

PERCEPTIONS OF BUDDING LECTURERS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF MENTORING PRACTICES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, KANO, KANO STATE

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Abstract

This study adopted the descriptive survey design to investigate the perceptions of budding lecturers on the current status of mentoring practices in the Federal University of Education, Kano, Kano State. The study's population comprised of all 525 lecturers in the university. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 50 lecturers who participated in the study. Researcher's developed structured questionnaire titled "Budding Lecturers' Mentoring Experience Survey" (BLMES) was used to collect data. The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in the field. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient Statistics was used and a correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics of mean, with 2.5 serving as the criterion mean for decision. The finding revealed that the poor organizational structure of mentoring practices notwithstanding, the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers includes providing valuable guidance on career advancement and professional growth, improving teaching skills and helping in navigating the challenges of being a novice lecturer. The study concluded that budding lecturers are aware of the connection between effective mentoring and the opportunities for the expansion of their professional development and career advancement and that mentoring and mentorship in the university has a robust potential for growth, once deliberate efforts at tackling observed challenges are put in place. It then recommended, amongst others, that universities should intensify efforts at improving fruitful mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their novice counterparts and universities should create an enabling environment that foster effective mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their young colleagues.

Keywords: Perceptions, budding lecturers, mentoring, practices

Introduction

The value of university education cannot be underestimated. According to the National Policy on Education (NPE), university education determines to a large extent the level of development in any country, Nigeria inclusive (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). It is obvious, however, that the lecturer's role is central in the realization of the goals of tertiary education. For, they are the ones who translates educational policies into practice and programmes into action (Ukeji, 1996). Lecturers are the academic workforce in colleges and universities. Considering the pivotal functions they play, there is need to facilitate their career advancement and to enhance their productivity and efficiency through mentoring (Ekpoh & Ukot, 2018). Mentoring is a well-established concept in academic research and has been considered a critical template Nigerian universities could adopt to enhance lecturers' potentials and productivity.

Mentoring is a process that always involves communication and is relationship-based, but its precise definition is elusive (Phillip, 2014), with more than 50 definitions currently in use (Crisp & Cruz, 2009) and each definition is often based on different scholars' perceptions, philosophical and other convictions (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2016). Thus, Bozeman and Feeney (2007) defined mentoring "as a

process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development;" They went further to state that "mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)." Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) defined mentoring as a professional, one-to-one relationship between a less experienced person (mentee) and a more experienced person(mentor) that aims to improve the former's professional and career advancement. While Leavit (2011) viewed mentoring as a relationship which involves a more experienced and/or knowledgeable individual (mentor) who acts as a counselor, role model, teacher, and guidance of a less experienced or knowledgeable individual (mentee) for the purpose of sharing ideas, knowledge, and guidance and offering support for personal and professional development of mentee.

In the academic setting which is the focus of this study, Johnson (2007) asserted that academic mentoring entails a relationship between an experienced academic and a novice academic where the experienced academic provides guidance, assistance, support and encouragement to facilitate the novice's academic and professional development. Olasupo (2013) stated that an academic mentor is usually a senior faculty member who guides a junior faculty member 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. Although several mentoring styles have been identified, however, two mentoring practices (formal and informal mentoring) have been found prevalent among academic staff in universities in Nigeria (Emoefe, 2016). While formal mentoring is performed at the institutional level, with well-defined objectives, a coherently established program, scheduled meetings, precise and anticipated actions, formative evaluations etc., informal mentoring is performed through sporadic, voluntary meetings, training activities, without planning or evaluation. In an informal relationship, mutual guidance and advice is changed sporadically as needed, without a pre-set schedule or formal agenda (Leslie et al., 2005). Numerous studies that have analyzed the two types of mentoring, formal and informal, have not been able to conclude, for a certainty, that one is superior to the other (Torey & Blamires, 2006). Both forms offer valuable career and psychosocial benefits to lecturers.

Although convectional forms of education provides ample opportunities for skill development, but as asserted by Little (1994), the novice lecturer may still require further support and guidance. The academic qualification possessed by junior academic staff may not to prepare them enough for the challenges embedded in academic career hence the need for proper mentoring of this cadre of academic staff (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2016). Mentorship is often the mechanism through which such support and guidance is given. Research reveals that newcomers can be effectively integrated through positive mentoring relationships (Kram, 1985).

Mentoring at the university level has been conceived as a better model for helping lecturers expand their knowledge and expertise in classroom instruction. It is associated with positive outcomes such as assisting the mentees in establishing clear learning goals and professional relationships and improving both their theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham, 2017). Mentoring is valuable as it provides the mentee the chance to feel connected, integrated and eventually legitimized into his or her future role (Young, Klossner, Docherty & Mensch, 2013) Socialization into the professional role of lecturing is often successfully navigated through mentorship and has been documented as important element of role learning and role transition for lecturers (Mazerolle, Eason, Clines & Pitney, 2015).

Mentoring in academic settings may be undertaken in the areas of research/publications, practical instruction method, career/professional development, psychosocial support and community service. It is difficult, however, to determine to what degree mentoring impacts on teacher professional development and effectiveness, since there are vast differences among the structures that each school chooses to implement (Smith & Lynch, 2014). But as Harris and Miles (2009) pointed out, "in academia

mentoring appears to concentrate on the development of the person” or mentee (p. 273).

In the university system, a good mentoring process, therefore should depend on the established relationship and collaboration between the young budding teacher and the experienced one, should be characterized by good planning, continuity, monitoring, feedback and reflexivity (Tasevska, Stojanov, and Mickovska, 2016) and its mentoring objectives should include to: assist junior academics with their teaching skills and enhance their teaching and learning prowess, help them in the preparation of proposals to secure funding in support of scholarly and creative activities, help them to identify and achieve career growths, encourage them to develop and maintain a broader perspective on career options and opportunities, foster and encourage their sense of belonging within the academic community, help them increase their confidence and help them expand their professional networks. Overall, the goals of mentoring are manifold. But whatever the goal, a mentor “should not see the mentee as someone with a problem but as a young person with much to offer in the relationship and who just needs some additional support” (Dolan & Brady, 2012, p. 109). Effective mentoring relationships are free from compulsion and external pressures. Mentoring activities are fruitful if they help novice teachers develop and if the relationships are cohesive and efforts are collaborative and lead to professional growth (Allen, 2005; Blandford, 2001).

Mentoring brings value at many levels for mentees, mentors, supervisors and institutions where they work. Budding lecturers have an opportunity to gain practical knowledge, skills and experience from a seasoned lecturer who has achieved a level of expertise they aspire to attain. As Hamilton (in Hein & Nicholson, 1986) suggested, “mentoring is an old and honourable way of assisting a neophyte in a profession” (p. 143). The seasoned lecturer has an opportunity to expand his repertoire of professional knowledge and skills through his instruction and facilitation of others, and to receive fulfillment and satisfaction from helping others and contributing to their development. The institution has the opportunity to further develop and disseminate the wealth of talent, skill and knowledge of its employee. Mentoring programs enhance an institution’s research capacity.

Effective mentoring, generally, relies on several key factors, which can be categorized into four main areas: mentor-related, mentee related, relationship-related and institutional factors. First, it demands mentors who are experienced and are: experts in their areas of specialization, available and approachable, good listeners, honest, willing to provide constructive feedbacks, empathetic and understanding. Mentoring is effective when mentors are willing and capable of helping mentees identify and address challenges they face, helping them explore their career options, developing their skills, and building their networks, establishing a safe space where mentees can share their experiences and concerns without fear of judgment, and providing encouragement and motivation to help mentees stay on track and persevere through challenges. Secondly, effective mentoring takes place when mentees are humble, motivated, self-starters, willing to learn and work with their mentor, open to feedback, aware of their strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. Thirdly, effective mentoring involves establishing a strong, trusting relationship. Mentors and mentees can successfully relate when both share common interests, for instance similar research focus, there is trust and mutual respect between them and when there is a clear communication strategy that works both of them. Fourthly, effective mentoring thrives in an institution that fosters positive mentoring environment, that values and supports mentoring, that motivates mentors and provides training programmes and mentorship frameworks with clear goals and expectations (Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham, 2017). By considering the foregoing factors, universities can create an enabling environment that fosters effective mentoring and helps budding lecturers develop their expertise and confidence ((Mazerolle, Eason, Clines & Pitney, 2015).

This study is guided by the Albert Bandura's ‘Social Learning Theory’ (1977) that proposed that people acquire new behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions through observation, imitation, and modeling, particularly in social contexts. It suggests that learning can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even without physical practice or direct reinforcement. This theory also acknowledges the role of cognitive processes like attention, memory, and motivation in the learning process. In addition,

the theory explained that learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. Actions that are rewarded are more likely to be imitated, while those that are punished are avoided (Cherry, 2024; Bandura, 1977). This theory is relevant to this study as it describes the true nature of mentoring relationships. This invariably signifies that new lecturers can learn and adapt their teaching practices by observing and imitating the behaviors of experienced, successful lecturers. Not only could experience serve as role models, budding lecturers may observe experienced lecturers' teaching styles and interactions with students, in the process impacting on their own practices. It also signifies that experienced lecturers' positive feedback can motivate new lecturers to continue to improve.

Statement of the Problem

Results from studies have shown that effective mentoring significantly impacts the professional growth and job satisfaction of lecturers. However, there is limited insight into how budding lecturers in FUE Kano, perceive the current mentoring practices in the university. Whether the mentoring activities are meeting their needs and what challenges they face in their quest for effective mentoring remains unclear. This lack of understanding may hinder efforts to support meaningful mentoring of young academics, potentially affecting their performance, growth and overall contribution to the university. This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the perceptions of budding lecturers on the current status of mentoring practices in the Federal University of Education (FUE), Kano, Kano state.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the structure and organization of formal mentoring programmes in FUE Kano.
2. Examine the extent to which budding lecturers are aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE Kano.
3. Explore how budding lecturers perceive the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano.
4. Determine the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the challenges associated with mentoring practices in FUE Kano.
5. Investigate the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUE Kano.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the structure and organization of mentoring practices in FUE Kano?
2. To what extent are budding lecturers aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE Kano?
3. How do budding lecturers perceive the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano?
4. What are the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the challenges associated with mentoring practices in FUE Kano?
5. What are the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUEKano?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study as information was collected from a sample of the population and the findings were generalized for the entire population. The study's population comprised all lecturers in the university estimated to be about 525. While purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 50 lecturers, of the ranks of lecturer 1 and below, who had spent at least eighteen (18) months in the university, as new entrants in the university might not be aware of some of the issues the study seeks to investigate. Out of this number, 30 of them willingly gave their consent to participate in the study. A researcher developed structured questionnaire titled "Budding Lecturers' Mentoring Experience Survey" (BLeMES) was administered to collect numerical data. The instrument was divided into sections A and B. Section "A" elicited the demographic data of the participants that

is, their departments, rank and years of working experience in the university. While section “B” consisted of 39 items related to the research questions and was patterned on a 4-point rating scale of “strongly agreed,” “agreed,” “disagreed” and “strongly disagreed,” weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, with 2.5 serving as the criterion mean for decision. The face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts in Sociology of Education, Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation at the university. To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient Statistics was used to analyze the scores collected from a trial testing with five lecturers who were not part of the final study and a correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The study instrument was administered to academic members of staff in their offices with an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.

Results

Research Question 1:

What are the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the structure and organization of formal mentoring programmes in FUE Kano?

Table 1: Mean responses regarding the structure and organization of mentoring practices in FUE Kano

n = 30

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	There is a university policy that makes mentoring mandatory	1.3	0.1	Disagree
2	There are activities that are structured to provide adequate mentoring support for career development	1.7	0.6	Disagree
3	Mentoring activities are deeply incorporated into the university’s culture	1.7	0.2	Disagree
4	Workshops and seminars are regularly organized for lecturers on mentoring	2.3	0.2	Agree
Grand Mean		2.08	0.35	Disagree

Source: Field Work, 2025

Legend: \bar{x} = Mean; Std =Standard Deviation;n =Population

Results from Table 1 indicates that formal mentoring programmes are poorly structured and organized in FUE Kano since the mean responses to three items, except item 4 and the grand mean were below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 2:

To what extent are budding lecturers aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE Kano?

Table 2: Mean responses on the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE Kano

n = 30

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Enhances ability to write and publish research articles	3.07	0.57	Agreed
2	Boosts confidence in academic roles	2.67	0.87	Agreed
3	Improve teaching skills	2.97	0.79	Agreed
4	Encourages the use of more effective instructional strategies and resources in teaching	2.67	0.91	Agreed
5	Improves the ability to address diverse learning needs within the	2.80	0.79	Agreed

	classroom			
6	Provides valuable guidance on career advancement and professional growth	2.57	0.88	Agreed
7	Provides opportunities for professional networking	2.70	1.04	Agreed
8	Facilitates a more student-centred instructional approach	2.77	0.99	Agreed
9	Enhances ability at assessing students' understanding of the subject matter	2.40	0.92	Disagreed
10	Improves time management skills	2.57	1.05	Agreed
11	Helps in navigating the challenges of being a novice lecturer	2.50	0.88	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.70	0.89	Agreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

Note: The legend for table 1 applies

The result in Table 2 shows that except for item 9 which had a mean score of 2.40, the other mean responses on the potential benefits of effective mentoring ranged between 2.50 and 3.07. With a grand mean of 2.70, the mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that budding lecturers' awareness of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE, Kano is high.

Research Question 3:

How do budding lecturers perceive the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano?

Table 3: Mean responses on the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano
n = 30

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Experienced lecturers make themselves approachable and available for mentoring	2.70	1.04	Agreed
2	Experienced lecturers demonstrate a genuine interest in supporting the professional development of new lecturers	2.67	1.01	Agreed
3	Experienced lecturers do often listen to the concerns and needs of less experienced ones	2.63	1.01	Agreed
4	Experienced lecturers often carefully take their time to understand the perspectives of budding lecturers	2.33	1.11	Disagreed
5	Experienced lecturers are willing to mentor and guide new lecturers	2.40	1.11	Disagreed
6	Experienced lecturers provide sufficient feedback to budding lecturers	2.17	1.04	Disagreed
Grand Mean		2.48	1.054	Disagreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

Note: The legend for table 1 applies

The result in Table 3 reveals that out of the six items on the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano, items 1, 2 and 3 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, while items 4, 5 and 6 had mean scores below the criterion mean. But with a grand mean of 2.48, which is below the criterion mean, it means that the respondents perceived as negative the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers towards mentoring in FUE Kano.

Research Question 4:

What are the perceptions of budding lecturers regarding the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in FUE Kano?

Table 4: Mean responses regarding the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in FUE Kano

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Cultural differences between senior lecturers and their protégés	2.77	0.95	Agreed
2	Low awareness of the benefits of mentoring as a professional development strategy among lecturers	2.23	0.80	Disagreed
3	No or little formal provision by the institution for mentoring	3.03	0.79	Agreed
4	Different expectations about the mentoring relationships between senior lecturers and budding lecturers	2.60	0.99	Agreed
5	Lecturers' official schedules are too tight to give room for mentoring	2.70	0.94	Agreed
6	No or limited effective and fruitful line of communication between senior lecturers and their junior colleagues	2.20	0.94	Disagreed
7	Low level of mutual respect between senior lecturers and budding lecturers regarding mentoring	2.53	1.12	Agreed
8	Poor provision of working facilities to facilitate mentoring	2.83	0.86	Agreed
9	Novice lecturers' lack of preparedness	2.73	1.06	Agreed
10	Lack of flexible and adaptable approach between senior lecturers and their protégés	2.77	0.95	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.64	0.94	Agreed

n = 30

Source: Field Work, 2025

Note: The legend for table 1 applies

On the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in FUE Kano, the result in Table 4 revealed that out of the ten items identified as challenges, only items 2 and 6, with mean scores of 2.23 and 2.20 respectively, were below the criterion mean value. The other eight items had mean scores above the criterion mean. With a grand mean of 2.64, it means that the respondents identified them as challenges.

Research Question 5:

How do budding lecturers perceive the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUE Kano?

Table 5: Mean responses on the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUE Kano

n = 30

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Increasing resources and support for mentoring activities would improve mentoring quality	3.00	0.73	Agreed
2	Establishing clear objectives and expectations would improve mentoring quality	2.57	0.84	Agreed
3	Regular training of mentors on effective mentoring techniques would improve mentoring quality	3.03	0.71	Agreed
4	Recognizing and rewarding mentors' contributions would boost their motivation	2.57	1.02	Agreed
5	Mentor-mentee matching based on shared research interests or needs would enhance mentoring outcomes	2.73	0.89	Agreed
6	Regular meetings between mentors and mentees would enhance their relationships	2.90	0.60	Agreed

7	Constructive feedback would help mentors improve	2.63	1.11	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.78	0.84	Agreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

Note: The legend for table 1 applies

The result in Table 5 shows the mean responses of the respondents on the perceived best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring ranged between 2.57 and 3.03. With a grand mean of 2.78, the mean responses were above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that budding lecturers overwhelmingly agreed on the listed items as the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUE Kano.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study investigated the structure and organization of mentoring practices in FUE Kano. Responses were drawn from selected budding lecturers to gauge their perceptions. The results revealed that mentoring practices were poorly structured and organized in FUE Kano. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong (2012) who found that there are no formal mentoring programmes to ease the absorption of new and novice academic staff into the university system or any other tertiary institution of learning in the country.

The second objective examined the extent to which budding lecturers are aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in FUE Kano. The results revealed that budding lecturers' awareness of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers is high. This finding corroborates with the findings of several other empirical researches (Kutsyruba et al., 2019; Amoke, 2019) that have consistently showed that mentoring plays a crucial role in developing lecturers' competencies. Lecturers who undergo mentoring programmes, demonstrate improved instructional techniques and higher students' engagement and fosters their reflective teaching practices, allowing them to evaluate and refine their approaches to delivering critical content and managing classroom activities (Achinstein & Davies, 2016).

The third objective explored how budding lecturers perceive the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in FUE Kano. The finding revealed that experienced lecturers displayed negative attitude towards mentoring. This could lead to ineffective mentoring activities. This assertion is made against the backdrop of the study by Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham (2017) that found that mentoring is effective when mentors are available and approachable, good listeners, honest, willing to provide constructive feedbacks, empathetic and understanding.

With regards to the forth objective which examined the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in FUE Kano, the respondents' affirmation of the listed challenges are in agreement with the findings of several studies (Johnson, 2007; Daloz, 1986; Kram, 1985; Boice, 2000) about the obstacles and difficulties in implementing effective mentoring practices between experienced and novice lecturers.

The fifth objective investigated the best practices for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in FUE Kano. The respondents' choice of the suggested best practices are in consonance with Barrett, Mazerolle and Nottingham (2017)'s contention that effective mentoring thrives in an institution that fosters positive mentoring environment, that values and supports mentoring, that motivates mentors and provides training programmes and mentorship frameworks with clear goals and expectations.

Conclusion

This study concludes that budding lecturers are aware of the connection between effective mentoring and the opportunities for the expansion of their professional development and career advancement, that budding lecturers might not be having fruitful mentoring relationships in FUE Kano because of the noticeable existence of challenges that are obstructing the implementation of effective mentoring practices between experienced and novice lecturers and that mentoring and mentorship in the university has a robust potential for growth, once deliberate efforts at tackling the observed challenges are put in place.

Recommendations

1. Universities should intensify efforts at improving fruitful mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their novice counterparts.
2. Universities should formulate guidelines to integrate structured and organized formal mentoring programmes for budding lecturers.
3. Universities should create an enabling environment that foster effective mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their young colleagues.
4. Universities should encourage informal mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their novice counterparts.

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