



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTORSHIP SKILLS AND CAREER GROWTH OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to investigate the relationship between mentorship skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in south-south, Nigeria. To guide the study four research questions were raised and hypothesized. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance. The design of the study was a correlational survey research design. All business education lecturers in public universities in South-South Nigeria constituted the population of the study. As at the time of conducting the study, there were 158 business education lecturers in the institutions under study. Given that this size is manageable, the entire population was used for the study which makes it a census sampling. The research instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire segmented into three sections namely Sections A, B and C. Section A was designed to elicit responses on demographic data while Section B addressed mentoring skill received by business educators. Section C contained items on the career growth of business educators. Face validity of the instrument was estimated by giving a draft copy of the instrument to five experts. To establish the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot-tested with twenty respondents who were not part of the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Simple linear regression analysis were used to analyze the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the relationship between mentorship skills and career growth are of various strength from being weak and positive to moderate and positive. In addition, mentorship skills significantly predicted career growth of business educators in South-South Nigeria. Findings of the study also revealed a weak relationship between mentorship methodological and communication skills and career growth of business educators in South-South Nigeria while demonstrating that mentorship communication skills significantly predict career growth of business educators. However, mentorship methodological skill did not significantly predict career growth of business educators. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the development of reading, writing, communication, and research methodological skills should be encouraged within all mentorship programme in order to maintain the positive benefits of these skills on career growth.

Keywords: Relationship, Mentorship skills, Career growth, Business educators, public universities

Introduction

Employees in all sectors and levels of organization desire professional growth and development for the purpose of advancement in their respective profession. Such advancement is contingent on the acquisition and deployment of relevant skills that are deemed necessary for the performance of core roles for professional growth. Some of these skills include reading, writing, communication and research methodology skills. These skills, suffice to say, constitute the core elements that define the success or otherwise of all professional employees, including business educators in the field of Business Education.

Business Education is one of the vocational education programmes offered across the three levels of education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The programme is designed to create awareness in business occupation, preparing beneficiaries to be better citizens, better consumers of goods and services and intelligent business teachers (Rosselot-Merritt & Bloch, 2020). Business Education is a programme of study designed to equip its recipients with knowledge, understanding, attitude and skills necessary to secure employment in their professional areas or related fields in the industry and advance further in business education programmes (Ubulom et al., 2016). With such competence, business educators are expected to aptly function in any settings requiring skills in business

education. However, such competence does not undermine the relevance of the role of mentoring in shaping the career growth of business educators.

Mentoring is the process of serving as a guide for someone by facilitating and assisting the person's development. The process includes modeling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestions being taught to the mentee (Bozman, 2018). Also, as indicated, the mentor must be able to serve as a model of the teacher's role in education. The mentoring process includes coaching as an instructional technique used in areas such as sports or apprenticeship at the work place. In addition, it includes "cognitive coaching," a term gaining wider familiarity in education. To be effective, the mentor must be able to demonstrate a range of cognitive coaching competencies, such as posing carefully constructed questions to stimulate reflection, paraphrasing, probing, using wait-time, and collecting and using data to improve teaching and learning. Mentoring, like coaching, is a collaborative process (Bozman, 2018). However, as a function, a special duty required of a person, mentoring has considerably more dimensions than coaching or modeling. Therefore, it is more complex and demanding.

In a mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee are deemed to be in a collaborative relationship based on mutual respect, trust, and a commitment to growth in both parties. Professionally, mentoring is beneficial as important training and development tool for upward professional advancement of employees in an organization (Galamay-Cachola, 2018) and is beneficial to all its participants at all times and situations especially when it is effectively arranged. Boyd (2018) & and Chihenga (2016) also observed that a mentoring relationship is usually beneficial to all the stakeholders, for the mentee the benefits include increased professional opportunities and collegial networks, growth of professional knowledge and skill development, career advancement and more effective performance. The mentors' benefits include personal and professional satisfaction, enhancement of professional reputation, extension of collegial networks and influence and rejuvenated careers.

The functions of the mentor teacher vary depending on the needs of the new employee, the goals of the mentoring program, and the local and broader educational context or situation. It should be kept in mind that the mentor teacher is a helper, not a supervisor or evaluator, and "a very special person, a model of professionalism" whose efforts help to mold the mentee towards productive career growth (Cakir, 2016).

Career growth is defined as one's perceptions of the chances of development and advancement within an organization (Dialoke & Paschal, 2017). Oladele & Adelugba (2021) proposed four main constructs of organizational career growth, viz., career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth. Career goal progress is a typical example of higher order need satisfaction. Achieving professional ability development in an organization is also an example of an advanced level of need satisfaction. Promotion speed is the pace at which the employee has climbed the ladder as opposed to stagnating in the same function for a long time. In addition to promotion speed, remuneration growth also provides a measure of how employees are evaluated by employers (Oladele & Adelugba, 2021). These various aspects of career growth are collectively facilitated by certain mentoring skills.

There are some mentoring skills which the mentees are expected to acquire from the mentors whether formally or informally mentored. These include research skills, reading skills, writing skills, research methodological skills, research communication skills, collaborative skills, administrative skills, leadership skills and so on. This study however focused on four areas of reading, research writing, research methodological and research communication skills because they directly affect the growth of the business educators when viewed from the prospective of writing scholarly articles for publication which is a major emphasis and requirement for lecturers' career growth in the universities.

Reading skills are the fundamental life skills, the set of abilities and competencies to recognize, assess, select and prioritize the information that is relevant and up –to – date (Ogunye, 2018). Detailed reading requires note-taking techniques such as underlining, highlighting, picking keywords, recording of questions and summarizing. Reading skills help lecturers to engage in pragmatic reading that is devoid of laziness, carefree attitude, mind wanderlust and ill-preparedness. Writing is the art of constructing words in a form that can be read and understood. It is the method of communicating with language, signs and symbols. Writing refers to the process of generating ideas, organizing the ideas, revising and editing the ideas. The processes that help to improve academic writing include prewriting, organizing, drafting and revising (Lantsoght, 2018). Studies have shown that adequate mastery of

reading skills is directly related to career growth among educators Aminuyati et al., 2023). In the same vein, Aitchison et al (2016) noted that there is a positive correlation between writing skills and career growth among professionals.

Methodological skills describe the procedures that are used in carrying out a study. It involves applying appropriate research procedure. It identifies the principles and techniques that are used in research work (Cohen et al., 2018). The components of methodology include research design, population, sampling, sample size, instrumentation, validity, reliability, method of data collection and analysis (Omorogiuwa, 2019). Methodological skills help lecturers to identify the research methods and the measures to be adopted in a study, which may impact career growth. In academic research, the methodology adopted in a study determines the results and the findings that is communicated. Communication skill refers to the transfer of information from one person to the other (Khan et al., 2017). It refers to the articulation of ideas clearly to the needs and aspirations of a specific audience. It involves the exchange of knowledge and debate with colleagues and other people. In their separate studies, Kezar and Maxey (2016) and Cohen et al (2018) established a strong positive relationship between the development of methodological skills and career growth. In addition, Haeger & Fresquez (2016) and Mremi et al. (2023) also established a relationship between communication skills and career growth among researchers. However, in spite of these studies, there are still cases of poor career growth among professionals in public universities.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that mentorship has significant impact in fostering positive career growth among professionals, business educators inclusive. It has helped to build business educators from one career ladder to another. In recognition of the positive influence of mentorship on career growth, several researchers have advocated the institution of formal and informal mentoring mechanisms to guide junior members in an organization towards positive career growth and development. Considering this various importance of mentorship, it is unfortunate that some universities have not keyed into institutionalizing mentoring for their green horn academics or even older one who have to wade through their career paths painfully.

This appears to have contributed to lack of mentorship in research skill, teaching ability, computation of result, course advising, in addition to expertise in writing, reading, methodological as well as communication skills. This development has largely made some business educator being unable to publish quality papers for promotion resulting in slow career growth and subsequent stagnation in one position. Moreso, some also have to resort to co-authoring in most of their publication in order to survive the publish or perish syndrome. If this ugly trend persists, many business educators may be frustrated and stagnated in the career.

Several studies have been done to address the issue of mentorship in relation to career growth of professionals. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has addressed the relationship between mentoring and career growth of business educators in general and in public universities in South-South Nigeria particularly. It is against this backdrop that the study intends to determine the relationship between mentoring skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

1. Mentorship reading skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.
2. The mentorship writing skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.
3. The mentorship methodological skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.
4. The mentorship communication skills do not significantly predict career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed correlational survey research design. A correlational survey measures two or more relevant variables and determines the relationship between or among the variables as well as determine the prediction of future events from the present knowledge. The design was considered appropriate because the study essentially examined if the independent variable (mentoring skills) relate to the dependent variable (career growth) of business educators. The population comprised 158 business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study was conducted using a sample size of 158 business educators. This comprised all members of the population. Given that the population was of a manageable size, the whole population was used for the study, hence a census sampling was adopted.

The instrument that was used to collect data for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher after careful review of related literature. The instrument was titled: Relationship between Mentoring Skills and Career Growth of Business Educators. The questionnaire was segmented into three sections viz Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A was on demographic data. Section B captured mentoring skills received by business educators. It was made up of 32 items ranging from reading skill, writing skill, research methodological skills and communication skill. Section C dealt with the career growth of business education in the area of productivity, promotion speed, sponsorship and recognition with 12 items. Responses to each item for both section B and C was rated on a 4-point modified Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A); Disagree (D), and strongly Disagree (SD), and were weighted as 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The validity and reliability of the instrument were established the face validity and test-retest reliability respectively.

Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and Simple Linear Regression Analysis. Decision rule was based on boundary limit such that any calculated r-value between 0 and 0.30 was regarded as low/weak correlation, 0.31 and 0.60 was regarded as a moderate/average correlation, 0.61 and 1.00 was regarded as high correlation. The probability p-value was also used. Where p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 the null hypothesis was rejected but where p-value was greater than 0.05 the null hypotheses was retained.

Results

Research question 1: What is the relationship between mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson r showing the significant relationship mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	R	Decision
Reading Skills	158	3.21	0.39	0.33	Moderately Positive
Career Growth		2.80	0.41		

Table 1 shows the relationship between mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The data analysis indicates means of 3.21 and 2.80, as well as standard deviation of 0.39 and 0.41 with respect to mentorship reading skills and career growth respectively. The Table

also shows that the correlation coefficient of 0.33 is positive and moderate. This implies that the relationship between mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is moderately positive.

Hypothesis 1: Mentorship reading skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the linear regression estimate between mentorship reading skills and career growth of Business Educators

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.800	1	2.800	18.417	.000 ^b
Residual	23.718	156	.152		
Total	26.518	157			

Table 2 shows that the ANOVA summary of linear regression based on career growth as predicted by business educator's mentorship reading skills is statistically significant ($F(1, 156) = 18.417, p = .000 < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Mentorship reading skills significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 3: Linear regression coefficients on mentorship reading skills prediction on career growth of Business Educators

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.661	.267		6.226	.000
Reading Skills	.354	.082	.325	4.292	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Career Growth. Note. $R = .325$; $R\text{-square} = .106$; Adjusted $R\text{-square} = .100$; $p < .05$

Data in Table 3 show that mentorship reading skills predicting career growth of business educators is significant such that reading skills yielded a p-value of .000 with a beta value of .325 and t-value of 4.292. The adjusted R square value is .100, which indicates that the 10% of the variance in career growth is explained by mentorship reading skills of business educators. From the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 4: Pearson r showing the significant relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	Decision
Writing Skills	158	3.06	0.38	.468	Moderately Positive
Career Growth		2.80	0.41		

The analysis in Table 4 shows the relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The data analysis indicates mean of 3.06 and 2.80, as well as standard deviation of 0.38 and 0.41 for writing skills and career growth of business educators respectively. The Table also shows that the correlation coefficient of .468 is positive but weak. This therefore connotes that the relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is moderately positive.

Hypothesis 2: The mentorship writing skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on the linear regression estimate between mentorship writing skills and career growth of Business Educators

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.805	1	5.805	43.722	.000 ^b
Residual	20.713	156	.133		
Total	26.518	157			

Data in Table 5 reveal that the ANOVA summary of linear regression based on career growth as predicted by business educator's mentorship writing skills is statistically significant ($F(1, 156) = 5.805, p = .000 < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is not accepted. This means that mentorship writing skills significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 6: Linear regression coefficients on mentorship writing skills prediction on career growth of Business Educators

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.269	.233		5.442	.000
Writing Skills	.500	.076	.468	6.612	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Career Growth. Note. $R = .468$; $R\text{-square} = .219$; Adjusted $R\text{-square} = .214$; $p < .05$

Table 6 depicts that mentorship writing skills significantly predict career growth of business educators with (beta value = .468, t-value = 5.442 and p-value .000 < .05). The adjusted R square value is .214, which indicates that the 21.4% of the variance in career growth is explained by mentorship writing skills of business educators. From the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 7: Pearson r showing the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	Decision
Methodological skills	158	3.20	0.45	.100	Positively Low
Career Growth		2.80	0.41		

The analysis in Table 7 shows the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. Data analysis indicates means of 3.20 and 2.80, as well as standard deviation of 0.45 and 0.41 for mentorship methodological skills and career growth respectively. The Table also shows that the correlation coefficient of .100 is positive and weak. This therefore connotes that the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is positively low.

Hypothesis 3: The mentorship methodological skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA on the linear regression estimate between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of Business Educators

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.264	1	.264	1.568	.212 ^b
Residual	26.254	156	.168		
Total	26.518	157			

Data presented in Table 8 indicate that the ANOVA summary of linear regression based on career growth as predicted by mentorship methodological skills from business educators is statistically significant ($F(1, 156) = 1.568, p = .212 > .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. This means that, the mentorship methodological skills do not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 9: Linear regression coefficients on mentorship methodological skills prediction on career growth of Business Educators

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.504	.237		10.577	.000
Research Methodology Skills	.092	.073	.100	1.252	.212

a. Dependent Variable: Job Commitment. Note. R = .100; R-square = .010; Adjusted R-square = .004; $p > .05$

Data presented in Table 9 indicate that mentorship methodological skills do not significantly predict career growth of business educators with (beta value = .100, t-value = 1.252 and p-value .212 > .05). The adjusted R square value is .004, which indicates that 0.4% of the variance in career growth of business educators is explained by mentorship methodological skills. From the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is retained.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 10: Pearson r showing the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	R	Decision
Communication skills	158	3.17	0.45	.240	Positively Low
Career Growth		2.80	0.41		

Data presented in Table 10 indicate the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The Table shows means of 3.17 and 2.80, likewise standard deviations of 0.45 and 0.41 for mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators respectively. The correlation coefficient value obtained is .240 which indicate positive and weak relationship. Thus, the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is low.

Hypothesis 4: The mentorship communication skills do not significantly predict career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 11: Summary of ANOVA on the linear regression estimate between mentorship communication skills and career growth of Business Educators

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.523	1	1.523	9.508	.002 ^b
Residual	24.995	156	.160		
Total	26.518	157			

Table 11 depicts that the ANOVA summary of linear regression based on career growth as predicted by business educators mentorship communication skills is statistically significant ($F(1, 156) = 9.508, p = .002 < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Mentorship communication skills significantly predict career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 12: Linear regression coefficients on mentorship communication skills prediction on career growth of Business Educators

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.100	.228		9.192	.000
Communication Skills	.220	.071	.240	3.084	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Career Growth. Note. R = .240; R-square = .057; Adjusted R-square = .051; $p < .05$

Data in Table 12 show that mentorship communication skills predicting and career growth of business educators is statistically significant such that mentorship communication skills yielded a p-value of .002 with a beta value

of .240 and t-value of 3.084. The adjusted R square value is .051, which indicates that 0.51% of the variance in career growth is explained by mentorship communication skills of business educators. From the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question 1 indicated that the relationship between mentorship reading skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria was moderately positive. Similarly, hypothesis 1 shows that mentorship reading skills significantly predicted the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with that of Aminuyati, Karolina & Queiroz (2023) whose study established a positive relationship between mentoring reading skills and career growth. The findings of research question 2 showed that the relationship between mentorship writing skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria was moderately positive. In addition, hypothesis 2 showed that mentorship writing skills significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. These findings align appropriately with that of Aitchison et al (2016) whose study established a positive correlation between writing skills and career growth. The implication of these findings is that there is a direct correlation between mentorship reading and writing skills and career growth of business educators. Thus, a change in mentorship reading and writing skills will have a directly proportional effect on career growth.

It was discovered in research question 3 that the relationship between mentorship methodological skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria was positively weak. In the same vein, hypothesis three indicated that mentorship methodological skills did not significantly predict the career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This finding is not in line with the positions of Kezar and Maxey (2016) and Cohen et al (2018) which established a strong positive relationship between the development of methodological skills and career growth. The possible reason for the difference between the findings of this study and the positions of Kezar and Maxey (2016) and Cohen et al (2018) could be traced to the nature of the literature. While the findings of this study were the direct results of research exercise, the positions of Kezar and Maxey and Cohen et al were built on expected outcomes when all variables were held constant. The findings of this study in relation to mentorship methodological skills imply that career growth of business educators cannot be directly inferred from their research methodological skills. This was demonstrated by the weak relationship between research methodological skills and career growth and the failure of research methodological skills to predict career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

The findings of research question 4 indicated that the relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria was weak. Also, test of hypothesis 4 showed that mentorship communication skills significantly predicted career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This finding supports that of Haeger and Fresquez (2016) and Mremi et al (2023) which established a relationship between communication skills and career growth among researchers. Though the findings of this study indicated a weak relationship between mentorship communication skills and career growth of business educators, however, the study showed that mentorship communication skill was a predictor of career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This implies that the direction of career growth of business educators can be predicted from the level of their communication skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between mentoring and career growth of business educators in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. This implies that mentorship reading skills, writing skills, methodological skills, communication skills, significantly influence the career growth of business educators in public universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities should endeavour to institute mentorship programmes to sustain the gains inherent in such programmes on overall career growth.
2. University management should encourage the incorporation of reading, writing, communication, and research methodological skills within all mentorship programme in order to maintain the positive benefits of these skills on career growth
3. Where formal mentorship programmes are not in place, university systems should encourage the institution of informal mentorship to ensure that members of staff are properly guided through their career growth
4. The development of reading, writing, research methodology and communication skills should be encouraged within all mentorship programmes by university management in order to maintain the positive benefits of these skills on career growth.

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