

The Impact of Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Development of the Professions: a Study of Estate Surveying & Valuation Profession

Chikezie Okoronkwo

*Department of Estate
Management,
Federal Polytechnic Nekede,
Owerri Imo State*

Abstract

The real estate sector of the economy is a vibrant one because of the myriad of issues connected with land and land resources. It is attractive not just because of profits and investments in real estate but also because of prestige, political power and social status which property conveys. As many people enter the labour market after graduation, they are faced with various professional challenges that when unattended to may lead to their doom. The reason for this is that probationers in the real estate sector do not have the technical and managerial ability to forge ahead because the human resource base is shallow. This paper examined mentoring as work force development strategy that enables firms and organizations to attract, engage, develop and retain young talents in real estate practice. The study utilized the T Test statistic in analyzing data collected with the questionnaire and interview schedules. The study concluded that the dearth of mentors in the professions is a cogent reason for the proliferation of quacks and charlatans in the professions. The paper recommended the establishment of a mentors club in the real estate practice as well as other professions; the formation of consortium for enlarged resource base and technical knowledge among others.

Keywords:

Mentoring;
Professions; Resource
Base;
Entrepreneurship;
Human Capital

Corresponding Author:

Chikezie Okoronkwo

Background to the Study

Farren (2012) describes mentorship as a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger but must have a certain area of expertise. The basic ingredient in mentoring is that there is a person with little or no experience who wants to learn on the one hand, and there is another person with vast experience in the same field who is willing and ready to teach and guide him. It is a learning and development partnership. The person in need of mentoring is usually referred to as an apprentice, a protégé or a mentee.

Management Mentors (2015) describes mentoring as leadership oriented and success geared. It seeks to provide a safe environment where the mentor shares whatever issues that affects his professional or personal success. Its focus includes such things as creating a work/life balance, building self confidence, developing appropriate self perception and building professional traits becoming of an acclaimed professional. Mentoring is also a long term project. The mentor and the mentee must develop a basis through which they can learn about one another and build a climate of trust that creates an environment whereby the mentee will feel secure in imbibing and sharing the real issues that impact his success.

Mentoring is development driven, the purpose being to develop the individual not only for a job at hand but for also the future. This basic ingredient is the bedrock of human resource development and management. Where the mentor and mentee are able to establish a common drive and aspiration, the sky will be their limit. What is essentially important is that both parties must be plain with each other such that their common trust and faith will be beneficial first to themselves, then to the organization. The profession will be the ultimate beneficiary.



Fig. 1: The Mentor

Source: MommaDJane.com 2015

The Need for Mentoring

It is obvious that mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge. It is not a classroom affair although at certain times the use of ink and paper is cannot be avoided. Ensign (2011) outlined the functions of a mentor as someone who can

- a. Help you navigate your career path
- b. Give you perspective on the industry
- c. Accelerate your career
- d. Help you develop short term goals
- e. Keep you accountable to yourself and your goals
- f. Improve your networking skills
- g. Help you develop a long term career plan
- h. Advise you on professional development opportunities, and
- i. Broaden your perspective on your profession

Mentoring is very essential in the development and management of human resources. The need manifests when a firm, profession or institution seeks to develop its leaders or talent pool as part of succession planning, work force management and organization growth/expansion. In situations where a firm or profession desires to develop its diverse employees/members to remove barriers that hinder their success, mentoring presents the right answer. It may be that a firm/organization or profession desires to robustly develop its younger members in ways that are additional to the acquisition of specific skills/competencies in the profession. It is only through mentoring that this could be effectively achieved.

Techniques of Mentoring

Mentoring is of several techniques which may be used according to the situation and the mindset of the mentee. According to Aubrey and Cohen (1995) these techniques include but not limited to accompanying, sowing, catalyzing, showing and harvesting.

Accompanying is making a commitment in a caring way, which involves taking part in the learning process side-by-side with the learner. This technique requires that the mentor and mentee work together in unison and accompaniment such that the mentee learns by induction. Mentors are frequently confronted with the difficulty of preparing the mentee before he is ready to change. Sowing as a technique presumes that the mentee may not necessarily follow as the process progresses but will use the knowledge as back-up at a later period. Sowing is necessary when you know that what the mentor says may not be understood or even acceptable to the mentee at first but will make sense and have value to him in future when the situation requires it.

Catalyzing technique is employed when there is need to radically change the thinking pattern of the mentee. A situation may arise when change reaches a critical level of pressure where learning escalates. It is at this point that the mentor will choose to plunge the mentee right into change, provoking a different way of thinking, a change in identity or a re-ordering of values.

The technique of showing requires the making of something understandable, or using your examples to demonstrate a skill or activity. The mentor not only explains but shows practically, what he teaches. It is like teaching and learning by example - show what you are talking about; show by your own behavior.

In the technique of harvesting, the mentor focuses on "picking the ripe fruit": It is usually used to create awareness of what was learned by experience and to draw conclusions. Questions like "What have you learned?", "How useful is it?" are used to transmit knowledge.



Fig. 2: Techniques of Mentoring

Mentoring in Estate Surveying and Valuation Profession

In the Estate Surveying and Valuation profession, mentoring may start from the undergraduate level. The relation is developed between the lecturer and the student, industry based supervisor and student, or between a practitioner and a student. At this level, the student learns both formally and informally from the mentor. It is not uncommon for the mentor to provide financial assistance as well to the student. The important thing is that there is a learning relationship between them. The second level of mentorship arises upon graduation, when the graduate must be brought within the fold of the profession by getting registered as a member of the professional body (Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors & Valuers) and being guided by the mentor to take the professional qualifying examinations. The third stage is the period of preparation of a Critical Analysis (CA) and the joint test of professional competence. This will qualify the protégé/mentee for election into the Associate cadre of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors & Valuers. Yet, the fourth stage is the period of registration as an Estate Surveyor & Valuer with the Registration board (Estate Surveyors & Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria). The fifth stage is the setting up of practice as an Estate Surveyor & Valuers and the compliance with professional codes of practice. It is after this stage that the relationship may be slightly loosened but not broken for the parties may continue to collaborate in projects and other ventures to the benefit of both.



Fig. 3: Stages of mentoring in Estate Surveying & Valuation Profession

Data Presentation and Analysis

In the course of this study, a pilot examination was conducted using three cities of Owerri Imo State, Umuahia and Aba in Abia State as sample. Questionnaires and interviews were utilized in data collection. They were distributed to selected Estate Surveying and Valuation firms.

Table 1. Distribution and Analysis of Questionnaires

S/No.	Age of Firm	No. Distributed	Agreed	Disagreed
1	0 yr- 9 yrs	10	8	2
2	10 yrs – 19 yrs	10	7	3
3	20 yrs – 29 yrs	10	8	2
4	30 yrs and above	10	8	2
	Total	40	31	9

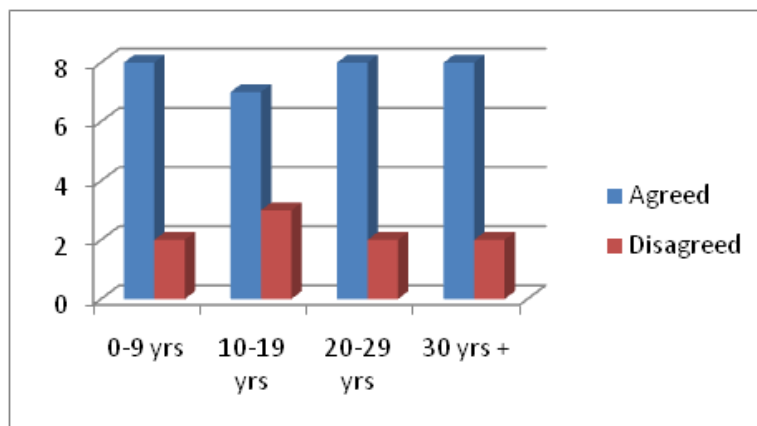


Figure 4. Distribution and Analysis of Questionnaires

T Test was used in the analysis of the data collected. This is a statistical tool that shows the variability between two means. It is denoted by the formula.

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_T - \bar{X}_C}{\sqrt{\frac{\text{var}_T}{n_T} + \frac{\text{var}_C}{n_C}}}$$

The hypothesis formulated is a two tailed one which states that "mentoring is not a panacea for human resource development in real estate practice". The t-value will be positive if the first mean is larger than the second and negative if it is smaller. After computation, the t-value was viewed in a table of significance to test whether the ratio is large enough to say that the difference between the groups is not likely to have been a chance finding.

The use of T Test is justified when the mean of two groups are being analyzed. The essence is to ascertain the differences between scores for two groups, so as to judge the difference between their means relative to the spread or variability of their scores. The t-test was employed in the testing of the means of those who agreed that mentoring is a panacea for human resource development and management in real estate practice as against those who disagreed.

With sample values of

Population/Group 1 (Agreed) = 8, 7, 8, 8

Population/Group 2 (Disagreed) = 2, 3, 2, 2

Significance Level: 0.05

The use of the T Test Calculator available on the internet made the calculation simple. Once the figures are correctly keyed in, the result is published. For our exercise the result obtained was that

The T-value is 15.556349.

The P-Value is < .00001.

The result is significant at $p < .05$.

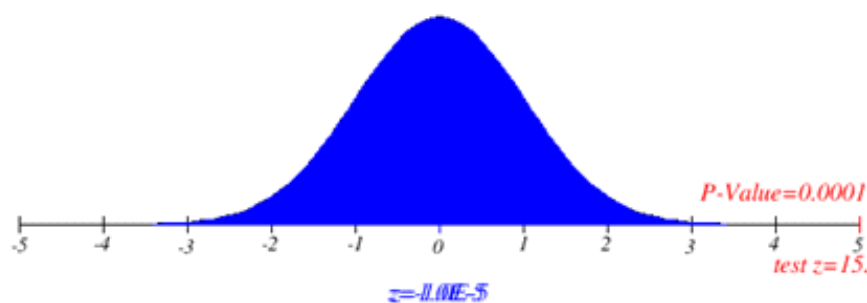


Fig. 3 Two Tailed

Under a level of significance of 0.05 and a degree of freedom, the result which is positive showed that there is a significant difference between the two groups given their variability. Thus we rejected the Null Hypothesis that "Mentoring is not an important tool in the development and management of human resources"; and accept the alternative hypothesis that mentoring is an important tool in the development and management of human resources.

Conclusion

A mentor is more than an adviser as he provides wisdom, technical knowledge, assistance, support, empathy, and respect throughout and often beyond the period of mentorship and into professional career. An effective mentoring relationship develops over time. Where the protégé/apprentice is obedient, appreciative and indeed strikes the necessary cord with the mentor, both usually deepen their working relationship, collaborating on projects and becoming true professional colleagues.

Mentoring offers the best recipe for professional experience, competence and collaboration. It is the antidote to quackery and the prevalence of charlatans in the profession of Estate Surveying and Valuation especially in Nigeria where the laws have become tools for operation instead of protection of the professional.

It has been observed that the debilitating condition of our human resource base is the result of poor, inadequate and sometimes lack of mentoring. Many young graduates are interested in quick money without learning the ropes. The result is an abysmal knowledge of the rudiments of practice in the various areas of such as Property Management, Facility Management, Project Management, Property Development, Appraisals, Valuation, Consulting, Research and Data Processing among others.

Recommendations

1. Establishment of a NIESV Mentors' Club. The club will be such that will encourage older and more experienced Estate Surveyors & Valuers to take the mentoring of young and upcoming ones.
2. The support and assistance of government in the form of grants and the establishment of entrepreneurial centres for probationers of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors & Valuers is strongly recommended. This is essential considering the dearth of necessary finance to prop up young ones.
3. Estate Surveying and Valuation firms should be strengthened to accept, train and re-train young graduates in the real estate sector.
4. Formation of consortiums should be encouraged for enlarged resource base and technical knowledge.
5. Employees should be sponsored to conferences, workshops and seminars. This will widen their scope and generate the much needed manpower for sustainable Estate Surveying and Valuation practice in Nigeria.

References

- Aubrey, B & Cohen, P (1995). *Working wisdom: timeless skills and vanguard strategies for learning organizations*. Jossey Bass. pp. 23, 44-47, 96-97.
- Farren, C. (2012). *Eight types of mentor: which ones do you need*. <http://www.masteryworks.com/>
- Management Mentors (2015). *the difference between coaching and mentoring*. Massachusetts: Chestnut Hill Press.