 4.1205        | 1.02882 | Accepted |
| Time pressures on mentors who are already heavily burdened        | 4.1687        | .74603  | Accepted |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>   | <b>4.4021</b> |         |          |

**Table 4. Influence of mentoring on career development**

| Model    | R                 | R Square                    | Adjusted R square | Std. error of the estimate |        |      |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|------|
| 1        | .191 <sup>a</sup> | .036                        | .028              | .34658                     |        |      |
| Model    |                   | Unstandardized coefficients | Std. error        | Standardized coefficients  | T      | Sig. |
|          |                   | B                           |                   | Beta                       |        |      |
| 1        | (Constant)        | 4.585                       | .150              |                            | 30.478 | .000 |
|          | Mentoring         | .073                        | .036              | .191                       | 2.022  | .046 |
| <b>F</b> |                   |                             |                   | <b>4.088</b>               |        |      |

a. Dependent Variable: Career Development

Table 4 reveals that mentoring has significant influence on career development of academic members. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination of ( $R^2$ ) with value of 0.036 means that 3.6% of the total variations in the career development have explained by the explanatory variables taken together. Reason for low value of  $R^2$  may be because mentoring that exists in the studied tertiary institutions are mostly informal in nature. The adjusted  $R^2$  shows that even after adjusting for the degree of freedom, the model could only explain about 2.8% for career development. This, not only signifies low levels of the explanatory power of the model, but indicates that there are other factors that account for the change in the career development. However, the F – statistics, which assesses the reliability of the regression, is significant at 5% level for measure of career development. This implies that mentoring acts as a predictor or antecedent of individuals' career development in the studied tertiary institutions.

This study supports the findings of [1,12,28,30,31,32,34] and [33] that mentoring programme is associated with career development.

However, this study is contrary to the findings of [36,37,38,29] and [39].

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study investigates the impact of mentoring on career development among academic members. Specifically, the study examines the means of fostering mentoring relationships and the challenges experienced by both mentors (Senior Academic Members) and Mentees (Junior Academic Members) in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study reveals that mentoring that exists in Nigerian tertiary institutions are mostly informal in nature, but has significant influence on career development of academics. However, this study indicates most of academic members have not benefited from mentoring due to the challenges embedded in mentoring.

The study, therefore, recommends that mentoring relationship should be formalized by the management of tertiary institutions. More also, senior academic staff members should give adequate attention to their academic staff members and also allow them to speak freely about their ideas. This will encourage mentors and mentees to develop strong relational quality

as key component of successful mentorship. Hence, academic standards in Nigerian tertiary institutions may rise.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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