

WORKPLACE MENTORING AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN FCT ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The effect of mentoring on employee performance in universities is not thoroughly understood, even though it has been universally acknowledged as an effective tool for employee growth. This study examines the effect of workplace mentoring on employees' performance in private universities in Abuja, Nigeria. This is to evaluate the effect of Pedagogy and Psychological support on employee performance. The study adopted a survey research design, targeting a population of 2,118 employees from various private universities in Abuja. A sample size of 370 participants was determined using the Fisher formula. Data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using statistical regression techniques. These results indicate that psychological support has a statistically significant positive relationship with employees' performance, while Pedagogy does not demonstrate a significant relationship. The findings of this also highlight the importance of effective psychological support programmes and services in private universities in Abuja. It is recommended that these institutions prioritize developing and implementing such programmes to enhance employee performance. By providing adequate psychological support, employees can gain valuable guidance, support, and resources to navigate their career paths, leading to improved job satisfaction and overall performance.

Key Words: Workplace Mentoring, Employee performance, Private Universities, Pedagogy, Psychological Support,

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is a crucial instrument for cultivating individuals inside firms. Mentoring is a process in which seasoned professionals offer direction, counsel, and assistance to less experienced persons in order to assist them in attaining their professional and personal objectives. Mentoring is a frequently employed practice at private

universities to facilitate the growth of personnel, especially those who are either new to the business or in the first phases of their professional journeys. The impact of mentoring on employee performance has garnered significant attention from both researchers and practitioners. Multiple studies have demonstrated that mentorship yields a beneficial influence on the performance

of employees, particularly those employed at private institutions (Malik & Nawaz, 2021; Mnasi et al., 2022). Research has shown that mentoring has a positive impact on several aspects of work, such as job happiness, employee engagement, and retention rates. Additionally, it has been proven to boost productivity, creativity, and innovation (Colquitt, 2013).

Research has demonstrated that proficient mentorship may have a beneficial influence on employee performance across several dimensions. According to a study conducted by Chaudhry et al. (2020), mentoring has been found to enhance employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment, resulting in enhanced performance. The study revealed that mentoring fosters heightened job satisfaction by enhancing employees' comprehension of their tasks and responsibilities, while also furnishing them with a distinct trajectory for their career advancement. In addition, mentoring offers individuals essential assistance, evaluation, and direction to overcome obstacles and cultivate fresh abilities, ultimately resulting in enhanced job performance. Mentoring enhances employee performance by offering workers the essential assistance and direction to cultivate their skills and competences (Vidyasagar & Sujatha, 2021). Mentoring facilitates the identification of areas for development among individuals and offers them essential feedback and direction to cultivate novel abilities and competences (Ojeaga & Okolocha, 2020).

A mentoring relationship involves a knowledgeable and experienced individual (mentor) who acts as a guide, counselor, role model, and teacher for a less knowledgeable or experienced individual (mentee). The mentor shares

guidance, ideas, and knowledge to assist in the mentee's personal and professional growth (Leavitt, 2013; Ojeaga & Okolocha, 2020). The main objective of a mentoring program is to aid mentees in fully and quickly understanding the intricacies of their job, in order to foster personal development and devotion to the firm. Mentoring may be conducted in various organizations, including higher education institutions. Mentoring in academic contexts encompasses several domains, including research and publishing, practical instructional techniques, professional development, psychosocial support, and volunteerism. Emoefe (2016) states that mentoring has a positive impact on academic staff by amplifying their innate abilities and capacity for growth in educational endeavors, including teaching, research, publishing, and community involvement.

The correlation between mentoring and employee performance is intricate and diverse, and studies have demonstrated that proficient mentoring may yield favorable outcomes on employee performance through various means. Mentoring may enhance employee performance by offering avenues for talent enhancement and knowledge acquisition (Malik & Nawaz, 2021). Mentors play a crucial role in assisting mentees in recognizing their areas of proficiency and areas for improvement, while offering direction on acquiring new competencies and information that are pertinent to their occupation (Fong et al., 2021). Madhavan and Kumar (2020) did a research which revealed that mentorship has a notable and beneficial effect on the skill enhancement and performance of employees in the hospitality sector.

The notion of employee performance is complex and involves several aspects

that contribute to fostering a favorable connection with the business. These elements encompass commitment to the business's principles, readiness to go the extra mile for the firm, and the employees' tendency to stay with the organization (Alcover et al., 2011; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2017). Iqra and Yahya conducted a study in 2013. Clear indications of a loyal worker include their disinterest in alternative job opportunities, eagerness to assume additional responsibilities, demonstration of workplace satisfaction, willingness to work with minimal supervision, ability to make valuable contributions, and absence of frivolous excuses. The primary factors that significantly impact employee retention rates are their level of productivity and the company's commitment to meeting their needs.

Statement of problem

The effect of mentoring on the employee's performance of University staff has been an area of It generates curiosity among scholars and practitioners in the field of human resource management. Mentoring is a dynamic connection where a seasoned individual provides guidance to a less experienced individual in their personal and professional advancement. While mentoring is commonly acknowledged as a helpful tool for employee development, the precise influence of mentoring on employee performance at universities remains incompletely comprehended.

Despite its longstanding presence in academia, research has revealed that mentoring in this discipline remains inadequately developed (Okurame, 2008). Although mentoring is a well-established practice in academic circles, there is a dearth of research on mentoring in the corporate sphere in

comparison to academics (Dankwa & Dankwa, 2013). The university management's indifference towards mentoring may stem from their perception of it as inconsequential, assuming that the majority of university staff are already proficient in their respective domains. Nevertheless, mentorship has become indispensable in the contemporary corporate landscape, particularly inside academic institutions such as private colleges. This is due to the expected advancements in technology and the heightened worldwide rivalry (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008). A significant number of senior personnel are anticipated to retire in the near future. Without the implementation of mentoring strategies, the business risks losing the valuable knowledge and expertise required for enhancing performance. The departure of top leadership may lead to the organization's vision, culture, personal networks, abilities, and historical assets being compromised. Hence, mentorship plays a vital role in ensuring the continuity of the younger workforce's commitment to the institution and mitigating the anticipated decline in knowledge and performance. The institution is now experiencing subpar employee performance in terms of dedication, and management feels that this may be attributed to a deficiency in comprehending how mentoring may successfully enhance performance and how to quantify its impact.

Numerous studies have been undertaken to assess the efficacy of mentoring in improving employee performance across different contexts. An investigation carried out by Ellen et al (2018) demonstrated that mentoring had a beneficial impact on the career outcomes of mentees, encompassing their levels of work satisfaction, rates of promotion, and rates of employment

retention. Moreover, a study done by Jalees Rehman (2012) shown that mentoring has a beneficial impact on both employee motivation and work performance. Nevertheless, several studies have failed to document the favorable impact of mentoring on employee performance. A research done by Zhang and Liu (2021) shown that mentoring did not have a statistically significant impact on employee performance inside a public sector business. In a hospital environment, a research done by Patricia and Elmore (2013) discovered that mentoring did not have a noteworthy impact on staff engagement.

The inconclusive results from prior research (Patricia & Elmore, 2013; Dankwa & Dankwa, 2013) indicate that the impact of mentoring on improving employee performance may differ based on the circumstances, kind of mentoring, and the attributes of the employees and mentors involved. In addition, studies examining the impact of mentoring on employee performance have frequently concentrated on certain facets of employee performance, such as work satisfaction, organizational commitment, or task performance, rather than evaluating total employee performance (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020). This creates a knowledge vacuum regarding the impact of mentoring on the overall performance of employees in private universities. This study aims to fill the information gap about the impact of workplace mentoring on the performance of employees in private institutions in Abuja, Nigeria. This study aims to examine the impact of mentoring on employee performance in a university setting. By doing so, it will contribute to the existing body of research on mentoring and employee performance and shed light on the factors that can influence the effectiveness of mentoring in improving employee performance.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does psychological support impact employee performance of private Universities in Abuja?
- ii. Does pedagogy have a positive and significant effect on employee performance of private Universities in Abuja?

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of workplace mentoring on employee performance of private Universities in Abuja, Nigeria, as implied from the statement of the research problem. Additionally, the specific objectives are as follows:

The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To analyze the influence of psychological support on employee performance private Universities in Abuja
- ii. To examine the effect of pedagogy on the employee performance of private Universities in Abuja

Research hypotheses

Ho₁: psychological support has no significant effect on employee performance of private universities in Abuja.

Ho₂: pedagogy has no significant effect on employee performance of private universities in Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring

Arogundade (2013) defined a mentor as someone who promotes the personal and professional development of another person by imparting the knowledge and

wisdom acquired over time. Mentoring is a one-on-one developmental connection where a person with greater experience or knowledge assists someone with less experience or knowledge. Katthy Kram was born in 1985. Ojedokun (2013) defined mentoring as a systematic procedure in which individuals of higher status and reputation provide instruction, guidance, and support to encourage the intellectual and professional growth of those selected as protégées. Mentoring is a mutually beneficial connection between two individuals, where one person deliberately seeks guidance and support from the other person who possesses extensive experience, knowledge, skills, or status in many areas of human activity (Okurame, 2013). Bilesanmi (2013) proposed that mentoring involves the provision of personalized guidance and motivation by a seasoned employee to less experienced individuals, in a creative manner, across various areas of expertise. Mentoring is a process in which seasoned and knowledgeable supervisors impart their expertise and experience to younger workers through individualized interactions.

Mentoring relationships entail the transfer of wisdom, acquisition of information and skills, and advancement of the protégé's career progression within the business (Akinbobola, 2013). Noe (1988) and Kram (1983) proposed two primary aspects of the mentoring relationship: career assistance and psychological support functions. Career support roles include sponsorship, mentoring, access to influential contacts and resources, visibility, aiding the protection of the mentee, and assigning demanding tasks to promote the protégé's career (Noe, 1988; Kram, 1983). Psychosocial support roles encompass several activities such as serving as a

positive example, fostering friendships, providing guidance and counseling, accepting the mentee, and validating their experiences (Clutterbuck, 2004; Kram, 1983).

Moreover, formal developmental interactions are regarded as esteemed methods of on-the-job experience employed for learning (Janssen, Tahitu, Van Vuuren, & de Jong, 2018). In line with the social learning theory, which suggests that individuals learn from each other via observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977), most formal mentoring programs assign a younger management to learn and observe from a senior manager. Mentoring is an informal process in which connections arise organically or spontaneously without any external intervention (Hu, Wang, Wang, Chen, & Jiang, 2016). The establishment of these relationships is contingent upon the mentor's inclination to offer guidance, the extent of mentoring support given to proteges, the mentor's and protégé's disposition, and finally, the protégé's aptitude and eagerness to acquire knowledge (Dougherty, Turban & Haggard, 2010).

An extensive study has been conducted on the correlation between workplace mentoring and employees' performance, revealing that mentoring may significantly enhance employee performance. Research has demonstrated that workplace mentoring has many advantages for both the mentor and the mentee, such as enhanced job performance (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Mentoring facilitates the acquisition of novel skills, information, and competencies that are crucial for achieving success in one's professional endeavors. In addition, mentoring can offer the mentee valuable feedback and assistance, therefore

improving their performance (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

The mentor might also derive benefits from workplace mentoring. Mentoring offers mentors the chance to enhance their leadership and coaching abilities, resulting in enhanced work performance (Allen et al., 2004). In addition, mentoring can enhance the mentor's work satisfaction and dedication to the business (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Although workplace mentoring offers several advantages, it also presents certain difficulties. An inherent problem lies in the potential lack of organic development of mentoring connections, necessitating the establishment of institutionalized programs or efforts (Scandura & Williams, 2004). Furthermore, the quality of mentoring relationships may be influenced by variables such as the mentor's accessibility and the mentee's level of engagement (Ragins & Kram, 2007). A further obstacle in workplace mentoring is the potential for power imbalances to arise between the mentor and the mentee, resulting in adverse consequences such as the misuse of authority and conflicts of interest (Eby & McManus, 2004).

Psychological support

Psychological support, as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), is the provision of professional and empathetic care aimed at assisting persons in coping with emotional challenges, mental health issues, and psychological diseases. Psychological support, as defined by Judith A. Cohen, refers to the provision of emotional and practical aid to persons who have had trauma or other major life stressors. This assistance aims to help them cope with and recover from their experiences. (Cohen, 2014). Psychological support encompasses

many therapies and tactics designed to enhance emotional well-being and resilience in persons facing psychological distress. Treatment options may encompass therapeutic interventions, counseling sessions, social reinforcement, and more modalities of aid that facilitate the effective management of symptoms and enhancement of persons' overall well-being.

Mentoring is widely acknowledged as a helpful technique for fostering employee growth, with the provision of psychological support being a crucial component of successful mentoring partnerships. Psychological support is the provision of emotional and psychological aid by a mentor to their protégé. This aid may involve active listening, giving constructive comments, and providing counsel and direction on personal and professional matters. Research repeatedly demonstrates that the provision of psychological support by mentors has a beneficial effect on the job performance of their protégés. Erdogan et al (2017) conducted a study that revealed a favorable correlation between the mentor's supply of psychological support and the work engagement of their protégé. This, in turn, had a beneficial effect on the job performance of the protégé. Moreover, the advantages of psychological assistance offered by mentors go beyond only job performance and encompass other results such as professional contentment and dedication. A study conducted by Ragins et al (2016) revealed that workers who got substantial psychological support from their mentor showed significantly greater levels of job satisfaction and commitment compared to those who had a mentor or had a mentor who offered minimal psychological support.

The impact of psychological support on employee performance transcends any business or sector. For instance, Liu et al (2021) conducted a study which revealed that the provision of psychological support by a mentor has a beneficial effect on the job performance of healthcare professionals. Various mechanisms have been suggested to elucidate the favorable influence of psychological support on employee performance. A mechanism that can be employed is the mitigation of stress and anxiety levels. Employees who get psychological support from their mentors have enhanced resilience in dealing with the demands and pressures of their work environment, resulting in reduced levels of stress and anxiety. Reduced levels of stress and anxiety can lead to enhanced job performance. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the influence of psychological assistance on employee productivity may be influenced by additional elements, including the caliber of the mentorship connection, the length of the mentorship, and the perceived likeness between the mentor and protégé. Scandura et al (2017) conducted a study that shown that psychological support has a more pronounced beneficial effect on employee performance when they have a high-quality mentoring connection.

The correlation between psychological assistance and employee performance in any firm can transcend individual-level consequences. Son et al (2019) argued that receiving psychological support from a mentor has a good correlation with team performance. The study revealed a positive correlation between the amount of psychological support provided by mentors and the degrees of task cohesiveness and team performance exhibited by the teams. According to Weng et al (2020), psychological support has an indirect effect on employee

performance through its influence on employee creativity. The study revealed a favorable correlation between psychological support and employee innovation, which subsequently had a good impact on employee performance. These findings indicate that providing psychological support can effectively promote employee creativity, hence improving their overall job performance.

Moreover, Du et al (2021) proposed that receiving psychological support from a mentor has a good correlation with employee creative behavior. The study revealed a positive correlation between the extent of psychological support provided by mentors and the likelihood of workers engaging in creative activities, such as proposing novel ideas and methods to work assignments. This discovery implies that providing psychological support to employees might foster greater innovation in their job, hence resulting in improved performance outcomes. Furthermore, the influence of psychological assistance on employee productivity might fluctuate based on the nature of the mentor-protégé dynamic. An instance of this may be seen in a research conducted by Kim et al (2021), which revealed that psychological support had a more pronounced effect on employee performance within informal mentoring relationships as opposed to official mentoring partnerships. These findings indicate that the dynamics of the mentor-protégé relationship might influence the efficacy of psychological assistance.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the scholarly examination of the methods and principles of teaching and learning, and it plays a crucial role in the process of mentoring. Academics have examined the notion of pedagogy in several settings, including mentorship connections. According to Xu and Yang

(2021), pedagogical mentoring is a mentorship method that focuses on transferring information, skills, and competences from mentors to mentees, with a central focus on the mentee's learning and growth. The authors observe that pedagogical mentoring is differentiated from other types of mentoring, such as social or career mentoring, due to its specific emphasis on the process of teaching and learning. Pedagogical mentoring is a methodical and intentional approach to mentoring that focuses on the mentee's development of information, skills, and competencies. Guo et al (2020) define pedagogical mentoring as the application of instructional techniques and approaches that are explicitly intended to promote learning and growth. These may encompass activities such as offering constructive criticism, exemplifying behaviors, establishing objectives, and enabling chances for rehearsal and contemplation.

Pedagogy, as a facet of mentoring, is the utilization of instructional and educational techniques to facilitate the mentee's progress and maturation. The educational method is to establish a learning environment that is nurturing, captivating, and demanding. Regarding mentoring, the mentor has the duty to create and execute an educational strategy that is customized to meet the particular requirements of the mentee. Prior research has emphasized the significance of pedagogy in mentoring relationships, especially within the realm of higher education (Li et al., 2020). An effective mentoring relationship necessitates the mentor's utilization of many pedagogical techniques, including offering constructive criticism, establishing explicit expectations, and exemplifying desired behaviors. These tactics are designed to assist the mentee in their learning and growth, while also

ensuring they can fulfill the requirements of their academic program or job objectives. Furthermore, the instructional methodology in mentoring is not universally applicable. Mentors need to modify their approach according to the individual requirements of each mentee (Stuckey-Mickell et al., 2020). This necessitates the mentor to possess a profound comprehension of the mentee's learning preferences, objectives, and obstacles. By customizing the teaching method to match the specific requirements of the mentee, the mentor may establish a mentoring relationship that is more efficient and influential.

The academics propose that pedagogical mentorship is crucial for fostering employee learning and growth. According to Zhang et al (2021), pedagogical mentorship resulted in increased work satisfaction, desire for learning, and enhanced job performance among employees. They further proposed that pedagogical mentoring can enhance employee growth by offering a well-organized and supportive learning setting that promotes the acquisition of skills and transfer of information. Liu et al (2020) argued that pedagogical mentorship is positively correlated with increased levels of creativity and innovation among employees. The authors propose that pedagogical mentorship, by its focus on acquiring new information and abilities, can facilitate the development of a wider range of ideas and methods among workers, ultimately resulting in more inventive outcomes. The mentor-mentee relationship's quality significantly impacts the efficacy of pedagogical mentoring, particularly in terms of the mentor's provision of feedback and support, as well as the mentee's reported learning and progress (Allen et al., 2021). Reflective practices are crucial in pedagogical mentorship as they aid in

facilitating learning and fostering development. Reflective practices, as demonstrated in research conducted by DuFour et al (2021), enable workers to engage in critical evaluation of their experiences, discover areas for personal and professional development, and provide novel insights and methods for effective action. This may entail motivating the mentee to introspect on their experiences and pinpoint areas that require enhancement, as well as assisting them in formulating methods to tackle these areas.

Pedagogical mentorship has been associated with increased employee engagement and retention, hence improving employee performance. According to Abujarad and Yusof (2020), pedagogical mentorship resulted in increased levels of work satisfaction, commitment, and desire to remain among employees. The authors propose that firms may cultivate a favorable and encouraging work atmosphere that promotes employee engagement and loyalty by investing in employee learning and development through pedagogical mentorship. Moreover, Tsai and Chen (2021) elucidated that there is a favorable correlation between pedagogical mentorship and employee emotional intelligence, which in turn is linked to work performance. According to the authors, pedagogical mentorship can improve employee emotional intelligence by offering chances for self-examination, feedback, and the enhancement of skills.

Employees' Performance

Performance refers to the achievement of a certain job, which is evaluated based on predetermined or recognized standards of correctness, comprehensiveness, cost, and speed (Ekundayo, 2015). A

performer is an individual or a group of individuals who work together towards a same goal. Employee performance has been characterized by several factors, including the capacity to meet targets, accomplish objectives, and reach benchmarks. According to Shahzadi et al. (2014), employee performance encompasses the level of production in terms of quality and quantity, the ability to be accommodating and helpful, and the timeliness of completing tasks. In addition, Afshan, et al (2012) provides a definition of performance as the successful completion of certain tasks, evaluated based on established benchmarks of precision, comprehensiveness, cost, and speed. Employee performance refers to the behavior and effectiveness of workers in fulfilling their assigned obligations in the workplace. Several researchers have examined job performance as the tasks and responsibilities that an individual fulfills in the workplace.

Employee performance refers to the actions and conduct of an employee, which should be differentiated from the results they achieve. This distinction is important since the outcomes can be influenced by external factors and may not accurately reflect the employee's true performance. According to Armstrong (2014), employee performance is determined by both skill and motivation. He further asserted that performance covers both actions and consequences. Behaviors stem from the performer and transform the performance from an abstract idea into an action. Behaviors serve as both tools and outcomes of intellectual and material efforts in everyday tasks, and can be evaluated apart from the results they produce. The research defines employees' performance based on their level of dedication and effectiveness. Employee commitment refers to a deep sense of

loyalty and dedication towards the business that employs an individual. It entails a readiness to work extended hours for the company and a strong intention to remain with the firm (Udu & Ameh, 2016).

Empirical Review

Kumari and Sahu (2022) examined the influence of mentoring on employee performance. The research seeks to examine the impact of mentorship on employee performance within the Indian banking industry. The study employed a quantitative research approach and gathered data using a survey. The study's population consisted of workers working in the Indian banking industry. A convenience sampling strategy was employed to pick a sample of 384 employees. The data were gathered through the utilization of a self-administered questionnaire. The data gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings demonstrated that mentoring exerts a favorable and substantial impact on the performance of employees within the Indian banking industry. The study suggested that firms should promote mentorship programs since they enhance employee performance. Nevertheless, the study did not employ a random sampling approach, thereby compromising the generalizability of the findings.

Alghamdi and Jabeen (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between mentoring and employee performance in organizations in Saudi Arabia. The primary aim was to examine the correlation between mentorship and employee performance in firms in Saudi Arabia. The study utilized a quantitative research approach and data was gathered via a survey. The study's population consisted of employees from Saudi Arabian organizations. A

convenience sampling strategy was employed to choose a sample of 150 employees. The data were gathered through the utilization of a self-administered questionnaire. The data was analyzed using regression analysis in the research. The findings demonstrated that mentoring exerts a favorable and substantial impact on the performance of employees inside firms in Saudi Arabia. The research suggested the implementation of mentorship programs in Saudi Arabian enterprises as a means to enhance employee performance. Nevertheless, the study employed a limited sample size and a convenience sampling approach, thus compromising the generalizability of the results.

Shambare et al. (2019) conducted a study on the relationship between mentoring and employee performance in the South African hospitality industry. The objective of the study was to investigate the correlation between mentorship and employee performance within the hospitality sector in South Africa. The study employed a quantitative research approach, with data being gathered via a survey. The study's population consisted of employees within the South African hotel sector. A convenience sampling strategy was employed to choose a sample of 200 employees. The data were gathered through the utilization of a self-administered questionnaire. The data was analyzed using regression analysis in the research. The findings indicated that mentoring exerts a favorable and noteworthy impact on the performance of employees within the hospitality sector of South Africa. The research proposed the use of mentorship programs in the South African hotel sector as a means to improve employee performance. However, the study employed a limited sample size and a convenience sampling approach, thus

compromising the generalizability of the results.

Tellez et al. (2019) conducted a study in Mexico to investigate the impact of mentoring on employee performance. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of mentoring on the performance of employees in Mexico. The study employed a quantitative research approach and data were gathered via a survey. The study's population consisted of employees from Mexican organizations. A convenience sampling strategy was employed to choose a sample of 234 workers. The data were gathered through the utilization of a self-administered questionnaire. The data was analyzed using regression analysis in the research. The findings indicated that mentoring exerts a favorable and noteworthy impact on the performance of employees inside Mexican firms. The report suggests that Mexican firms should allocate resources towards implementing mentorship programs as a means to enhance employee performance. Nevertheless, the study employed a limited number of participants and a convenience sampling method, thus compromising the applicability of the results to a broader population.

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory:

Developed by George Homans in 1958, this theory suggests that social relationships are based on an exchange of benefits or resources. Social Exchange Theory is a psychological framework that explains social behavior and interactions. The theory suggests that social relationships are formed based on the exchange of rewards and costs between two or more individuals. Rewards can include anything that is valued by individuals, such as material

benefits, emotional support, and social status. Costs refer to any negative experiences that are associated with social interactions, such as effort, time, and emotional stress.

SET suggests that individuals engage in social exchanges when they perceive that the benefits outweigh the costs. For example, a person may decide to help a friend move to a new apartment because they believe the benefits of helping (e.g., strengthening the friendship, feeling good about themselves) outweigh the costs (e.g., spending time and energy, physical discomfort). SET also proposes that individuals are motivated by the principle of reciprocity, which means that people tend to feel obliged to return favors and kindnesses they have received from others. Therefore, a person who has received help from a friend may feel motivated to help that friend in return.

In mentoring relationship mentoring, Social Exchange Theory suggests that the mentor and mentee enter into a relationship based on the expectation of rewards and costs. Mentors are motivated to invest time and effort in their mentees because they expect the mentee to produce outcomes that are beneficial to them, such as increased productivity, a positive reputation, or personal fulfillment. In return, the mentee receives guidance, support, and opportunities for growth that can help them achieve their goals. If both parties feel that the rewards they receive outweigh the costs associated with the mentoring relationship, they are likely to remain committed to the relationship and engage in positive behaviors.

Transformational Leadership Theory:

Transformational leadership theory is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their

full potential by creating a vision and empowering them to achieve it. This theory was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978, and later expanded upon by Bernard M. Bass in the 1980s. According to transformational leadership theory, leaders inspire their followers to transcend their self-interests and work towards a common goal. They do this by creating a compelling vision of the future, communicating it clearly and persuasively, and providing support and guidance to achieve it. Transformational leaders also demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness, which enables them to build strong relationships with their followers and create a positive work environment.

The application of transformational leadership theory to mentoring can be highly effective in helping employees develop their skills and abilities. Transformational mentors focus on empowering their mentees by providing guidance, support, and encouragement to help them achieve their goals. They also challenge their mentees to think critically and creatively and provide opportunities for them to take on new challenges and responsibilities.

Methodology

This study used a survey methodology with a descriptive and causal research design as the main components. This descriptive study aimed at collect data from various staff members, including senior administrative managers, academic staff, library staff, accountants,

administrative officers, and technical staff, to examine the effect of workplace mentoring on employee performance in private universities in Abuja, Nigeria. The study used a combination of stratified sample and purposive sampling procedures due to the variety of duties and responsibilities that these employees across different grades had. The choice of a descriptive research design was motivated by the goal of obtaining current information on the case study and describing the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. This research design is well-suited for revealing the associations among multiple variables.

The four private universities in FCT Abuja that make up the target population for this study are Baze University, Veritas University, Nile University, and African University of Science and Technology, with a combined population of 2,118 (NUC, 2022). This population included both academic staff and non-teaching staff members. Due to the size of the target population, Fisher (1983) devised the formula, which was used to generate the needed sample of 337. To ensure that the sample size would be at least 337, an additional 10% was added to account for incomplete and invalid questionnaires which make the new sample size to be 370. The study further employed a proportionate stratified sampling design in reaching respondents across private universities in Abuja according to the respective percentage proportions.

Table 1: Sample Size by University

| University | Population | Sample |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Baze | 906 | 158 |
| Veritas | 521 | 91 |
| Nile | 663 | 115 |
| AUST | 28 | 6 |
| Total | 2118 | 370 |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires served as the main instrument for gathering data for this study. To collect primary data, the researchers used closed-ended questions in the surveys. To guarantee the questionnaire's clarity, validity, and reliability, a pre-testing phase was carried out prior to its administration. Clarification was offered to those who needed it to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaire's Likert scale items were evaluated for reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha test.

Validity and Reliability

A pilot study was conducted, involving a subset of one-third of the selected respondents from the target population, to examine the reliability of the questionnaires (Hair et al., 2019). A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable, indicating a reliable data collection instrument (DeVellis, 2017). Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each objective, forming a scale to measure reliability (Taber, 2018).

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha

| S/No. | Construct | Cronbach Alpha |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Psychological Support | 0.890 |
| 2. | Pedagogy | 0.985 |

Table 2 shows a high Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.990 for Psychological Support and 0.985 for Pedagogy suggesting that the items within these constructs are reliable and consistent measures of their respective concepts.

Method of Data Analysis and Model Specification

The inferential analysis encompassed Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine the effect of workplace mentoring practices on employee performance in private universities in Abuja, thus testing the research hypotheses. The regression model used

to examine the correlation is represented as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_{PED} + \beta_{PCS} + \varepsilon$$

In the model, EP represents the dependent variable (Employee Performance), β_0 is the regression constant, β signifies the coefficient of independent variables, PED represents Pedagogy, PCS represents psychological support and ε denotes the error term associated with the regression model.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data for this research was gathered by administering a questionnaire to the employees of private universities in Abuja. To ensure maximum

participation, the researchers made weekly visits over a two-week period to reach out to all employees of the institution. Initially, the response rate

was low, but with persistent efforts and persuasion, the response rate improved. A summary of the collected responses is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Response Rate

| Response Rate of Questionnaire | Frequency |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Number of Distributed Questionnaire | 370 |
| Returned Usable Questionnaire | 355 |
| Unreturned Questionnaire | 15 |
| Response rate | 95.9% |

Source: Field Survey 2023

The participants in the study received a total of 370 questionnaires. 355 of the questionnaires were returned and deemed suitable for study. 15 questionnaires, nevertheless, were never returned. The study's computed response rate is 95.9%, showing a high degree of participation and engagement on the side of the respondents.

Regression Analysis Results

Regression analysis was used as the main statistical tool in this study to investigate the effects of workplace mentoring on worker performance. The results of each regression model are shown in the subsection that follows for in-depth investigation.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .770 ^a | .593 | .591 | .28187 | 2.177 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Pedagogy, Psychological Support

b. Dependent Variable: Employees' Performance

Source: SPSS Output 2023

The R Square value of 0.593 indicates that Pedagogy and Psychological Support, as predictors, collectively explain about 59.3% of the variation in Employees' Performance of private universities in Abuja Nigeria. This suggests that these two variables have a moderate degree of influence on the Employees' performance outcome. The adjusted R Square being close to R Square implies that the model is not overly complex and that the predictors included in the model contribute meaningfully to explaining the variation in Employee Performance. The relatively low standard error of the

estimate (0.28187) suggests that the model's predictions are, on average, close to the actual values of Employees' Performance, indicating a reasonable level of accuracy in the model's predictions. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.177 indicates no significant autocorrelation, which suggests that the model's error terms are relatively independent. The regression model with Pedagogy and Psychological Support as predictors seems to provide a reasonable fit to explain the variation in Employees' Performance.

Table 5 ANOVAANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 39.732 | 2 | 19.866 | 250.049 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 27.251 | 343 | .079 | | |
| | Total | 66.984 | 345 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Employees' Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Pedagogy, Psychological Support

Source: SPSS Output 2023

Table 5 above indicates that the regression model, which includes the predictor's Pedagogy and Psychological Support, is statistically significant. The low p-value (Sig. = .000) suggests that the model's overall fit is highly unlikely to be due to random chance. In other words, the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable is statistically significant. The F-value of 250.049 is relatively large, further indicating that the variation explained by the model (sum of squares due to regression) is much larger than the unexplained variation (sum of squares

due to residuals). The high F-value and low p-value suggest that at least one of the predictors is significantly related to Employees' Performance. The ANOVA results imply that the regression model with Pedagogy and Psychological Support as predictors provides a strong fit to explain the variation in Employees' Performance. These predictors appear to have a substantial influence on the outcome variable. These findings suggest that both Pedagogy and Psychological Support contribute significantly to explaining the variability in Employees' Performance.

Table 6Coefficients^a

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.749 | 0.862 | | 0.869 | 0.398 | | |
| | Pedagogy | 0.113 | 0.197 | 0.762 | 0.576 | 0.572 | 0.609 | 1.642 |
| | Psychological Support | 0.948 | 0.088 | 0.936 | 10.788 | 0.000 | 0.943 | 1.061 |

a. **Dependent Variable:** employee performance, R Square = 0.677 F Statistic= 22.707 Adjusted R Square = 0.655, Sig F Square= 0.000, PV < 0.05

b. **Independent variables in the Model:** (Constant), Pedagogy, and Psychological Support

Source: SPSS Output 2023

Table 6 above presents the coefficients obtained from the regression analysis. These coefficients represent the relationships between the independent variables (Pedagogy and Psychological Support) and the dependent variable (employee performance).

The results show that Pedagogy has a coefficient of 0.113 with a standard error of 0.197. This indicates a positive relationship, suggesting that an increase

in Pedagogy is associated with a higher level of employee performance. However, this coefficient is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), meaning that the relationship may not be reliable.

On the other hand, Psychological Support has a coefficient of 0.948 with a standard error of 0.088. This coefficient is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating a strong positive relationship

between Psychological Support and employee performance. A higher level of Psychological Support is associated with increased employee performance.

The collinearity statistics show that both independent variables have acceptable levels of tolerance and VIF, indicating no significant multicollinearity issues.

The overall model's performance is also assessed through the R Square, F Statistic, Adjusted R Square, and significance of F Square. The R Square value of 0.677 indicates that the independent variables explain approximately 67.7% of the variation in employee performance. The F Statistic of 22.707 with a significance level of 0.000 suggests that the regression model is statistically significant. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.655 indicates that approximately 65.5% of the variation in employees' performance is accounted for by the independent variables.

The results suggest that Psychological Support has a significant positive effect on employee performance, while the effect of Pedagogy is not statistically significant. These findings support the importance of Psychological Support in influencing employee performance in the studied context.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The significant positive relationship between Psychological Support and employees' performance highlights the importance of providing effective Psychological Support programs and services. Organizations should invest in resources and strategies to support employees in their Workplace Mentoring journey. By offering guidance, support, and opportunities for career growth and exploration, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, employee performance. This finding is in line with the findings of

(Erdogan et al., 2017; Ragins et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Tsai & Chen, 2021) who suggested that organizations should prioritize providing effective Psychological Support programs and services to enhance employee performance,

The non-significant relationship between Pedagogy and employees' performance suggests that simply providing teaching and learning opportunities may not be sufficient to drive employees' performance. While teaching and learning are undoubtedly important for skill development and competence, they may not directly translate into improved employee performance. Organizations should consider combining Pedagogy with other factors such as Psychological Support and job satisfaction to maximize its impact on employees' performance.

The study's focus on Workplace Mentoring highlights the significance of aligning employees' career goals and aspirations with organizational objectives. Organizations should adopt a holistic approach to Workplace Mentoring that encompasses both pedagogy and psychological support aspects. By facilitating employees' professional growth, organizations can enhance their loyalty and commitment, which in turn can positively impact employees' performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the analysis emphasize the importance of effective Psychological Support programs and services in enhancing employees' performance. The study therefore concludes that providing guidance in terms of psychological support, and opportunities for career growth and exploration can lead to increased employee satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately improved performance.

On the other hand, the non-significant relationship between Pedagogy and employees' performance suggests that teaching and learning alone may not directly translate into better performance. Therefore, it was concluded that while teaching and learning are crucial for skill development, organizations should consider integrating them with other factors such as Psychological Support and job satisfaction to maximize their impact on performance.

The study's focus on Workplace Mentoring highlights the significance of aligning employees' career goals and aspirations with organizational objectives. Adopting a holistic approach that combines training and counseling aspects can facilitate employees' professional growth, leading to increased loyalty and commitment, which positively influence performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Private universities in Abuja should prioritize the development and implementation of effective Psychological Support programs and services. This can involve providing guidance, mentorship, and resources to help employees navigate their career paths. By investing in comprehensive Psychological Support, universities can support employees in making informed decisions, exploring growth opportunities, and aligning their career goals with the institution's objectives.

Private universities should understand that while pedagogy is crucial, it does not always result in better worker performance. When paired with other elements like psychological support and job satisfaction, pedagogy can have a greater overall influence. Employees' performance may be improved over time

by using this integrated strategy, which can produce a more comprehensive growth experience.

Private universities should strive to align employees' career goals and aspirations with the institution's objectives. This can be achieved by offering clear pathways for career progression, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and promoting a culture of continuous learning. By facilitating employees' Workplace Mentoring within the university context, institutions can strengthen loyalty, and commitment, and ultimately enhance employees' performance.

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