# ASSESSMENT OF MENTORING PRACTICES INFLUENCING BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EDO AND DELTA STATES

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**Abstract**

*This study assessed mentoring practices influencing business educators in Edo and Delta States. Two research questions guided the study while three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using asample of 231 business educators. A 16-item questionnaire was utilized for the study. The Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded co-efficient of .95 and 0.85 for the two sub-sections of the instrument with an aggregate reliability of 0.90. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The z-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the research questions revealed that formal mentoring does not influence business educators. Informal mentoring was found to be the dominant mentoring practice influencing business educators in Edo and Delta States. Hypotheses testing showed no significant difference on mentoring practice of business educators either by gender, types of tertiary institutions or state of domiciliation of institution. This implies that management of tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States neither plans, implements nor evaluates mentoring practices for business educators. It was therefore concluded that mentoring practices for business educators in Edo and Delta States is inadequate to meet business educators' career growth and development needs. It was therefore, recommended among others that authorities of tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta State especially of Department of Business Education should compulsorily institute formal mentoring practice in addition to the available informal professional mentoring for business educators. This could help to give more opportunities to the young/inexperienced business educators to learn from the wealth of experience of the older and more experienced business educators so as to enhance their professional commitment.*

**Keywords:***Mentoring, Business Educators, Management*



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## Introduction

The urgent need to maintain a competitive edge in the 21st century and era of information and communication technology make many organizations including tertiary educational institutions to employ so many in-service training, learning and development techniques such as mentoring for their employees. In recent times, there is a renewed interest in the use of mentoring to properly equip,supervise, manage and motivate employees for proper career growth and development beyond what was acquired in formal schools to enhance the commitment and improve on the job performance of employees. Mentoring has become one of the techniques designed and encouraged by organizational authorities to develop its personnel and promote staff competitive advantages.

Mentoring is a relationship which involves a more experienced and/or knowledgeable individual (mentor) who acts as a counselor, role model, teacher, and guidance of a less experienced or knowledgeable individual (mentee) for the purpose of sharing ideas, knowledge, and guidance and offering support for personal and professional development of mentee (Leavitt, 2011). The main purpose of any mentoring programme is to help mentees understand the nitty-gritty of their jobs well on time in order to facilitate personal growth and organizational performance. Mentoring can be undertaken in different organizations including tertiary institutions. Mentoring in academic settings may be undertaken in the areas of research/publications,practicalinstruction method, career/professional development, psychosocial support and community service. According to Emoefe (2016), mentoring helps the academic staff to develop natural strength and potentials for advancement in educational service including teaching, research and publications, and community service.

Mentoring is highly relevant to educators' career growth and development irrespective of their gender or type of institution or state of domiciliation of an institution. The reason for this is that a good measure of training and supervision obtained through mentoring could help business educators develop a greater feeling of competence and confidence in the teaching job.When mentees are competent and confident to take on greater tasks and perform more challenging duties, there would be a greater sense of empowerment, which is capable of improving their overall job performance. Mentoring as an on-the-job training programme has been successfully used by various organizations to enhance the commitment level of their employees **(**Sekhosana, 2001**).** Mentoring provides **s**upportive supervision and encouragement that enhances employees' commitment and job performance. With effective mentoring, both the mentor and the mentee derive mutual benefits that are capable of helping them to be committed to their jobs and improve job performances.

Mentoring is usually provided for the development of employees in formal and informal practices in a workplace irrespective of gender. According to Emoefe (2016),



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there are two mentoring practices (formal and informal mentoring practices) among academic staff in universities in Nigeria.Okurame (2008) however, found mentoring practice is organized, structured, and have clear and specific departmental or organizational goals while informal mentoring practices are not structured, not organized, no clear and specific departmental or organizational goals. Kram (1985) stated that if effectively implemented, whether formal or informal, mentoring practices provide career and psychosocial benefits for employees.

Formal mentoring has only recently emerged as a staff development strategy while informal mentoring has long been a feature of many work environments (Kehinde, 2013). According to Kehinde, formal mentoring occurs when an institution/department takes a decision to implement a scheme of mentoring which will have formal recognition within the institution/department even if there are no tangible rewards for being involved as a mentor or mentee. In formal mentoring relationship, a senior employee is assigned to nurture the career and job development of a newer or younger or less experienced employee (Adesina, 2013). This way, the department or organization dictates the beginning and ending dates to the mentoring relationship, provides expectations for how often the mentees are to meet with their mentors, requires regular check-in points with a programme coordinator, and offers a formal orientation or training session and often a formal closure to the programme. According to Adeyanju (2013), one of the major advantages of formal mentorship is that it ensures that mentorship is extended to individuals and minorities who would not have been considered previously within the organization.

Informal mentoring referred to as traditional mentoring, focuses primarily on the mentee's career path through goal setting (Adesina, 2013). The mentor and mentee work together to devise an action plan that sets career goals that will lead the mentee on the appropriate career path. Meanwhile, Bilesanmi (2013) stated that this type of mentoring is void of a precise structure and the rules are often at the discretion of the mentor who defines the parameters, expectations and approach. One of the major features and at the same time, one of the major disadvantages of informal (traditional) mentoring is that it is highly selective and elitist in nature (Byrne in Adeyanju, 2013). According to Adesina (2013), major characteristics of informal mentoring are that it is a natural process; that is the mentor and mentee pair together by their own internal forces. It involves frequent social interactions between the mentor and mentee resulting in the mentee and mentor spending time outside of the office and sharing a friendly, comfortable relationship. Friendship rather than job requirements, keeps the two parties together.

There are mainly three types of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;namely; colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Edo and Delta States are educationally advantage states with a lot of these tertiary institutions. To this end, they have high number of tertiary institutions offering business education. However, it appears that business educators in Edo State practice more mentoring than their counterparts in Delta



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State because it has more federal universities than Delta State. However, University of Benin as a first generation university has been in existence for decades with so many renounce professors who can function as mentors compared to Delta State.

In these tertiary institutions,male educators appear to find it easier to embrace mentoring more than their female counterparts. This is probably because women are usually saddled with domestic chores that make it difficult for them to fully embrace mentoring as compared to males. In terms of cross-gender mentoring, fear of sexual molestation may make women not to submit to or be interested in cross-gender mentoring. In Nigerian society, sexual accusations and rumours of sexual engagement are usually bearable for the male gender more than their female counterparts thereby making it difficult for women to expose themselves and engage in meaningful cross gender mentoring relationships. There may also be a concern about societal wrong impression of the mentoring relationship which may make male mentors not to want to establish mentoring relationships with women especially those who are married. All these issues have serious negative implications for female business educators' advancement on the job.

Several studies have shown that mentoring has the potential to influence educators' commitment and job performance irrespective of gender or type of institutions. However, Olasupo (2013) stated that the effects of mentoring relationships remain almost the same across different types of schools. According to Alibegovic, Hawkins and Parmar (2009), the role-modeling support provided through mentoring is highly influential in employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and overall job satisfaction has a strong relationship with job performance. In the same vein,Bartley-Daniele (2014) noted that different types of mentoring relationships occur in formal workplace settings to influence employees' career growth and development.Ehrich (2013) reported that in research studies done by Hansford, Tennent and Ehrich in which the influence of mentoring were examined, it was found that several influential outcomes are available for mentors in ideal mentoring relationships while for the mentees, the most frequently cited being collegiality, collaboration and networking. In some cases, these benefits are related to cross-fertilization of ideas and the opportunity to exchange ideas. Meanwhile, Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong (2012) stated that there are no formal programmes such as mentoring to ease the absorption of new and novice academic staff into the university system or any other tertiary institution of learning in the country whileEmoefe (2016) stated that there are two mentoring practices (formal and informal mentoring practices) among academic staff in universities in Edo and Delta States. However, Emoefe (2016) did not show any significant difference in informal mentoring practice in the universities in Edo and Delta States.

Effective mentoring practices whether formal or informal may influence the career growth and development of educators. However, despite these numerous



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assertions, there is a dearth of empirical information on mentoring practices influencing business educators in Edo and Delta States. Many of the empirical studies available and reviewed were done in the industrial sectors using factory workers and not related to business educators. Also, many of the studies were conducted in foreign countries outside Nigeria. It was also observed that these studies used non-homogenous and non-randomized samples that are general and not specific to business educators. This situation creates a serious gap which this study tended to fill.

**Statement of the Problem**

Mentoring is a tool that can help to bring business educators into relationships for the purpose of sharing ideas, knowledge, and understanding so as to provide support for improved commitment and performance on their jobs. Despite the numerous empirical evidences on the benefits of mentoring to employees' career growth and development, there seem to be a dearth of information on mentoring practices influencing business educators in their career growth and development in Nigeria general and particularly in Edo and Delta States thereby creating a serious gap which this study tended to fill. Against this back drop, this study assessed mentoring practices influencing business educators in Edo and Delta States.

**Research Questions**

The following two research questions guided this study:

1. Does formal mentoring practice influencebusiness educators in Edo and Delta States?
2. Does informal mentoring practice influence business educators in Edo and Delta States?

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the meanratings of male and female business educators on mentoring practices influencing business educators.
2. There is no significant difference in the meanratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on state of domicilianof institutions.
3. There is no significant difference in the meanratingson mentoring practices influencing business educators based on ownership of institution.

**Method**

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 231 business educators in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States. The entire population was used as sample because the size was manageable.Data werecollected using a structured questionnaire titled Assessment of Mentoring Practices influencing



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Business Educators in Tertiary Institutions in Edo and Delta States (AMPI-BETI). The items in the questionnaire were adapted from Emoefe (2016) and from the literature reviewed. The instrument was structured on five (5) point response scale of Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Not Sureweighted 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of business education. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot tested on 20 business educators who were not part of the sample. Data collected wereanalyzed using Cronbach's alpha test and reliability co-efficient of .95 and 0.85were obtained for the two clusters with an aggregate reliability of 0.90.Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in their various schools by the researcher with the help of three (3) research assistants. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, z-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). A mean of 3.50 was set as the criterion rule for acceptance of the research questions, such that a mean rating on any item by the respondents equal to or above 3.50 was taken as "Agree" while a mean lower that 3.50 was taken as "Disagree". The hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was upheld where the z-calculated was less than the z-critical. Where the t-calculated was equal to or greater than t-critical, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Result**

**Research Question 1:** Does formal mentoring practice influence business educators?

**Table 1: Respondents' Mean Rating on Formal Mentoring Practice influencing Business Educators**

| S/N | Formal Mentoring Practices | Mean | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | There are clear and specific departmental goals for mentoring business educators | 3.13 | .99 | D |
| 2 | There is departmental or school follow-up to benchmark the success of mentoring so as to develop best practices. | 2.99 | .94 | D |
| 3 | Mentoring is based on departmental or school interest | 2.03 | 1.03 | SD |
| 4 | Department or school formally pairs junior/inexperienced business educators with senior/experienced business educators for mentoring relationship based on academic specialization | 3.24 | .97 | D |
| 5 | Department or school has a timeframe for mentoring business educators | 2.99 | .78 | D |



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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | There are organized expert training on mentoring relationships for business educators | 2.82 | .84 | D |
| 7 | Department assigns junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators compulsorily for the purpose of mentoring | 2.95 | .86 | D |
| 8 | Department provides time table on how often the junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators could meet for mentoring relationships | 2.78 | .88 | D |
| 9 | Mentoring of business educators is strictly under the supervision of the department | 3.33 | 1.00 | D |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | **2.91** | | **D** |

*Note*. SA = strongly agree, D = disagree

Data in Table 1 show that the respondents disagreed with all the nine items relating to formal mentoring with mean values which ranged from 2.03 – 3.33. This result shows that business educators disagreed that formal mentoring was influencing them in their respective institutions. However, item 3 has a mean score of 2.03 showing that the respondents strongly disagreed that formal mentoring was influencing them.The aggregate mean score of 2.91 fell within the boundary of disagreed.The result of the study equally showed that the standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.78 - 1.02 showing that the standard deviation for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

**Research Question 2:** Does informal mentoring practice influence business educators in Edo and Delta States?

**Table 2: Respondents' Mean Rating on Informal Mentoring Practices influencing Business Educators**

| | **Informal Mentoring Practices** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Remark** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mentoring between junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators is on individual basis | 3.73 | .87 | Agreed |
| 2 | Mentoring relationships develop naturally between junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators | 3.90 | .80 | Agreed |
| 3 | Junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators enter into mentoring relationships at will | 3.80 | .98 | Agreed |



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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators terminate mentoring relationships at will | 3.67 | .98 | Agreed |
| 5 | Junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators mentoring relationships have immeasurable outcomes | 3.94 | .92 | Agreed |
| 6 | Mentoring for junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators is for indefinite timeframe | 3.89 | 1.03 | Agreed |
| 7 | Goals for mentoring junior/inexperienced and senior/experienced business educators are unspecified | 3.70 | 1.02 | Agreed |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | **3.80** | | **Agreed** |

Data in Table 2 showsthat the respondents agreed to all the 7 items relating to informal mentoring with mean values which ranged from 3.70 – 3.94. This result showed that business educators agreed that informal mentoring was influencing them in their respective institutions. The aggregate mean score of 3.80 fell within the boundary of agreed. The result of the study equally shows that the standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.80 - 1.02 indicating that the standard deviation for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the meanratings of male and female business educators on mentoring practices influencing business educators.

**Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis on mentoring practices influencing business educators**

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal.z | Crit.z | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 107 | 3.30 | 0.91 | | | | |
| | | | | 209 | 1.08 | 1.96 | Not Significant |
| Female | 104 | 3.44 | 0.96 | | | | |

Data in Table 3 showed that at 0.05 level of significance and 209 degree of freedom the calculated z value of 1.08 is lesser than the critical z of 1.96. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on influence of mentoring practices. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on influence of mentoring practices isaccepted.



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**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on types of institutions

**Table 4: Summary of one-way ANOVA on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on types of institutions**

| Source of Variance | SS | df | MS | Cal.F | Crit.F | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 49.880 | 2 | 24.940 | 0.37 | 3.00 | NS |
| Within Groups | 14049.85 | 208 | 67.547 | | | |
| Total | 14099.753 | 210 | | | | |

Data in Table 4 reveal that at 2 and 208 degrees of freedom, the calculated f value of 0.37 is lesser than the critical f of 3.00. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on types of institutions. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on type of institutions was accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on State of institution

**Table 5: Summary of z-test on mentoring practices based on state of domiciliation of institution**

| Source of variation | N | Mean | SD | DF | Cal. z | Crit. z | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| State | 144 | 3.19 | 0.67 | | | | |
| 209 | -0.37 | 1.96 | NS | | | | |
| Federal | 67 | 3.23 | 0.74 | | | | |

Data in Table 5 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 209 degree of freedom the calculated z value of -0.37 is lesser than the critical z of 1.96. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on state of domiciliation of institution. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on State of domiciliation of institution is accepted.

**Discussion**

The findingsof the study showed thatbusiness educators in Edo and Delta States agreed that formal mentoring didnot influence them either by gender, type of institution or state of domiciliationof institution. The implication of this finding is that the tertiary



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institutions in Edo and Delta States neither plan, implement or evaluate mentoring practices for business educators. This result is in line with the work of Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong (2012) which stated that there are no formal programmes such as mentoring to ease the absorption of new and novice academic staff into the university system or any other tertiary institution of learning in the country. There istherefore, a deficiency on the part of the management of universities, polytechnics and colleges of educations in Edo and Delta States in providing a structured and planned mentoring programme for the development of their academic staff. This finding is however, in dissonance with the findings of the study by Emoefe (2016) which stated that there were two mentoring practices (formal and informal mentoring practices) among academic staff in universities in Edo and Delta States. There is the need therefore, for the policy makers for tertiary institutions in Nigeria such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to include topics on mentoring in the approved minimum academic benchmark for business education and OTM programmes. Inclusion of mentoring in the minimum benchmark would help both educators and students to fully understand the concept.

The finding of the study showed that business educators in Edo and Delta States agreed that informal mentoring influenced them in their respective tertiary institutions irrespective of gender, type of tertiary institution or state of domiciliation of institution. The finding revealed that business educators in Edo and Delta States both agreed that informal mentoring practice influence them greatly on their teaching job. This is in line with the finding of Okurame (2008) which found that mentoring relationships in Nigerian academia experiences were mainly informal. This is a source of encouragement to the departments of business education Edo and Delta States. The implication of this is that business education departments in Edo and Delta States will continue to have business educators who are well mentored to achieve the goals and objectives of the departments.

The test of hypotheses revealed that there was no significant difference in the meaning ratings of male and female business educators on influence of mentoring practices. Both male and female business educators were not influenced by formal mentoring relationships. The implication of this was that they all depended on informal mentoring practice to influence their career growth and development. This finding is in line with the view of Emoefe (2016) which stated that gender did not show any significant difference in informal mentoring practice in the universities in Edo and Delta States.Mentoring although informal has provided equal opportunity for both male and female business educators to take on greater tasks and perform more challenging duties, thereby making business educators to have a greater sense of empowerment which has increased their overall commitment and job performance. There is no gender bias and marginalization. This is quite encouraging. The implication of this is that business



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education department in Edo and Delta States will continue to have business educators with optimal commitment and performance in their teaching jobs. This will help to improve the quality and quantity of products from these departments.

The test of hypotheses also revealed that there was no significant difference in the meaning ratings of business educators on the influence of mentoring practices based on types of institutions. This implied that all the respondents from the three categories of schools (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) used for this study agreed that they were not influenced by formal mentoring while they all agreed that informal mentoring practice greatly influenced their career growth and development in respective institutions. This showed that mentoring relationships for business educators is on individual basis and develops naturally between experienced and inexperiencedbusiness educators without departmental/institutional intervention. Departments/institutions do not also evaluate to know whether mentoring relationshipswere successful or not. This finding negated the assertion made by Bartley-Daniele (2014) that different types of mentoring relationships occur in formal workplace settings to influence employees' career growth and development. For business educators in Edo and Delta States, only one type occurs. The result by implication pointed out that the nature of the organization or environment can influence the type of mentoring practice in place. It also means that the authorities in business education department in these schools are not fully abreast with the benefits of mentoring in the development of their academic staff despite considerable empirical support of the importance of mentoring in the commitment and job performance of employees hence, they do not plan or implement mentoring for business educators. There is the need therefore, to institutionalize the culture of well-designed formal mentoring programmes with clear expected outcomes.

There was also no significant difference in the mean ratings on mentoring practices influencing business educators based on state of domiciliation of the institution. This finding negated the views of Emoefe (2016) which revealed that demographic characteristics such as ownership of universities, academic discipline, generation of universities, state of domicile and age of academic staff have a significant difference in informal mentoring practice among academic staff.There is the need therefore, for the policy makers for tertiary institutions in Nigeria such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to include topics on mentoring in the approved minimum academic benchmark for business education programme. Inclusion of mentoring in the minimum benchmark would help both educators and students to fully understand the concept.

## Conclusion

Mentoring is a tool that can help to bring business educators into relationships for the purpose of sharing ideas, knowledge, and understanding so as to provide support for



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improved commitment and performance on their jobs. The finding of this study showed that mentoring is offered to business educators in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States predominantly in aninformal practice irrespective of gender, type of institution or state of domiciliation of institution. This implies that management of tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States neither plan, implement nor evaluate mentoring practices for business educators. It is therefore concluded that mentoring practices for business educators in Edo and Delta States is inadequate to meet their career growth and development.Therefore, authorities in charge of business education in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States should put in place institutional/departmental policies that would compulsorily make formal mentoring of all junior/inexperienced business educators a part of job responsibilities for senior/experienced business educators.This could help to give more opportunities to the young/inexperienced business educators to learn from the wealth of experience of the older and more experienced business educators so as to enhance their professional commitment.

**Recommendations**

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Authorities in charge of business education in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States should not only sustain but improve upon the level of informal mentoring presently on ground to continue to influence business educators' career growth and development.
2. Authorities in charge of business education in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States should put in place institutional/departmental policies that would compulsorily make formal mentoring of all junior/inexperienced business educators a part of job responsibilities for senior/experienced business educators.
3. Authorities in charge of business education in Edo and Delta States should institute the culture of multiple mentoring practices becausethe functions of mentoring in academic settings are quite diverse. A single individual mentor may not be able to provide all that an individual business educator needs across the entire career.

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