

# MENTORING IN THE WORK PLACE: PROSPECT AND CHALLENGES IN A CHANGING WORLD

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## **Abstract**

**M**entoring is one among the basic part of organisational continuity and success. An organisation that do not prioritise this factor tend to put its future in jeopardy. Personnel development depend on it mostly. Different scholars have given different opinions on what they opined to what mentoring is. Redmond (2009) view it as a professional bond between an elderly friend, tutor or a counsellor to a growing person in an organisation. Another viewed it to be serving as a guide, counsellor and teacher for another person usually in academics or occupational capacity. As important as mentoring is, the actors allowed the effect of extraneous variable to set in and mask the wrong/unacceptable behaviour as mentoring. With the advent of time, the mentors have become stingy with knowledge, and those that are ready to mentor usually end up with unserious mentees. More so, pride, superiority perception, and egoism has taken the lead were the upcoming colleagues are not ready to learn and the experienced are forcing or selfishly commanding for respect. Mentoring is a process that softly teaches humility to both parties for effective learning and development. Few of these menace were looked into and intended solution were outlined.

**Keywords:** Mentoring Workplace and changing world.

## **Introduction**

The future of every organization depends 80% on this psychological factor called mentoring. Many people have attended / achieved or perform excellently well in their fields of endeavor because they pass through adequate mentoring. The initial intends of mentoring is to groom the young breeds to adapt, adjust, perform and be conversant with their roles in/on duties. But with the

advent of technology and passage of time, people have logically changed the original focus into what is called master and slave venture. Selfishness has eroded the true meaning of mentoring. People have become selfish with knowledge to a point where only few want to share. For the purpose of this paper, this active factor will be looked into critically. What then is mentoring in a workplace or what is workplace mentoring?

Jeff (2016) defines it as a learning partnership between employees for purposes of sharing technical information, institutional knowledge and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavour. If this process is done correctly, the organization may reduce turnover and increase productivity. Ragins (2012) argued that workplace mentoring is not confined to a certain age and is a relationship that develops through close interactions with a [mentor](#) and their protégé (mentees). Mentoring practices differ from other developmental relationships in the workplace, such as supervision and leadership. As being observed in our today practices, people have changed the original function of mentoring into relationships that will not yield any adequate profit to the organisation. Remember! The essence of mentoring in the first place is for maximisation of profits.

People have become so selfish these days that only few are ready to teach, guide and mentor the young ones in the profession of endeavour. No one wants to be displaced from his/her seat of honour so therefore they make policies that are so rigid in nature and difficult to attain a height within a short period of time. These undesirable behaviours are not adequate. It has distorted the mental perception of people/workers toward their commitment to work. No wonder corruption keeps growing both in size and weight. This is a big call to all organisational/ industrial psychologists. This problem calls for urgent attention where psychological techniques will be applied to control the effect of this mighty extraneous variable. Mentor has a great influence on his mentee.

This is seen in Bandura's experiment. He placed two different children in a different room. Those in room A watched an adult playing with a doll while those in room B watched an adult being aggressive toward the doll. When he gave the children direct access to the doll, he noticed that those who watched an adult playing with the doll, where actually playing with the doll but the other group were harsh to the doll because they watched an adult being harsh to the doll. His experiment proved the strong will of mentoring process. Mentees sometimes tend to unconsciously dress like their mentors, speak like their mentors and even plan their routines like their mentors.

### **Types of Mentoring**

There are different types of mentoring ranging from group, reverse, formal, informal, relational and one on one mentoring. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on reverse and relational mentoring. According to Reeves (2023) reverse mentoring is the type of mentoring that if only adequately handled, it will yield to positive outcome. It is a type that teaches humility and enhances quick learning. This type of mentoring takes place when a younger member of an organisation is the mentor to an older member of the same organisation. The essence is to foster a better pipeline of leadership in a company (Jeff, 2016). The mentor has less overall experience in comparison to the mentee due to age. But in the particular mentoring area the mentor has more experience which reverses some dynamics of the mentorship. Example a retired person goes back to work part time to stay busy at the local security outfit and gets assigned a mentor who is 30 or

less than 30 years younger. A lot of people do have issues with this type of moulding. Ego of self-pride do take dominance. The aged will not want to learn under the young mentor because they feel that they are older and they deserve more. Though not all processes are like that. The matured ones are glad and willing to learn under a young mentor.

Relational mentoring - his is a style of mentoring that is based on peer interaction. This type can be defined as an interdependent and generative developmental relationship that promotes mutual growth, learning, and development within the career context Eric (2007). Whether it be an older associate or their boss, the mentoring comes from a close bond with another associate. Example: coaches, advisors, and teachers.

### **False beliefs on Mentoring**

Mentoring is a developmental approach that connects mentors with experience, knowledge and skills with mentees who want to learn from them. Despite its many advantages, mentoring is still not a must-have development tool across organizations, because there are many misconceptions about it. The following myths will be looked into.

Time consuming – a lot of perception about mentoring is that it is time consuming. Even though, in a formal mentoring, time frame might be assigned. Note that mentoring is not completely the same as training. Were an organisation will send its employees to school, or to attend seminars etc. in order to add knowledge on the job. Mentoring is much more beyond that. Mentoring has no time limit so long as both parties are still in

the organisation, learning continues. The timing in this process is flexible and light in nature. Both parties decide when and how.

One can only be a mentor or a mentee – as the saying goes, no man is an island. Every individual is blessed with one or two skills that the next person needs to survive. A mentor in a particular area of work can be a mentee in another so also a mentee can be a mentor in another facet. That is how mentoring operates. In fact, in the same organisation, a mentee will in the passage of time be a mentor to the young ones in the organisation. The ladder is very long and before one claim to the next step/level he/she will have to be a mentee for some time and become mentor subsequently.

Mentor must be older or more senior than the mentee – this statement is a myth that mislead peoples' thought. In the reversal type of mentoring, a young person can be a mentor to an aged person. For instance, it is a known fact that most of the young employees are conversant with computer operations compare to the aged ones. And today the world is digital. The age will have to learn or be mentored by the young in order to stay relevant in the work place. Remember, Mentoring is about humility and learning.

The mentor dictates the relationship -A mentoring relationship is based on mutual trust, respect and openness a partnership. If the mentor determines the course of the relationship or always tells the mentee what to do, it takes away from the equality inherent in a partnership. It can also put too much of a burden on the mentor to have all the answers. The mentor's role is to provide perspective,

challenge the mentee's thinking, and provide support and encouragement. The mentee also needs to bring his or her views and experiences to the relationship. In fact, the mentor should actively seek feedback from the mentee. Together, they should acknowledge when they do not have answers and jointly explore issues to gain clarity.

The mentor needs to be an expert - Mentors must have experience, knowledge or skills that can benefit another person. They do not need to be experts; in fact, they must be open to the idea that they do not have all the answers. Mentoring skills can be learned; in fact, mentoring programs should be supported by [training for the mentors](#), followed by regular check-ins.

### **Morals to Maintain in a Workplace Mentoring**

Deduced from the literature, we outline come up with the following as the principles that both mentor and mentee should observe and maintain during the mentoring process as opined by

1. Humility
2. Integrity and maintenance of integrity
3. Flexibility
4. Respect
5. Selflessness/Genuineness
6. Listening ability
7. Openness/Free mindedness
8. Willingness/Freedom of Expression

### **Benefits of Mentoring**

There are so many benefits or prospects attached to mentoring in an organisation. This benefit cut across both the mentor and the mentee. This paper will look into the following few:

Enlightenment –mentoring is like a guiding light that exposes/remove one from darkness and makes him/her understand the target. It broadens the mentee's mental abilities and make him see things in a broad and different perspective from the initial perception.

Cognition – psychologically speaking, mentoring has gone beyond overt exhibition. It also has to do with the cognition of the mentee. Piaget (1980) emphasises on the importance of cognition to learning. As one gets matured his cognition too develops. Mentoring in a way is a process of learning which has to do with the mental capacity of an individual. The process spur for cognitive thinking, reasoning, decision marking, and problem solving etc. mentoring enhances mental abilities toward that which one is mentored on.

Continuity – one among the benefits of mentoring is continuity. Life they say is a stage where everyone acts and go. Mentoring process affirm that old adage. Ones the old/elderly mentor the young ones in the profession or in any other task, even when they are not there, the young ones will pick up perfectly with the task and there will be progress in the line of duty.

### **Challenges of mentoring**

In spite of the benefits of mentoring observed above, it still has its limitation. This paper will look at the following:

Mentors often do not have the time to schedule set meetings and provide feedback for their mentees. Some research has shown that there may be no benefit to formal mentorship. Recently, many organization

employees work from home, and that can make it difficult to establish a consistent relationship. As the distance or globalization increases, then barriers to effective communication arise impeding the understanding between mentor and mentee. The termination of mentor-mentee relations can be awkward. Studies show that over half of all mentees reported a negative experience with their mentor. Dysfunctional mentoring relations are those in which the relationship is not beneficial for either the mentor, mentee, or both.

### Conclusion / Recommendation

Mentoring is gradually dying in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most especially in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. Mentoring is a developmental approach that connects mentors with experience, knowledge and skills with mentees who want to learn from them. This means that willingness to participate in the mentoring program is key. Despite its many advantages, mentoring is still not a must-have development tool across organizations, because there are many misconceptions about it. The plethora of information on mentoring has helped dispute some myths. For instance, we now understand that mentoring is as beneficial for the mentee as it is for the mentor and that mentoring can be conducted virtually. Nonetheless, there are still many common misconceptions that hold organizations back from implementing mentoring training and people back from participating in them. Being in tune with the ethics of mentoring is key for successful productivity in an organization. It was recommended that the morals of mentoring should strictly be adhere

to in order to combat or reduce the problems of mentoring.

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