

**MENTORING PRACTICES OF BUSINESS EDUCATION
LECTURERS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN DELTA
STATE OF NIGERIA**

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Abstract

There has been growing concern about the quality of education in Nigeria, especially teacher education. The training of teachers is more theoretical than practical and teaching has become complex with different classroom tasks to be performed using varied strategies and assessment methods. It is against this background to fill the gap between theory and practicals that the mentoring practices of Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State of Nigeria has become the focus of this study. Survey design was employed. The population of the study comprised 110 Business Education lecturers in four Colleges of Education in Delta State. No sampling was carried as the population was of manageable size. Two research questions were raised to guide the study, while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A questionnaire which was validated by experts and with reliability coefficient of 0.78 was used for data collection. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that mentoring practices in Colleges of Education in Delta State of Nigeria are not effective. It was recommended among others that mentoring of less experienced Business Education lecturers should be formalized in such a way that every freshly employed graduate becomes a beneficiary.

Keywords: *Mentoring Practices, Mentor, Mentee and Business Education.*

Introduction

Mentoring has its root and origin in Greek mythology which is similar to apprenticeship method of training that was practiced before Industrial Revolution. Apprentice method of training is very popular in Nigeria and is normally used for skills acquisitions in informal settings like trade-craftsmanship. According to MacLennan (1999), mentoring is a process where one senior individual avails himself to a junior to form a non-specific developmental relationship; to seek information from; to regard as a role model; to guide the performer; to provide feedback and appraisal; and to teach all forms effectively. Joel (2011) saw mentoring as a two-way process of dialoguing and planning, helping some people acquire expected competency and skills for a job or employment that can sustain and stabilize his economic level. In organizations, mentoring occurs when people interact with each other in such ways to absorb and adopt behaviours, attitudes and skills needed to perform their duties perfectly well.

Mentoring is a learning process where helpful personal and reciprocal relationships are built while focusing on achievement and emotional support as key elements. Mckimm, Jolie and Hatter (2007) on their part saw mentoring as a period when the protégé is in need of guidance and support in order to develop confidence and competence. Within mentoring relationships, mentees develop and learn through conversations with more experienced mentors who share knowledge and skills that can be incorporated into their thinking and practice (Wong & Premkumar, 2007). This period of tutelage is beneficial to both new and old employee, although more beneficial to the new employee who is trying to familiarize himself and be accustomed to the new skills and knowledge in the performance of work in his new organization. Mentoring a new employee at this stage will eliminate the trial and error usually experienced when a new employee is not so sure of what to do in a new job. It is stressed that many world's successful people benefitted from mentoring relationship with a mentor. According to

Business Enterprise Centre (2012), Freddie Laker (creator of first discount British Airline Sky train) mentored Richard Branson, and in athletes, Edd Merckx (five times tour de France winner) mentored Lance Armstrong (seven times tour de France winner).

Mentoring in an organization comes in different forms. For some professions, it is formalized in such a way that a new fresh graduate must have a mentor attached to him for a certain period of time. A mentor is one who has acquired a lot of experience to advise the mentee on career interest and progression. However, mentoring is not just a way of helping individual teachers' personal professional development but also a device to assist and build strong teaching culture in our schools that is dedicated to improving teaching, learning and caring.

Business Education is a branch of Vocational Education which is education for and about business. Business Education is that area of educational process which concerns itself with vocational and professional preparation for a career in the teaching of business subjects, and with business information which is important for every citizen and consumer in order that he may better understand and use his business and economic surroundings effectively.

Mentoring in Business Education, especially for the new and less experienced Business Education lecturer, can be very helpful in boosting his morale, as he has less stress and anxiety being under the tutelage and the support of an experienced colleague. According to Abbajay (2016), a good mentor has the desire to develop and help others in terms of time and energy. This help will ensure that the mentee grows and advances in his chosen profession. Mckimm, Jollie and Hatter (2007) and Ezeani (2014) separately identified some interpersonal skills of a mentor as objectivity role model, flexibility, peer respect, demonstrate competence, nonthreatening attitude, facilitator of learning, initiative and independence, open mindedness approachability, self-understanding and aptitude for role model.

On the other hand, a mentee should possess the following qualities: humility,

loyalty, commitment, willingness to learn, keenness to succeed, flexibility, adaptability, ability to accept challenge, open mindedness and approachability. Mentoring can be used in so many ways. For instance, during induction for a new starter who has just resumed work. An individual is working towards promotion, when a staff changed roles in a department or across an organization, changes in job roles following a restructure and continuous professional development.

The practice of effective mentoring in Colleges of Education in Nigeria is at its lowest ebb or lacking completely. According to Olasupo (2011), many factors are responsible for the challenges found in mentor and mentee relationship. Threat to mentor/mentee (protégée) relationship presents themselves in form of new technologies like Information and Communication Technology, where it is generally believed that the younger ones are more knowledgeable. Schneider in Olowookere (2012) affirmed that senior faculty members now prefer to interact and exchange ideas with foreigners than locals.

Globalization has also taken its toll on mentoring relationship as it made it easier to mentor one another across borders thus removing the impact of physical observation. E-mentoring relations have become additional risks to the traditional mentoring relationship as there is chance of miscommunication. It also takes a longer time to develop a relationship in e-mentoring as well as growing concerns for privacy and confidentiality. However, according to Ensher, Huen and Blanchard (2003) e-mentoring is different from traditional mentoring in terms of ability to provide vocational support and friendship. It is obvious that mentoring practice has become widely accepted and therefore is here to stay.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the mentoring Practices of Business Education Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain:

1. The effectiveness of mentoring methods used by lecturers in Business

Education in Colleges of Education.

2. How mentoring in Colleges of Education has benefitted less experienced Business Education lecturers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. How effective are the mentoring methods used by lecturers in Business Education in Colleges of Education?
2. How has mentoring in Colleges of Education benefitted less experienced Business Education lecturers?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced lecturers and less experienced lecturers on effective methods used for mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced lecturers and less experienced lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State on mentoring benefits.

Research Method

Descriptive survey design was used for this study since it involved people's opinion and perceptions, among others. The population of this study consisted of 110 Business Education Lecturers in four Colleges of Education in Delta State of Nigeria. The Colleges of Education are Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba; College of Education, Agbor; College of Education, Warri and College of Education, Mosogar. No sampling was done because the size of the population was manageable. So, the population was used as the sample.

Instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire made up of two sections. Section A contained demographic data of the respondents which included their status in their institutions.

Section B consisted of questionnaire items on mentoring practices of Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State. The questionnaire contained 25 item statements. Each item had 4 point rating scale and research question 1 had highly Effective (HE) - 4point, Effective(E) -3point, Lowly Effective (LE) – 2point, Not Effective (NE) - 1 point. The second research question had also 4 point rating scale as Strongly Agree (SA) – 4point, Agree (A) – 3Disagree(D) – 2point, Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1point .

The questionnaire was subjected to face validation by two lecturers from School of Business Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained by

administering it to 10 lecturers of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze, Anambra State, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.78. Data generated from this study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. In taking a decision, any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was accepted, whereas any item with a mean below 2.50 was rejected.

Result

Research Question 1:

How effective are the mentoring methods used by lecturers in business education in Colleges of Education?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on Effective Mentoring Methods used by Business Education Lecturers in Colleges of Education

S/N	Items	HE	E	SE	NE	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1	Instructing/developing capabilities	9	10	80	11	2.2	.7	Not Effective
2	Development of personal mentoring plan	5	4	10	91	1.3	.8	Not Effective
3	Rapport building	4	8	31	67	1.5	.8	Not Effective
4	Coaching	3	15	71	21	2.0	.7	Not Effective
5	Networking in formal and informal structure of an organization	1	11	15	83	1.4	.7	Not Effective
6	Counseling	97	2	8	3	3.8	.7	Effective
7	Facilitating	9	7	43	51	1.8	.9	Not Effective
8	Inspiring	10	8	74	18	2.1	.8	Not Effective
9	Observation	50	44	8	8	3.2	.9	Effective
10	Providing corrective feedback	21	31	43	15	2.5	1.0	Effective
Grand Mean/SD						2.2	.8	Not Effective

Table 1 reveals that Business Education lecturers rated all items below a mean score of 2.50 except items 6, 9 and 10 with mean scores of 3.8, 3.2 and 2.5 respectively. This implies that Business Education lecturers agreed that mentoring methods such as development of personal mentoring plan, rapport building, coaching among others is not effective. This consensus among Business Education lecturers is also

evident in a grand mean score of 2.2. Furthermore, a grand standard deviations score of 0.8 indicates that the Business Education lecturers had similar views in their responses.

Research Question 2:

How has mentoring in Colleges of Education benefitted Business Education lecturers?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on how Business Education Lecturers have Benefitted From Mentoring

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
11	Mentoring reduces the gap between theory and practice	81	22	3	4	3.6	.7	Agree
12	Mentoring improves levels of self-confidence and motivation.	62	31	5	12	3.3	1.0	Agree
13	Mentoring provides me with leadership skills	71	19	14	6	3.4	.9	Agree
14	Mentoring improves my ability to research.	31	62	9	8	3.1	.8	Agree
15	Mentoring facilitates career monitoring scheme where results can be measured.	66	23	10	11	3.3	1.0	Agree
16	Mentoring is a cost effective device (training).	31	59	13	7	3.0	.8	Agree
17	Mentoring nurtures the benefactor to become a master.	21	68	12	9	2.9	.8	Agree
18	Mentoring helps during professional transitions.	41	42	9	18	3.0	1.1	Agree
19	Mentoring leads to meaningful academic activities.	51	34	14	11	3.1	1.0	Agree
20	Mentoring gives pride in developing the next generation.	79	22	1	8	3.6	.8	Agree
21	Mentoring leads to building of network of professional collaborators within an institution and disseminates their expertise and skills.	51	39	9	11	3.2	1.0	Agree
22	Mentoring increases staff retention.	39	57	11	3	3.2	.7	Agree
23	Mentoring gives job satisfaction.	28	49	16	17	2.8	1.0	Agree
24	Mentoring provides me with a source of knowledge and experience.	37	51	18	4	3.1	.8	Agree
25	Mentoring enables me to develop skill by observing others.	56	29	19	6	3.2	.9	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD					3.2	.9	Agree

Table 2 shows that all items were rated by Business Education lecturers above a mean score of 2.50. This implies that Business Education lecturers agreed that the benefits of mentoring include staff retention, reduces gap between theory and practice, improved ability to research among others.

The agreement among Business Education lecturers is also revealed in a grand mean score of 3.2. Furthermore, the homogeneity of Business Education lecturers' response on benefits of mentoring is also shown in a grand standard deviation score of 0.9.

Hypotheses 1: The difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on effective methods used for mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State is not significant.

Table 3:

Test of Difference Between Mean Ratings of Experienced and Less-Experienced Business Education Lecturers on Effective Method Used For Mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State

Lecturer	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	T	p-vale	Decision
Experienced	41	43.07	9.96	108	-1.376	.172	Retain
Less-experienced	69	45.94	10.91				

($p > .05$)

Table 3 reveals that p-value is greater than .05 ($.172 > .05$) with a t-cal value of -1.376. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected that the difference between mean

ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on effective methods used for mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State is not significant.

Hypotheses 2:

The difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on how Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education have benefitted from mentoring is not significant.

Table 5:

Test of Difference between Mean Ratings of Experienced and Less-Experienced Business Education Lecturers on Benefits of Mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State

Lecturer	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t	p-vale	Decision
Experienced	41	45.90	8.73	108	.204	.838	Retain
Less-experienced	69	45.46	11.98				

($p > .05$)

Table 4 shows that p-value is greater than .05 ($.838 > .05$) which implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected. This further indicates that the difference between mean ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on how Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education have benefitted from mentoring is not significant.

Summary of the Findings

The following findings emerged from the study:

1. Mentoring methods such as development of personal mentoring plan, rapport building, coaching among others are not effective.
2. Benefits of mentoring include staff retention, reduces gap between theory and practice, improved ability to

- research among others.
3. The difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on effective methods used for mentoring in Colleges of Education in Delta State is not significant
 4. The difference between the mean ratings of experienced and less-experienced Business Education lecturers on how Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education have benefitted from mentoring is not significant

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that effective mentoring methods were not adopted in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Such mentoring methods like development of personal mentoring plan, giving instructions, coaching and so on were not effectively used in the relationship between lecturers. This finding is in line with Olasupo (2011) who noted that mentoring is at its lowest ebb in Nigeria and many factors are responsible for the challenges found in the mentor-mentee relationship. The challenges become more pronounced, thus affecting inexperienced lecturers or mentees when methods of mentoring in an organization are not formalized. The implication of this is that it is half-hazardly done with less experienced lecturers who can reach out to their senior colleagues benefitting.

The finding also revealed that the benefits of mentoring such as staff retention, job satisfaction, skill acquisition, training cost effectiveness, improvement of level of confidence, and so on were agreed by all Business Education lecturers as being beneficial. It is also important to note that these benefits cut across all organizational members (mentors, mentees and management). This finding was supported by Business Enterprise Centre (2012) when it documented that Richard Branson was mentored by Freddie Laker. Perhaps, it is important to note that in some cases, the

mentee became more successful than the mentor.

Conclusion

The idea of continuing training after qualification for a period through mentoring has become wide spread and is well established in many professions and in many countries. In some organizations and in some countries, it is well structured and formalized that a new fresh graduate is attached to an experienced colleague who puts him through by mentoring. However, effective practice of mentoring is lacking in most Colleges of Education in Nigeria. This in one way has directly affected the lecturers' competencies and quality of education. It was observed that although mentoring is not formally practiced in Colleges of Education in Delta State, those who have had the mentor/mentee relationship privately have benefited enormously.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. All newly recruited Business Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Delta State should be attached to a specific experienced Business Education Lecturer to mentor them using accepted effective methods.
2. Mentoring of less experienced Business Education lecturers should be structured and formalized in such a way that every newly employed graduate benefits from it.
3. Human Resource Managers should see and accept mentoring as an important learning tool and draft plans on how to formalize it in Colleges of Education so that teaching becomes truly a learning profession.

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