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Mentoring of Beginning Business Education Lecturers for Sustainable Pedagogical Skills Development in State Universities in Rivers State

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Abstract- This study explored the mentoring needs of beginning business education lecturers as a way of achieving sustainable pedagogical skill development in state universities in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study and the entire population of lecturers in the two state universities in Rivers State were used. Questionnaires were distributed by the researchers and then retrieved for analysis on completion. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the two hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that mentorship in academic publications, in students' assessment, and in research writing among others are the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers., The findings also indicated that both categories of lecturers shared similar views on the practices needed for mentoring and the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers. It is therefore recommended that Heads of Departments of Business Education Programmes in the state universities in Rivers State in collaboration with their Deans should ensure that effective and efficient mentoring practices exist and are encouraged in their institutions.

Keywords: mentoring, business education, pedagogical skills development.

I. Introduction

Business Education is one occupational area of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria. Business Education has been defined in several ways, most of which highlight its vocational nature. Idialu (in Amoor, 2010) views Business Education as a form of Vocational Education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. This is to say that Business Education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. Ajisafe, Bolarinwa and Edeh (2015) refer to Business Education as a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing, and Office Technology and Management (OTM). They added that major topics in Business Education include: office practice, book keeping, business mathematics, business communication, secretarial duties, word-processing, and advertising. Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) opine that the goals of Business Education incorporate: preparing students for specific career in office occupations; equipping students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and exposing students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Lecturing in the university is very demanding and a stressful job especially among new lecturers; hence, new lecturers often experience difficulties in the transition of roles from learners to teachers or from industry to classroom (Franklin & Molina, 2012). This can also be said of teaching of Business Education in state universities in Rivers State. This challenge of transition to academics can be addressed through mentoring of the beginning business education lecturers if sustainable skill development is to be achieved amongst graduates of the programme. Okorie and Ezeji cited in Fadairo, (2010) explained that possession of skill is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking or behaving in a specific activity, which has become so natural to the individual through repetition or practice such that it becomes automatic. Central in the definition is the idea that skill could be regarded as ability, (an outcome of learning) to practice an act to the point of perfection. Skill development is basic to all forms of education, knowledge, learning and professional training.

Mentoring is a process that involves generating a learning association between a skilled person with professional expertise and a less skilled staff member (Shreeve, Gibb & Ribeiro, 2013). Santamaria (2003) view mentoring as a collaborative relationship where a skilled and professional person willingly gives his time to teach, support, and encourage a novice (or beginning) lecturer. Mentoring is a helpful learning bond that is created between a caring individual who shares information, skills and wisdom with another individual who is new in the workplace. According to Paris (2013), the beginning lecturer is typically ready and willing to benefit from such interchange so as to improve his/her professional journey.

Ozturk and Yildirim (2012) view a novice (beginning) lecturer as a new lecturer who has joined

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the lecturing profession. Additionally, a novice lecturer is a new lecturer (employee) in an organisation who performs lecturing-based duties (Hudson, 2012). The author further states that a novice lecturer is an employee who has been in the field for less than five years and still needs to be guided and developed in his/her profession. This view is similar to Ozturk and Yildirim (2012) who added that most novice lecturers are the less experienced teachers who need a veteran lecturer to assist them and indicate or model how to behave and do things in a classroom situation.

II. Statement of Problem

The researchers' interest in conducting this study was derived from their experiences when they first joined lecturing career in tertiary institutions. Even though the researchers have been in teaching profession at the secondary school level at different times, their teaching experiences at that level differ significantly with their new experience as tertiary institution lecturers. The way things are done at the tertiary institution level is a bit different from what obtains at the secondary school level. The curriculums are completely different from each other. Job schedules and responsibilities are different and are sometimes a bit more demanding for a beginning lecturer. It is therefore crucial for the more experienced business education lecturers to understand the needs of the beginning business education lecturers and to assist them progress in their new career path by mentoring them. All the newly appointed lecturers require mentoring because even though they are qualified teachers, they are engaged in a different system and must understand the system if they must succeed. It is against this background that this study is being conducted to determine the practices needed to mentor beginning business education lecturers as well as the perceived benefits of mentoring the beginning business education lecturers in state owned universities in Rivers State.

III. Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the study include the following:

i. Determine the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.
ii. Determine the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

IV. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

i. What are the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State?
ii. What are the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers on the practices needed for mentoring beginning Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

V. Research Method

The design of this study was a descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Rivers State. Rivers State is located in the coastal southern part of Nigeria and is bordered on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by Imo and Abia States, to the east by Akwalbom State, and to the west by Bayelsa and Delta States. Rivers State has two state universities namely: Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University. The population for the study consisted of the 79 Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the population consisted of 60 lecturers from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and 19 lecturers from Rivers State University.

The sample for this study was made up of the entire population of the Business Education Lecturers in the two State Universities in Rivers State. Therefore, no sampling technique was used.

A structured questionnaire titled "Mentoring of Beginning Business Education Lecturers Questionnaire" (MBBELQ) was used as the instrument for this study. The instrument was developed by the researchers to elicit opinions of the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, A and B. Part A addressed the personal data of the respondents while Part B addressed mentoring practices needed for mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers and the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.The response options of the instrument were based on a five-point scale as follows: 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Undecided, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree.

After constructing the questionnaire, it was given to three experts in the department of Business Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, to face validate. Suggestions, observations and criticisms of the experts were used to modify and improve the instrument. To establish the internal consistency of the

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instrument, copies of the questionnaire administered to 10 Business Education lecturers of Niger Delta University, Amassoma. This is because Business education Lecturers in Niger Delta University possess similar characteristics as those in the study population. The scores obtained were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha statistics. A reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. Based on the coefficient, the instrument was considered highly reliable for the study The researcher went to the two state universities and administered the questionnaires on the Lecturers of the department after self-introduction and explanation of the purpose of visiting the institutions. The copies of the questionnaire used for the research was given to the lecturers of the universities under study. The filled questionnaires were then collected from them for analysis. Mean was used to answer the two research questions. The two null hypotheses were tested using z-test at a significance level of .05. SPSS package was used to analyse the data. A mean of 3.50 served as the cut-off point. When the mean of all the respondents on any particular item is greater than or equal to 3.50, it was regarded as Agreed (A) and when the mean is less than 3.50, the result is regarded as Disagreed (D). Any hypothesis with *p*-value less than or equal to 0.05 was regarded as significant (rejected); otherwise, it was not significant (accepted).

VI. Results

Research Question 1: What are the practices needed for mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the practices needed for entoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers

S/N	Items	Respondents $n_I = 60, n_R = 19, n_G = 79$						Remarks
		$\bar{x}_R$	σ_R	$\bar{x}_I$	σ_I	$\bar{x}_G$	σ_G	
1.	Mentorship in Research Writing	4.20	0.77	3.99	0.78	4.01	0.78	Agreed
2.	Mentorship in Teaching Methods	3.60	0.50	3.94	0.34	3.91	0.36	Agreed
3.	Mentorship in Students' Assessment	3.80	0.77	4.07	0.83	4.04	0.82	Agreed
4.	Mentorship in Career Progression	4.40	0.50	3.96	0.28	4.00	0.33	Agreed
5.	Mentorship in Classroom Management	2.80	1.01	3.30	0.46	3.26	0.66	Disagreed
6.	Mentorship in Lesson Presentation	3.40	0.50	3.38	0.48	3.38	0.48	Disagreed
7.	Mentorship in Academic Publications	4.20	0.41	4.30	0.46	4.30	0.45	Agreed
8.	Mentorship in Risk Management	3.80	0.41	3.84	0.36	3.84	0.36	Agreed
9.	Mentorship in Academic Administration	3.60	0.50	3.91	0.82	3.89	0.61	Agreed
10.	Mentorship in Provision of Corrective Feedback	3.60	0.50	3.69	0.46	3.68	0.46	Agreed

$\bar{x}_I$ = Mean responses of IAUE lecturers, $\bar{x}_R$ = Mean responses of RSU lecturers, σ_I = Standard Deviation of IAUE lecturers, σ_R = Standard Deviation of RSU lecturers, $\bar{x}_G$ = Item Mean of means, σ_G = Item Standard Deviation of means.

Results presented in Table 1 above showed that the respondents agreed on eight out of 10 practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities of Rivers State with mean ranging from 3.68 to 4.30. However, the respondents did not consider mentorship in classroom management and mentorship in lesson presentation as practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers. Furthermore, with standard deviation ranging from 0.33 to 0.82, the results indicate that there is little dispersion in the opinion of the respondents.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State?

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Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers

S/N	Items	Respondents $n_I = 60, n_R = 19, n_G = 79$						Remarks
		$\bar{x}_R$	σ_R	$\bar{x}_I$	σ_I	$\bar{x}_G$	σ_G	
1.	Enhanced confidence of the lecturers	3.80	0.77	4.30	0.46	4.26	0.51	Agreed
2.	Enhanced performance in research activities	4.40	0.50	3.91	0.27	3.95	0.32	Agreed
3.	Better understanding of the expectations in the various categories of responsibilities teaching	3.80	0.77	3.61	0.62	3.62	0.64	Agreed
4.	Ability of the lecturers to develop a viable plan for future development	3.80	0.41	3.69	0.46	3.69	0.45	Agreed
5.	Ability to progress in career with minimal delays	3.60	0.50	3.98	0.23	3.95	0.28	Agreed
6.	Identification of potential sources of research fund	4.00	0.92	4.07	0.83	4.06	0.83	Agreed
7.	Identification of provided support for grant writing	3.80	0.77	3.69	0.46	3.69	0.49	Agreed
8.	Encourages active participation in professional activities within/outside the institution	3.60	0.50	3.92	0.26	3.89	0.30	Agreed
9.	Better understanding of criteria for promotion	3.40	1.54	2.98	1.57	3.02	1.56	Disagreed
10.	Increased spirits of the mentored lecturers leading to job satisfaction	3.70	0.77	3.51	0.62	3.52	0.64	Agreed
11.	Increased competency for the mentored lecturers	3.70	0.41	3.59	0.46	3.59	0.45	Agreed
12.	Increased commitment from the mentored lecturers	3.50	0.92	3.57	0.83	3.56	0.83	Agreed

$\bar{x}_I$ = Mean responses of IAUE lecturers, $\bar{x}_R$ = Mean responses of RSU lecturers,σ_I= Standard Deviation of IAUE lecturers, σ_R = Standard Deviation of RSU lecturers,$\bar{x}_G$ = Item Mean of means, σ_G = ItemStandard Deviation of means

Results presented in Table 2 above showed that the respondents agreed on 11 out of 12 perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State with mean ranging from 3.52 to 4.26. However,, the respondents did not consider better understanding of criteria for promotion as perceived benefit of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers. Furthermore, with item standard deviation ranging from 0.28 to 1.56, the results indicate that there is little dispersion in the opinion of the respondents.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers on the practices needed for mentoring beginning Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test analysis of the mean responses on the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers

	$\bar{x}$	σ	n	Df	α	z_{cal}	*p*	Decision
IAUE Lect.	3.84	0.53	60					
				77	0.05	0.65	0.51	Accepted
RSU Lect.	3.74	0.59	19					

KEY: $\bar{x}$ =Mean, σ = Standard Deviation, n = Number of Respondents, df = Degree of Freedom, α = level of significance, z_{cal} = Calculated z-value, p = Significance (2-tailed)

The result on Table 3 reveals a z_{cal} of 0.65 with a *p*-value of 0.51. Since the *p*-value is greater than the α value (level of significance) of the test ($p<.05$), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between responses of the state universities' lecturers on the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

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Table 4: z-test analysis on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers

	$\bar{x}$	σ	n	Df	α	z_{cal}	*p*	Decision
IAUE Lect.	3.74	0.59	60	77	0.05	1.01	0.91	Accepted
RSU Lect.	3.76	0.73	19					

KEY: $\bar{x}$ *=Mean,* σ *= Standard Deviation, n = Number of Respondents, df = Degree of Freedom,* α *= level of significance,* z_{cal} *= Calculated z-value, p = Significance (2-tailed)*

The result on Table 4 reveals a z_{cal} of 1.01 with a *p*-value of 0.91. Since the *p*-value is greater than the α value (level of significance) of the test ($p<.05$), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between responses of the state universities' lecturers on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities of Rivers State.

VII. Findings of the Study

The findings of the study include the following:

1. Mentorship in academic publications, in students' assessment, and in research writing are the practices among others needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.
2. Enhanced confidence of the lecturers, identification of potential sources of research fund, and enhanced performance in research activities among others are the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between responses of the state university lecturers on the practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant difference between responses of the state university lecturers on the perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State.

VIII. Discussion of Findings

Findings with respect to research question one shows that the respondents agreed on mentorship in research writing, teaching methods, students' assessment, career progression, academic publications, risk management, academic administration, and in provision of corrective feedback as practices needed for mentoring of beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State. The findings of this study are in consonance with the study of Ndebele, Heerden and Chabaya (2013) which showed a significant impact of mentoring on the preparation of the new generation of researchers. The finding of this study also supported the views of Lankau and Scandura (2002), Dutton and Heaphy (2003), and Geber (2010) in which mentoring was seen as a great way of assisting new academics in achieving significant research output early in their career, thus mentees enjoyed carrying out researches when they have elderly lecturers to help and guide them in the process. The corresponding research hypothesis also indicated that both categories of lecturers shared same view on the mentoring practices needed.

Findings with respect to research question two shows that the respondents agreed on enhanced confidence of the lecturers, enhanced performance in research activities, better understanding of the expectations in the various categories of responsibilities teaching, ability of the lecturers to develop a viable plan for future development, ability to progress in career with minimal delays, identification of potential sources of research fund, identification of provided support for grant writing, encourages active participation in professional activities within/outside the institution, increased spirits of the mentored lecturers leading to job satisfaction, increased competency for the mentored lecturers, and increased commitment from the mentored lecturers as perceived benefits of mentoring beginning Business Education Lecturers in State Universities in Rivers State. These findings are in consonance with findings of Pompa (2012) who noted that good mentor-mentee relationship brings about improved performance and productivity, improved job satisfaction and motivation, leadership ability, and encouragement of positive risk taking. Carter and Francis (2000) posited that a good mentor-mentee relationship promotes collaborative, equity, cooperative practice and reflection, necessary to move the new lecturers beyond the transmission of past and existing practices. Lieberman and Miller (2000) have suggested that new teachers would build their experience, have enhanced confidence and self-esteem through the mutual support offered by other colleagues. Other researchers have also indicated that the advantages of mentoring is that it is supportive in enhancing the confidence of novice teachers, allowing them to put complex experiences into standpoint, and increasing their spirits and job satisfaction (Bullough, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). The corresponding research hypothesis also indicated that both categories of lecturers shared same view on the perceived benefits of mentoring.

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IX. Conclusion

This study has revealed some practices that could be used in mentoring beginning business education lecturers if sustainable skills development is to be achieved in graduates of business education programme in state universities in Rivers State. The study also captured the perceived benefits of effective mentorship which can lead to professional development of the mentee and advancement in pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, it is pertinent to note that just having a mentor is not enough as the outcome of mentees in terms of research and pedagogical output can only be outstanding when they are paired with mentors who have the interest.

X. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Heads of Departments of Business Education Programmes in the state universities in Rivers State. Their Deans should ensure that effective and efficient mentoring practices exist and are encouraged in their departments.
2. The State Institutions should ensure that newly appointed lecturers are fully aware of the benefits of institutional mentoring as the exercise will be futile if the new lecturers refuse mentorship.

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