Article

Adoption of Formalized Mentoring Among Academic Staff in Selected Nigerian Universities

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Abstract – The study investigated how mentoring is being adopted and practiced among academics in three universities in Edo State, Nigeria. A survey research design was used. A structured questionnaire was administered to academic staff across the three universities in Edo State. One hundred and seventy-eight (178) validly collected responses were analysed using descriptive statistics and the Binomial test. The study finds that mentoring though not formalized was widely practiced in universities in Edo State. Both senior and junior lecturers agreed that mentoring was very important in teaching the younger colleagues how to better perform their jobs. Given the above findings, the study recommends that universities in Edo State should as a matter of necessity formalize the adoption of mentoring among academic staff thus giving it institutional support to make it more effective with measurable outcomes. Also, mentoring programme of universities should be structured in a way that would incorporate the uniqueness of the different areas of specialization in advancing mentees' career development.

Keywords: Academic staff, Adoption, Mentor, Mentoring, Protégé, University.

1. Introduction

Mentoring is a one-to-one affiliation that takes place between the mentor and the protégé with the intention of the mentor (expert) voluntarily devoting time to teaching, supporting, and encouraging a younger, less experienced person (Protégé) (Idubor & Adekune, 2021; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Many institutions have come to recognize the importance of mentoring and coaching programmes and have formalized systems of doing both. The world of work is rapidly changing in Nigeria with the influx of younger persons, women, and other minorities into the workforce and the exit of older workers either voluntarily or involuntarily (Agbonifoh & Idubor, 2016). It is therefore expedient that the experience and knowledge of the older workforce be passed on seamlessly and continuously to the younger generation through the act of mentoring and knowledge management (Massaro *et al.,* 2021).

The importance of mentoring and its benefits to the organisation, the mentor and protégé have been severally demonstrated especially in the western world (Farkas *et al.* 2019; Kram, 1985; Leidenfrost *et al.,* 2014; Noe, 1988; Zachary, 2000). The situation may be slightly different in Nigerian organizations as noted by Okurame (2008) because of the negative connotations of mentors as godfathers. The notion of godfatherism is that an employee is under the protection and influence of a more powerful person with the aim of the junior employee getting benefits he may not ordinarily be entitled to, and for him to avoid punishment for infractions. Mentoring, however, is to ensure that the protégé acquires the requisite knowledge, experience and guidance to enable him to perform exceptionally on the job in particular and in life generally (Idubor & Adekunle, 2021). It is about getting the protégé to learn from the mentor what he may not ordinarily learn or for him to learn it faster and in greater depth.

The number of universities in Nigeria has grown steadily over the years and now stands at 49, 54 and 99 for Federal, State and Private Universities making a total of 202 universities as of June 2022 (National Universities Commission, 2022) with yearly increases in student enrolment. Qualified lecturers are direly needed to perform the roles of teachers, researchers, and administrators. Qualification does not reside in certification alone; there is a vast pool of knowledge and experience that resides in older and senior academics that new entrants can greatly benefit from. If effectively used, mentoring can be a veritable tool for enhancing educational standards and performance among lecturers (Ojokulu & Sajuyigbe, 2015), increasing productivity (Sola, 2018), reducing stress for new lecturers in the teaching profession, promoting better organisational norms (Sweeney, 2004), the transmission of positive attitudes (Payne, 2006), and resolving challenges and obstacles (Okurame, 2008).

Several studies have been conducted in Nigeria concerning the subject matter. The general approach of Nigerian studies has been to stress the importance, benefits and challenges of mentoring in the workplace as a way of enhancing employee performance, career growth, competencies, and even for succession planning and staff retention (Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015; Elegbuanya, 2012; Idubor & Adekunle, 2021; Omale *et al.* 2017). While many studies done on mentoring in Nigerian universities have typically lauded the importance of mentoring and its benefits, few have investigated the actual practice of mentoring in Nigerian universities to see if there is a formal mentoring system in place (Okurame, 2008; Kolade, 2015; Sola, 2018). The objective of this study, therefore, is to determine the extent to which mentoring is adopted among academic staff in Universities in Edo state.

2. Literature Review
2.1   Concept of Mentoring
Mentoring is not an unpopular concept. The term was first used in 1616 based on the mythology of Greek that made Odysseus assign the tutoring of his son Telemachus to his friend Mentor (Cartwright, 2012). However judging from the current definitions of the word mentor as a trusted counselor (Kram, 1985), guide (Moon, 2014), tutor (Azman, Muhammad & Sebastian, 2009), coach (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1987), it would seem that the mentoring function has been going on for as long as man has existed. The Bible records the relationship between Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, and even Jesus Christ and His disciples; these were all forms of mentoring relationships. Invariably, the

result of mentoring is for the mentor to at least reproduce himself in the protégé or to produce a protégé that can surpass him in his field of expertise and to be able to say like Jesus Christ said to His disciples that anyone who trusts in Him by following His footsteps would be like Him and do greater works than He did while on earth (John 14: 12. The Holy Bible KJV).

The concept of mentoring in the Social and Management Sciences has a very homogenous definition across disciplines. This points to the importance of the concept and the agreement by all on the functions it entails. The term 'mentor' is used to refer to the more knowledgeable individual while the recipient of the mentoring is variously referred to as either a protégé or mentee, however for this work, the term protégé is used.

Carmin (1988) opines that mentoring is an interactive and complex process that occurs between individuals with diverse experiences and proficiency which combines the development of interpersonal, psychological, and socialization functions in the relationship. Mentoring can also be defined as a mentor helping a protégé to learn new and unique things that would have been very difficult or impossible if he had not been mentored (Bell, 2000). Zachary (2002) indicated that a mentor is a person who knows relevant subjects, facilitates the personal development of the protégé, encourages him to make wise choices, and helps him to make transitions.

Rao (2010) describes mentoring as a process of tutoring a junior person in a workplace by a senior colleague or manager. The relationship involves technical, interpersonal, and political skills that are taught by the more experienced person to the less experienced person. Popoola, Adesopo, and Ajayi (2013) opine that mentoring is a process that involves a dexterous and highly emphatic individual known as a mentor, assists and supports another person known as a protégé in developing their skills, knowledge and attitudes and their competence in the workplace. Adeboye (2020) defines mentoring as the relationship that exists between a mentor and his/her mentees.

In the academic setting which is the focus of this study, Olasupo (2011) states that an academic mentor is usually a senior academic staff who guides a junior colleague by way of advice, guidance, support and other relevant means in matters connected to the attainment of academic success; the protégé, on the other hand, is the junior faculty member who is the beneficiary of the mentorship. Generally, it has been agreed that mentoring is one of the easiest and most effective methods of assisting individuals to develop the required skill sets in different organizations (Ayyala *et al.,* 2019; Choi *et al.,* 2019; Cros *et al.,* 2019; Sola, 2018).

2.2   Types of Mentoring

Formally, a mentoring relationship is one that the workplace supports and is well structured so that members of the organization who need mentoring can benefit from it. The outcomes of the mentoring relationship are measurable because goals are set at the beginning of mentoring and mentors and protégés are deliberately matched, organisational or departmental goals and the specific needs of the protégés (Metros & Yang, 2006).

Because organizations that engage in formal mentoring programs have specific and clear goals in mind, the process is well managed to increase the possibility of having a successful outcome. Formal mentoring programmes usually occur on a one-on-one basis. However, mentoring could take place in groups depending on the organization and the willingness of the mentors.

Informal mentoring on the other hand is a mentoring relationship that has little or no structure, there are no specific goals and the process is not controlled to achieve a predetermined goal. This mentoring relationship is created spontaneously without the active involvement of the organization. The relationship may take place as a result of the mentor taking a social interest in the protégé or the protégé approaching the mentor and expressing a desire to be mentored by him. The affinity between the mentor and protégé is based on the personal chemistry between the two and the mentoring covers a wide range of activities and usually lasts for a very long time and it is not strictly based on job rank or hierarchy. Other more specific forms of mentoring include induction mentoring, peer mentoring, developmental mentoring, distance mentoring, and reverse mentoring, among others.

2.3 Need for Mentoring among Academic Staff in Nigeria

Many studies have been undertaken to establish the need for mentoring among academic staff in Nigerian universities (Kolade, 2015; Nnaji *et al.,* 2015; Omale, *et al,* 2017; Sola, 2018; Undiyaundeye & Basake, 2017). The consensus is that young academic staff just entering the university system face many challenges and that if not properly guided they may be unable to successfully overcome them at the appropriate time. The academic environment is fraught with many pitfalls for the unwary new entrant and at the same time, it holds many prospects for growing and advancing new academic staff that may not be knowledgeable enough to take quick advantage of the benefits inherent in the relationship. The role of mentoring therefore is to help the protégé avoid the dangers inherent in lecturing and harness the positive potential to ensure a rewarding academic career.

Undiyaundeye and Basake (2017) argued that the pursuit of development by young academic staff in Nigeria is not without challenges, fears, and anxieties, and therefore mentoring can be an effective way of mitigating the stress of new lecturers, helping them resolve challenges and achieve career goals more readily. Mentoring has also been advocated as a means of transferring the dexterity that protégés need in excelling professionally, promoting learning and productive use of knowledge, the definition of goals and career paths, and job satisfaction (Okurame & Balogun, 2005). Kolade (2015) described mentoring as a platform for inculcating the leadership acumen of a new generation of academics. Ayodeji and Adebayo (2015) also indicate that mentoring can be used to build and maintain effective school administration in Nigeria because teaching is a multifarious and complex assignment that demands the guidance and experience of senior academic staff. Omale *et al.* (2017) aver that retention of staff and transfer of knowledge in Nigerian universities are improved by mentoring. Nnaji *et al.* (2015) state that the professional competence of newly employed lecturers could be significantly enhanced through mentoring. This view is also collaborated by Undiyaundeye and Basake (2017) also state that mentoring is needed in academics because it increases job satisfaction, self-confidence, enhances staff retention rate, encourages professional growth, develops competence, and encourages collaboration while reducing competition. Sola (2018) also concurs when he states that the career development of academics is significantly influenced by mentoring activities the individuals have undertaken.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the Social Exchange Theory. This theory was propounded by George Homans. Homans (1961) says for interaction to qualify as a social exchange, it must include the exchanging of activities between two or more persons. The theory identifies exchange as a social behaviour that may occur in both economic and social outcomes. According to Raschdorf (2015), an examination of the social exchange theory reveals that the concepts of rewards and costs informally complement the dynamics of the relationship that exists in mentorship. Raschdorf (2015) further states that the social exchange theory of mentoring alludes to an expectation of an exchange of benefits between mentor and protégé and that mentors who have benefited in the past feel obligated to reciprocate by building mentoring relationships with younger colleagues. Ehrich *et al.* (2004) state that the social exchange theory as applied to mentoring is built on social and economic costs and mutual dependence that makes mentors and protégés evaluate the costs and benefits in determining the viability of the relationship. The social exchange theory is premised on social interactions and the characteristics of interpersonal relationships. Homans (1958) stresses the dyadic exchange relationship and framed social behaviour in terms of rewards and punishment. Blau (1964) however highlights the effect of these reciprocal exchanges in social interactions by referring to social exchange as the actions that are willingly engaged in by individuals based on the benefits they are anticipated to bring into the relationship.

There have been several modern modifications of the social exchange theory but the theory has come under some criticisms. One of such criticisms is that the theory is not testable. A major criterion for theories is that they are testable and therefore capable of being proven untrue (because some of its major concepts like rewards and cost are difficult to define). Another criticism of this theory is the portrayal of human interactions as purely rational, calculating the costs and rewards to be gotten from a particular relationship. It has been argued that human relationships cannot be reduced to a one-dimensional connection of cost and reward (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Raschdorf, 2015).

2.5   Empirical Review of Literature

This section presents a review of previous empirical investigations on mentoring amongst academic staff of universities in Nigeria and other countries.

Okurame (2008) explored the experiences and challenges of mentoring academics in a university in Nigeria using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The sample size was 48 academic staff from five units of the sampled faculty and data were sourced with the aid of the modified mentoring function scale. In addition to the questionnaire, open-ended questions were also used, requiring respondents to provide written responses. The respondents assessed the mentoring opportunities that existed in the university and how those interested could avail themselves of such opportunities if they had been recipients of mentoring and the role it played in their development. The study also discussed the barriers to the mentoring relationship, and the staff development policies to be adopted by the institution. The finding of the study indicated that 37% of the respondents reported that mentoring was a significant part of their development and that all the respondents recognized mentoring as a critical developmental tool but disagreed over the type of mentoring programme to be encouraged.

A major deficiency in Okurame's (2008) study is the population size and the sample. Not only was the study restricted to one university, but it was also further limited to one faculty

where only 48 academic staff were selected. Secondly, the gender of the selected staff was skewed toward males – 42 while there were only 6 female respondents. Considering the issues that have been raised in different sex mentoring relationships, it is our view that an important aspect of the mentoring relationship was left unexplored. Okurame (2008) states that both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to gather data from the respondents, however, in the discussion of results, a clear distinction was not made between the answers gotten qualitatively and quantitatively.

Afolabi *et al.* (2015) examined mentoring among academic staff of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria. The study aimed to examine the perception of mentoring by the academic staff, ascertain the form and extent of mentoring, examine how existing mentoring relationships were initiated, identify the challenges experienced by protégés and mentors alike, and finally examine the influence of job status and years of service on the perception of mentoring by the academic staff. Afolabi *et al.* (2015) made use of all academic staff in the university as their population and through purposive sampling, selected a sample of 200 academic staff from the 13 faculties of the university. The study used an instrument titled "academic staff mentoring questionnaire" to collect data. Afolabi *et al.* (2015) found that 86% of the academic staff sampled were involved in a mentoring relationship, 93% were favorably disposed towards mentoring as a developmental tool. The respondents also identified some challenges associated with mentoring relationships to include self-withdrawal of junior members, laziness and unresponsive attitudes of protégés, balancing conviction with the expectation of a mentor, and inadequate attention from a mentor. The study also found, that there was no significant difference between the perception of respondents to mentoring based on job status and working experience.

Afolabi et al. (2015) found that mentoring relationships exist among academic staff of Nigerian universities; however, the study failed to define whether the mentoring that exists was informal or formal. This is important because what people regard as mentoring at times, especially when it is informal falls short of what the mentoring relationship ought to be. Secondly, Afolabi *et al* (2015) used only job status and working experience in determining mentoring relationships while ignoring gender and other demographic attributes. Gender differences are very significant in determining mentoring relationships and with the advent of more women into academics; we feel that it is an aspect that ought not to be neglected. Afolabi *et al.* (2015) dealt with only one university – a Federal 1st generation university. Today in Nigeria, there are state and private universities and the dynamics of mentoring relationships might be different across these universities. The scope of the study in terms of population is therefore deemed to be too narrow and should have been expanded to capture both state and private universities. This current study fills this gap by sampling academics in federal, state, and private universities in Nigeria.

Kolade (2015) investigated the developmental capacity of mentoring among academics in a state-owned university in Nigeria. The study cross-sectionally surveyed all the faculties of the university and a sample size of 100 that was purposively selected was used out of which 80 responses were found valid. Questionnaire was used to collect data from all categories of lecturers from professors to graduate assistants. The instrument was highly structured, open-ended, and distributed by hand. The study sought to identify the practices that can cumulate to mentoring practices at Adekunle Ajasin University. Kolade (2015) found that age was closely related to the academic position that 44% of the respondents had benefited from a

mentoring relationship while 40% of senior academics have provided mentorship to younger colleagues. It was also discovered that over 80% of the respondents reported interest in the career development of their colleagues. This study was limited to one University and many of the factors that could influence the mentoring relationship like age, gender, and length of service were disregarded in the study.

Nnaji *et al.* (2015) examined how mentorship influences the professional competence of lecturers that were newly employed in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study examined the benefits of mentoring to newly employed lecturers in the university. The population consisted of all academic staff of the institution out of which a sample size of 220 was selected from the two universities in the state. The instrument used for the study was titled "mentoring and professional competence of newly employed lecturers questionnaire" (MPCNELQ). The study revealed that professional competence is significantly impacted by the mentorship of newly employed lecturers.

Obasi and Ohia (2018) examined how mentorship impacts the professional development of lecturers in three universities in Rivers state. A descriptive survey approach was adopted for the study using questionnaire and interview schedule as instruments for data collection. Data obtained were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The study found that, though mentoring is acknowledged in the universities, the process is not formalized to make it yield the desired results. The study also identified the mentoring relationship to predominantly focus on the student-lecturer relationship where graduate assistants are allocated to senior colleagues for thesis supervision. The study, therefore, suggests that universities in Nigeria should promote a mentoring programme that is comprehensive, integrative and implementable and should be evaluated regularly.

Amanda *et al.* (2018) examined mentoring in STEM to train scientists to become better leaders. The study found that ineffective mentoring has a negative impact on students, departments, faculty, and institution. The negative impacts are shown in form of declined productivity, increase in stress, and loss of valuable research products and talented researchers. The study proposed mentoring training for students at graduate and postgraduate levels to equip them for leadership responsibility in their areas of specialty. Cassese and Holman (2018) investigated peer mentoring via writing groups among female academics. Using a case study approach, the study discussed how writing groups can serve as flexible mechanisms for peer mentoring to complement existing mentoring relationships and address challenges women face in mentoring.

Akosile and Olatokun (2020) investigated the individual, organizational and technological factors that promote knowledge sharing among lecturers at Bowen University in Nigeria. Data were collected from 151 respondents and analysed using Chi-square and logistic regression. Findings from the study revealed that university policy (organizational factor) and trust (individual factor) significantly influence knowledge sharing. Surprisingly, knowledge sharing among lecturers was not significantly influenced by technological factors. The study suggests a motivating reward system for lecturers to engage in knowledge sharing.

Idubor and Adekunle (2021) investigated the challenges confronting mentoring among Nigerian academics. The study provided empirical evidence on the challenges both senior and junior academics encountered in a mentoring relationship. These challenges were broadly categorized into victimization, instant gratification, gender-based bias, work-life

imbalance, and incivility. Using data collected from academics from three universities in Nigeria, the study found that victimization and instant gratification are the most prominent mentoring challenges confronting academics in the country. The study also found that academics' perceptions of mentoring challenges based on the aforementioned categorization do not significantly differ based on demographic attributes. The study concluded that university management should support the mentoring programme by formulating and implementing policies to curb the prevalence of the identified challenges.

Okon et al. (2022) investigated how cloning, nurturing, and apprenticeship practices impact the research productivity of early career academics in nineteen universities in the South-South region of Nigeria. Data collected from 644 respondents were statistically analysed using regression analysis and other descriptive statistics. The study found that cloning and apprenticeship practices significantly influenced research productivity of early-career academics while nurturing practices do not show any significant influence on research productivity. The study suggests that early-career academics should be identified and encouraged by senior academics to engage in a mentoring relationship.

3. Methodology of Study

A survey research design was used. The population consists of all academic staff in three randomly selected universities located in Edo State. These include the University of Benin (Federal University); Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma (State University); and Igbinedion University Okada (Private University). These universities were chosen for use in this study because they are the oldest federal, state, and private universities in the State and they have a sizeable number of staff. Only the academic staff that have spent at least twelve months in the universities were included in the study. This is because new entrants to the university might not be aware of some of the issues the study seeks to investigate. The records collected from the registries of the selected universities showed that the total numbers of academics in the universities were 3054. The population of academics at University of Benin; Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma; and Igbinedion University Okada were 1824, 680 and 550 respectively. Based on the total population, Yamane's formula ($n= N/(1+Ne^2)$) was used to statistically determine the sample size to be 353. However, the sample size was increased by 30% (that is, 106) to increase the chance of having a larger sample size. At the end, the sample used was 459. A structured questionnaire was administered to 459 academic staff across the three universities in Edo State. The questionnaire was broadly categorized into two sections. The first section contains the bio-data of the respondents such as sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, working experience, and cadre. The second part contains a question on the adoption of formalized mentoring system in the selected universities. Convenience sampling was used in administering the questionnaire to the target respondents. To provide a comprehensive assessment of the subject matter, the questionnaires were distributed across the various cadres of academics in the universities. The responses from the copies of the questionnaire administered were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage. Binomial test was used to test the null hypothesis that states that most universities in Edo State have not adopted mentoring as a policy. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 24.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of the data collated from the questionnaire administered to academics in the three selected universities in Edo state. The presentation and analysis of the data in this section were guided by the research objective.

4.1   Description of respondents' demographic variables

This section contains the different background information of the respondents which includes information on questionnaire distribution, sex, age, marital status, highest educational qualification, year of experience, and rank of the respondents. The results are presented in Tables 1 to 7 below:

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution to Sampled Universities

S/N	Institution	Questionnaire			Response Rate (%)
		Administered	Retrieved	Valid	
1	University of Benin	274	150	134	48.9
2	Ambrose Alli University	102	50	32	31.4
3	Igbinedion University	83	30	12	14.5
	Total	459	230	178	38.8

Table 1 shows that 459 copies of the questionnaire were administered while only 230 were retrieved. Only 178 copies of the questionnaire were found to be valid and usable (Note: any Tables [from Tables 2 to 9] with total of respondents less than 178 shows that the responses to the question analysed in the table were not answered by all the respondents). The response rates for the universities are: University of Benin (48.9%); Ambrose Alli University (31.4%); and Igbinedion University (14.5%). Overall total response rate stands at 38.8%.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

S/N	Category	Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Male	50	75.8	64	62.1	114	67.5
2	Female	16	24.2	39	37.9	55	32.5
	Total	66	100	103	100	169	100

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents are male, which are 114 accounting for 67.5% of the total respondents. The female respondents were 55. This represents 32.5% while 9 respondents did not indicate their gender.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

S/N	Category	Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	18-24years	0	0	22	20.6	22	12.5
2	25-35years	9	13.0	38	35.5	47	26.7

3	36-45years	30	43.5	41	38.3	71	40.3
4	46-55years	19	27.5	6	5.6	25	14.2
5	56years and above	11	15.9	0	0	11	6.3
	Total	69	100	107	100	176	100

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (71) are between 36 and 45years old. This category accounts for 40.3% of the total respondents. This is followed by 25-35 years old (47, 26.6%) and 46-55years (25, 14.2%). Respondents within the age bracket of 18-24years accounts for 12.5%. Finally, respondents that are 56years old and above account for 6.3%. Only 2 of the respondents did not indicate their age category.

Table 4: Marital status of respondents

		Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
S/N	Category	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Single	3	4.5	36	35.3	39	23.2
2	Married	63	95.5	66	64.7	129	76.8
	Total	66	100	102	100	168	100

Table 4 shows the marital status of the respondents. 129 (76.8%) of the respondents were married, while 39 (57.6%) were single. Only 9 respondents representing 5% did not indicate their marital status.

Table 5: Educational qualification of respondents

		Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
S/N	Category	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	PhD	51	76.1	23	21.5	74	42.5
2	Masters	16	23.9	52	49.5	68	39.1
3	First Degree	0	0.0	32	29.0	32	18.4
	Total	67	100	107	100	174	100

Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (74) had Ph.D. This category accounts for 42.5%. 68 (39.1%) of the respondents have Masters qualification while 32 (18.4%) of the respondents have a first degree. Four (4) of the total respondents did not indicate their highest educational qualification.

Table 6: Working experience of respondents

		Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
S/N	Category	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Less than 3years	12	17.1	43	53.0	55	32.4
2	3-6years	12	17.1	35	35.0	47	27.6
3	7-12years	22	31.4	19	19.0	41	24.1
4	Above 12years	24	34.3	3	3.0	27	15.9
	Total	70	100	100	110	170	100

From Table 6, the majority of the respondents (55) have at most 3years working experience as lecturers which account for 32.4% of the total respondents. 27.6% of them have worked for three to six years while 24.1% have worked for 7 to 12years. Respondents who have worked for more than 12years accounted for 15.9% of the total respondents. 7 (3.9%) of the total respondents do not indicate their years of experience.

Table 7: Ranks of Respondents

S/N	Senior Academics			Junior Academics		
	Category	Frequency	%	Category	Frequency	%
1	Senior Lecturer	37	54.4	Graduate Assistant	33	31.4
2	Associate Professor	13	19.1	Assistant Lecturer	34	32.4
3	Professor	18	26.5	Lecturer II	27	25.7
4	-	-		Lecturer I	11	10.5
	Total	68	100		105	100

Table 7 shows the respondents' rank. The respondents cut across the lecturing cadres in universities as follows: 18 Professors; 13 Associate Professors; 37 Senior Lecturers; 11 Lecturer I; 27 Lecturer II; 34 Assistant Lecturers and 33 Graduate Assistants.

4.2   Adoption of Mentoring among Academics in Universities in Edo State

To investigate the adoption of mentoring practices in the selected Nigerian universities in Edo State, respondents were asked whether their institutions have formalized mentoring systems. The responses are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Adoption of mentoring practices in universities

S/N	Category	Senior Academics		Junior Academics		Both	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Yes	9	13.2	39	43.8	48	30.6
2	No	59	86.8	50	56.2	109	69.4
	Total	68	100	89	100	157	100

Table 8 shows that majority of the senior academics (59, 86.8%) said that there are no formalized mentoring systems in their universities while only 9 (13.2%) agreed that their universities have formalized mentoring systems. In a similar vein, the majority of the junior academics (50, 56.2%) said that there are no formalized mentoring systems in their universities while only 39 (43.8%) agreed that their universities have formalized mentoring systems. In summary, Table 8 shows that majority of the academics (109, 69.4%) said that there are no formalized mentoring systems in their universities while only 48 (30.6%) agreed that their universities have formalized mentoring systems.

Hypothesis Testing

H_0 Most universities in Edo State have not adopted mentoring as a policy.

H_A Most universities in Edo State have adopted mentoring as a policy.

Table 9 shows the Binomial Test result for tested hypothesis

Table 9: Binomial Test for Hypothesis One

Category	Response	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
Group 1	Yes	48	0.31	0.50	0.000
Group 2	No	109	0.69		
Total		157	1.00		

A binomial test in Table 9 indicated that the proportion of non-adoption of mentoring as a policy is 0.69 which is higher than the expected 0.50, p = .000 (1-sided). We, therefore, do not reject the null hypothesis. It is concluded that most universities in Edo State have not adopted mentoring as a policy.

5. Discussions

This study revealed that the majority of the respondents (69.4%) said that there is no formalized mentoring system in their universities. This is worrisome because a formalized mentoring relationship helps to provide organisational support to members, especially the new and younger ones. Deliberate efforts should be made by university management to formalize mentoring system to enhance the career development of younger academics. Mentoring as acknowledged by Idubor and Adekunle (2021), Nnaji et al. (2015), Obasi and Ohia (2018) and Umukoro and Okurame (2018) is critical in supporting new academic staff in universities as some may be entering the world of work for the first time and hence would need guidance to navigate the new territory successfully. Aside from this, the workload of the average lecture according to Ebuara et al. (2020) and Valerie et al. (2019) is rigorous and demanding. Teaching, project supervision, research, classroom management, mastery of subject matter and other ad hoc duties required mentoring to be efficiently performed. Since newly employed younger academics would be thrust into the performance of some of these tasks, proper guidance, assistance and preparation of the younger lecturers must be done by the older and more experienced lecturers through proper mentoring (Mgbekem, 2004).

Mentoring is not only beneficial to mentees but also to mentors. For instance, the self-actualization which Maslow talks about in the needs theory comes into play (Maslow, 1954) when a senior academic can boldly showcase his/her mentees that are breaking new grounds in their professions. Mentors are usually well-established, experienced and accomplished people in their fields and life generally (Adizu & Asuquo, 2020). After attaining this height, that is, they have actualized themselves, what is left for them is building the next generation that may surpass them. This feeling of being a part of and contributing to something that will outlive their physical presence in the organization gives a sense of purpose and deep satisfaction to these mentors. Hence, the need to encourage the formalization of mentorship in the university system to preserve and promote legacies.

Finally, a formalized mentoring system is an effective means of transmitting corporate culture within the organization and also increasing communication in the workplace (Khdour et al., 2020). Through mentoring, management's views can be passed on to protégés in a non-threatening, non-combative atmosphere where they have the liberty to question what they do not understand or agree with, and management through the mentors will take time to explain and educate the protégés on them. Likewise, information about issues affecting the protégés can also be passed on to management through the mentors. In this way, the mentors form and become a link bridging the gap between younger employees and management thereby improving organisational communication.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study examined mentoring among academic staff in Universities in Edo. Three universities were selected for the study namely the University of Benin (Federal University), Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (State-owned University), and Igbinedion University, Okada (privately owned University). The study found that mentoring among academic staff in the universities sampled has not been formally adopted as a policy but that there is an appreciable level of mentoring going on in these universities. Interestingly, both the senior and junior academic staff were in agreement about the importance and need for mentoring in the University. It is concluded that most universities in Edo State have not adopted mentoring as a policy.

This study recommends the following:
First, because the respondents were in agreement concerning the importance and need for mentoring, universities should as a matter of urgency formalize the adoption of mentoring among their academic staff by creating a healthy work environment where learning and teaching are emphasized. This formalization will give institutional backing to mentoring and ensure it is more effective. Second, a mentoring programme in universities should be structured in a manner that would take into cognizance the uniqueness of the different areas of specilization in advancing mentees' career development.

7. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation is with respect to response rate. Though a total of 459 questionnaires were distributed among the three universities, the response rate was not encouraging as only 230 were retrieved. It was found that many academic staff were not keen on filling out the questionnaire and some even refused bluntly to do so citing lack of time and tiredness. This is quite worrisome because one of the key functions of academic staff is research and as such, they should know the importance of such exercise. Out of the 230 returned, 52 copies were invalidly completed. The study used only 178 copies that were validly filled for data analyses.

Another limitation was the research instrument used which was the self-report questionnaire. Though respondents' names were not requested, the self-report questionnaire does have a potential for response bias, especially for reasons of social desirability. In future studies, it might be beneficial to combine subjective measures like the self-report questionnaire with other objective measures, for example, observation and focus studies and interviews.

Lastly, only academic staff from universities in Edo state were used for this study therefore generalizing the findings of this study to Nigeria might be hampered. However, this limitation can be resolved by having a larger study that will cover more states or all states of the country.

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