

Mentoring and Improved Workers' Commitment in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Mentoring is an intense interpersonal relationship that exists between a senior and an experienced colleague and a less experienced subordinate in which the senior provides support, direction and feedback regarding career plans and personal development to the subordinates. The study aimed at establishing the relationship that exists between mentoring and workers' commitment with a view to unraveling the significance of mentoring for sustainable organizational growth and development. A study was undertaken using 95 administrative and technical staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Systematic sampling technique was used for sample selection. Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and appropriate chart while Linear Regression was used to determine the influence of mentoring on employees' commitment and Factor Analysis was used to categorize crucial factors influencing employee commitment to the organization. The study revealed that 62.2 percent of the respondents showed that mentoring had high impact on their performance. Factors such as Extrinsic Motivational Factors (45.3%), Intrinsic Motivational Factors (18.1%) and Institutional Motivational Factors (15.5%) were factors influencing employee commitment to the organization. Results of Linear Regression analysis showed that mentoring had a significant influence on employees' commitment ($t = 2.99$) at 0.01 level of significance. It was concluded that mentoring had a great impact on employees' commitment.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Employees' commitment, Job satisfaction and improved organization performance*

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Background to the Study

The concept of mentorship has been recognized and accepted by scholars and business practitioners world-wide, as a valuable resource for employees' commitment in organizations. Organizational theorists and management scholars have identified mentoring as an exchange relationship in which both mentor and protégé gain several benefits from each other (Ragins, 1997; Young and Perrewe, 2003); Young and Perrewe; 2004). Allen and Meyer (2004), in a study on comparative analysis of mentored and non-mentored individuals discovered that mentored employees demonstrate higher level of objective and subjective positive outcomes such as; career development, job satisfaction, socialization, organizational commitment and career advancements, while compared to non-mentored individuals. Also, mentors, in return for time and efforts spent in providing support to the protégé, they gain positive outcomes such as career rejuvenation, recognition, personal satisfaction, organizational reputation and increase in knowledge and power (Noe, 2002).

As a result of the importance attached to this concept, scholars have used various theoretical perspectives to explain mentoring relationships in form of leadership, justice, power, exchange and motivation. According to Richard, and Tracy (2008), mentoring is defined as reciprocal exchange of relationship between a mentor and a protégé. It is a hierarchical relationship between a senior and influential organizational member (mentor) and a junior and/or less experienced organizational member Kramer (1983). As part of efforts put in place to understand this concept better, scholars have identified various forms of mentoring relationships, such as; lateral or peer and mentoring by external sponsor (Eby, 1997; Allen and Eby, 2007; Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007; Scandura and Palleegreni, 2007).

Organizational commitment in other words, refers to active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves to contribute to the organizational well-being, Mowday, Steer and Porter(1979). According to Korman, *et. al.*, (1997), organizational commitment is a tendency to remain in one's present organization as result of perceived benefits acquired in one's current employment compared to employment opportunities elsewhere.

In spite of the importance of concept of mentoring to organizations, management and operatives, its acceptance as management tool as revealed by research efforts have been minimal where practiced or has never been adopted at all in some organizations in less developed countries. In his research work in India Afza (2005), discovered that in both large and small organizations, subordinates' commitment to their jobs is weak, job satisfaction is low, turnover rates are high, and the subordinates' attitudes and behaviors are not positively reflecting the organization's expectations, values, and culture. Afza (2005), study noted that these consequences happen because superiors do not or rather poorly understand the dynamics of the contextual basis of power they use to build and manage their relationships with their subordinates. This therefore, calls for this study.

Objective of the Study

The study is aimed at establishing the relationship between mentoring and improved workers' commitment to their jobs, specifically, it:

- (i) Examines the impact of mentoring on workers' performance.
- (ii) Identifies various factors that enhance workers' commitment to their employment.
- (iii) Investigates how mentoring has enhanced workers' commitment to their organization.

Review of Relevant Literature

Scholars have argued that the quality of superior-subordinate relationship is of crucial importance, because subordinates identify their immediate superiors as the most preferred source of information about events in an organization (Lee, 1997). Also, employees identify their immediate superiors as the primary source for receiving information from the top management (Lee, 2001). Equally, Jablin and Krone (1994), averred that for employees to fully imbibe the value and culture of an organization, superior-subordinate communication pattern should go beyond working interactions and should include a component of social support in superior-subordinate interactions.

Social support according to Meiners and Miller (2004), is the communication between people who lend a hand, reassure, show concern for, and give encouragement between superior and subordinates. This unique form of interaction reduces uncertainty, provides a sense of personal control, and creates a stronger bond between the superior and subordinates (Jablin and Krone, 1994; Lee 2005; Lee & Jablin, 1995). According to Cohen (1993), where properly practiced, social support is capable of serving as a defense to shield the negative consequences of stress brought about by organizational factors, such as; role ambiguity, work overload and job uncertainty. It has also being argued that since social support is usually provided by immediate superior, the subordinate receiving it is bound to enjoy lower level of stress, if compared to others, who are not privileged to enjoy similar opportunity, (Alexander, Helms & Wilkins, 1989; Anderson & Tolson, 1991). On the whole, superior-subordinate cordial relationship is meant to obtain maximum resources from both superiors and subordinates, which organizations are bound to benefit from tremendously. This is achieved through communication activities that include both work and social support interaction, (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982).

According to Mowday, *et al.* (1982), the concept of commitment is one of the major factors in determining the relationship between individuals and an organization. A review of the literature suggests that there are various distinct approaches to defining commitment. Generally, business scholars and practitioners usually agree that the definition of commitment can be recognized through high involvement of individuals to organization's aspirations, objectives, goals and values; exchange of behavior to receive benefits and psychological attachments of an individual to an organization. Based on this belief and the definition given by Mowday, Porter and Steer (1982), many scholars have defined commitment thoroughly, based on three factors, which are: belief and acceptance of values and organizational goals; willingness to exert individual efforts to achieve

organizational goals; and a strong desire to maintain membership in an organization. Buchanan (1974) sees it as identification with goals and values between an individual and the organization or an exchange of behavior to get benefits that will be appreciated by others. These definitions essentially focus on the psychological relationships that individuals have with an organization because these scholars could recognize high employees' commitment with an organization; identification with the individual and organization goals and values; exchange of behavior to receive benefits and psychological attachment of an individual to an organization. Also, Northcraft & Neale (1996) examined commitment from the organization's point of view and submitted that commitment has to do with employee's attitude reflecting his loyalty to the organization, as an ongoing process through which organization members express their concern for the organization and its continued success and wellbeing. This is because a highly committed employee will always identify with the goals and values of the organization and of course has a stronger desire to belong to the organizational citizenship behavior; a willingness to go over and beyond their required/assigned duties (Nehemeh, 2009).

Equally, Ogini, Afolabi, and Erigbe (2014) submitted that the essence of superior-subordinate relationship is to ensure that the superior supervises the work of subordinates that are being monitored to achieve expected result. This line of argument was accentuated by Decker (1994), who noted that the weapon of any manager is communication. Naturally, in every organization, communication occurs between members of different hierarchical positions. Superior-subordinate communication therefore refers to the interactions between organizational leaders and their subordinates; especially on how they should work harmoniously to achieve personal and organizational goals.

Also, Flippo (1980), who describes superior-subordinate relationship from leadership point of view, noted that it is a concept that tailors subordinates' behavior to a designed pattern and integrate such to organizational and personal interests in pursuit of some objectives. Adebayo (2005) describes leadership as the ability to create ideas and instill such into every member of the organization in terms of confidence, loyalty, willingness, satisfaction and co-operation. It can therefore be inferred that a superior must have vision, develop teamwork, counseling wisdom, discipline and be able to influence his subordinates in the world of workplace and to change their orientation in line with the organization's culture and core beliefs. Therefore, behavior exhibited by superior during the course of supervision of subordinates is known as mentoring.

To this end, a research work which centers on superior-subordinate relationship with special focus on continuous communication which enhances employees' commitment to organizational wellbeing is very important. This is because it has been argued that mediation which exists when a predictor affects a dependent variable indirectly through at least one variable is adequate to investigate. This is in line with the argument of Kramer (2004) and the findings of earlier researchers such as Fairhurst (1989) & Lee (1997, 2001), who contended that different types of relationships quality between superior and subordinate will lead to different types of communication within a set of different

individuals. To these scholars, if the individual group members believe that the preferential treatment and communication to certain subordinate by superior is deserved, the entire group may benefit as they use that particular colleague to gain greater access to information from their superior.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko in Ondo State, Nigeria. The University which was established in 1999 is located in the Northern region of the State with a humid climate change, especially during the raining season. It has an undulating topography with rocky soil. The region is a derived savannah with shrubs as dominant trees. The campus is conspicuously located on a mountain with beautiful structures and architectural designs; most especially the newly built senate building.

Study Population

The university has a regular student population of about 13,647 in six faculties; comprising, of Agricultural Sciences, Arts, Education, Law, Social and Management Sciences as well as Sciences, with about 1448 workers; both in academic and non-academic departments and units, as at the end of 2014/2015 academic session, with majority of them in non-academic section of the university.

The study population of this research consists of all administrative and technical staff of the university. By the virtue of the fact that this category of workers performs interrelated duties, their level of interaction is usually higher than their academic staff counterpart; hence they normally enjoy higher level of mentoring. Above all, this set of workers is adequately knowledgeable to understand the essence of this study and could respond to the survey instrument as appropriate.

Sampling Techniques

Systematic sampling technique was employed for the study. From the list of all administrative and technical staff provided by the Personnel Division, Registry Department of the university, a number was assigned to each staff. From this list, a number was picked through balloting. After the first number, the next 10th employee on the list was selected until the required sample size was arrived at, from the sample frame. Altogether, a total of 100 sets of questionnaire were administered for the study, out of which 95 sets were properly completed and returned, that formed the basis for this survey. Variables for the study were appropriately measured using a 5 point Likert scale of strongly agree as 5, agree as 4, undecided as 3, disagree as 2 and strongly disagree as 1. The grand mean score was calculated as $1+2+3+4+5=15$. This is divided by 5 to have 3.0 as the grand mean score. This was used as a benchmark to make decisions about the data. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Linear Regression Analysis was used to establish the relationship between mentoring and employees' commitment to their employment. Factor analysis was used to categorize crucial factors influencing workers' commitment to their organization.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The major aims of this study are to; examine the impact of mentoring on workers' performance, identify factors that enhance workers' commitment to their employment and to investigate how mentoring enhances workers' commitment to organizations. These objectives were achieved as contained in various tables and discussed below:

Table 1.0: Impact of Mentoring on Workers' Performance

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|-------|--------------------|
| Learning every day from my boss | 4.15* | 0.98 |
| Experiences from my boss influenced my job performance | 4.46* | 0.72 |
| My performance is positively associated with what my boss taught me | 4.10* | 0.74 |
| I wouldn't have known much if not my boss | 3.95* | 0.86 |
| My boss teaches me what I do not know | 4.05* | 0.93 |
| My boss guides me on assigned tasks | 3.74* | 0.94 |
| My boss takes me out on official duties | 3.28* | 1.17 |
| My boss sends me to represent him when the need arises | 3.53* | 1.13 |
| I like going out with my boss | 3.60* | 1.17 |
| I have benefited a lot under his/her leadership | 4.20* | 0.67 |

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

*Mean >3.0= High impact

In terms of impact of mentoring on workers' performance, the highest mean score was obtained on experiences from boss, being capable of influencing job performance (M=4.46; SD= 0.72), while going out with superior officers in the course of executing official tasks had the lowest mean score, but with one of the highest standard deviation (M=3.28; SD=1.17). From this table, it is obvious that all other factors that are capable of enhancing workers performance recorded very high impact. Equally, further analysis was carried out to determine the overall impact of mentoring on performance, using mean \pm standard deviation of the impact scores. This analysis revealed that 62.2 percent of the respondents indicated that mentoring had high impact on their performance, 24.3 percent submitted that it had moderate impact on their performance, while only insignificant proportion (13.5%) of the respondents noted that it had low impact on their performance. These findings imply that mentoring is very crucial to employees' improved performance. The graphical presentation of these results is as contained in Figure 1 below:

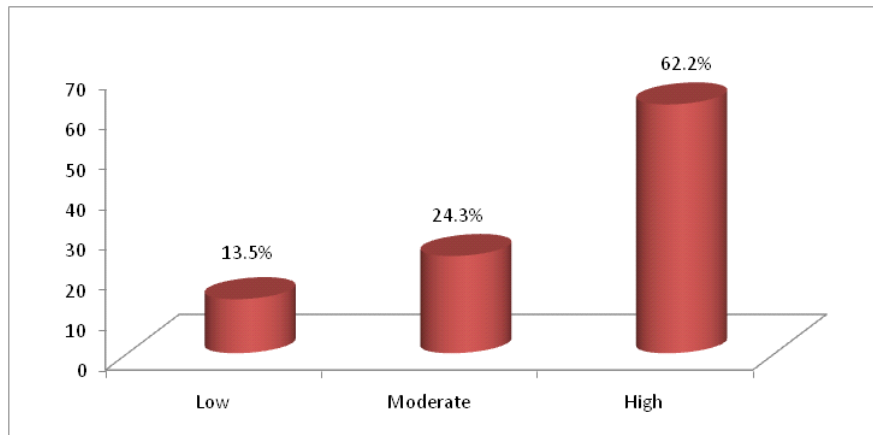


Figure 1.0: Level of Impact of Mentoring on Job Performance
Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Factors Influencing Workers' Commitment

Factor analysis was conducted to identify crucial factors influencing workers' commitment for improved organizational performance. A total of eleven(11) variables were loaded into the factor analysis template and the results showed a KMO of sampling adequacy of 0.22, with $\chi^2 = 126.57 (55) \leq 0.01$. The significant value of the Chi-square and the high value of the KMO were indications that the data were adequate and appropriate for factor analysis statistical technique. Results from this analysis showed that three (3) major factors were identified from the Principal Component Analysis. The first factor contributed about 45.32% and the second contributed 18.13%, while the third factor contributed about 15.52% to workers' commitment. The three factors cumulatively contributed about 78.97%, while the remaining 21.03% were the unknown factors influencing workers' commitment to organizational performance as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Factors Influencing Workers' Commitment

| Factor | Eigen value | % Contribution |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| I | 4.99 | 45.32 |
| II | 1.99 | 18.13 |
| III | 1.71 | 15.52 |
| Cumulative | | 78.97 |
| Unknown factor | | 21.03 |

Source: Field survey, 2016

Factor loading and identification from the Principal Component Analysis

Some variables/ factors under each of the three identified factors are as indicated in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Variables/Factors Influencing Workers' Commitment.

| Variables /Factors | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Good working environment | 0.36 | 0.62* | -0.48 |
| Attractive salary | 0.75* | -0.11 | -0.56 |
| Regular salary | 0.17 | 0.56* | -0.19 |
| Prompt motivation | 0.57* | -0.44 | -0.44 |
| Workers welfare | 0.82* | -0.33 | 0.09 |
| Regular promotion | 0.68* | -0.63 | 0.06 |
| Nature of employment | 0.18 | 0.58* | 0.58* |
| Adequate provision of office equipment | 0.83* | 0.06 | 0.21 |
| Regular training | 0.18 | -0.20 | 0.45* |
| Regular meetings | 0.23 | -0.02 | 0.58* |

***Significant variables**

Factor I- Extrinsic Motivational Factors

The following variables loaded high under factor one; attractive salary (L = 0.75), prompt motivation (L = 0.57), workers' welfare (L = 0.82), regular promotion (L = 0.68) and adequate office equipment (L = 0.83). These variables could best be described as general workers' welfare package, hence, they could be classified as '**extrinsic motivational factor**' as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Variables Contributing to Factor I

| Variables /Factors | Coefficients |
|--|---------------------|
| Attractive salary | 0.75* |
| Prompt motivation | 0.57* |
| Workers welfare | 0.82* |
| Regular promotion | 0.68* |
| Adequate provision of office equipment | 0.83* |

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Factor II- Intrinsic Motivational Factors

Under this, factors such as good working environment loaded highly, as (L=0.62), regular salary payment loaded highly, as (L=0.56) and nature of employment equally loaded highly, as (L=0.58). These factors are altogether described as intrinsic motivational factors.

Table 5: Variables Contributing to Factor II

| Variables/Factors | Coefficients |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Good working environment | 0.62* |
| Regular salary | 0.56* |
| Nature of employment | 0.58* |

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Factor III- Institutional Motivational Factors

Finally, the two institutional factors/variables loaded highly; regular training (L=0.45) and regular meetings (L=0.58)

Table 6: Variables Contributing to Factor III

| Variables/factor | Coefficients |
|------------------|--------------|
| Regular training | 0.45* |
| Regular meetings | 0.58* |

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Investigates how Mentoring has Enhanced Workers' Commitment to their Organizations

Results in Table 7 show that significant difference exists in the mean on the impact of mentoring on workers' commitment, as variables used in the Regression Analysis indicate F-value of 8.915 (33) at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that these variables were suitable for the purpose for which they were employed in the analysis. Furthermore, the result of regression analysis in Table 8 shows that mentoring had significant influence on workers' commitment (t = 2.99) at 0.01 level of significance. The R² value of 0.213 indicates that a unit change of mentoring on individual will bring about 21.3% changes in the level of workers' commitment to their organizations. This finding confirms a huge contribution of mentoring on workers' commitment to any organization and it is consistent with the findings of Payne and Huffman (2005); Portillo (2013) who established positive relationship between mentoring and employees affective commitment to organizations, as they discovered that the more satisfied protégées are with mentors, they perceive that their organizations care about them, which in turn leads to more affective commitment to work engagements. It equally affirms the finding of Roe (1957) who established a positive relationship between career counseling and/or mentoring and employees' commitment to their organizations.

Table 7: Results of Analysis of Variance for Regression Analysis showing difference in the means of dependent and independent variables under investigation

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| 1 | Regression | 871.669 | 1 | 871.669 | 8.915 | 0.01 |
| | Residual | 3226.731 | 33 | 97.780 | | |
| | Total | 4098.400 | 34 | | | |

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 8: Results of Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Mentoring on Workers' Commitment

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7.689 | 12.14 | | 0.63 | 0.53 |
| | Workers' Commitment | 0.915 | 0.31 | 0.46 | 2.99 | 0.01 |

Dependent variable: Impact of mentoring

Source: Field survey, 2016.

R= 0.461, R² = 0.213

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between mentoring and employees' improved commitment to their organization and affirmed positive relationship between mentoring and improved workers' performance. This study therefore brought to fore the need for management to design and implement wide-range motivation strategies; beyond payment of salaries and other fringe benefits, as employees are no longer satisfied with this generic remuneration package; they want to be engaged in the scheme of things and to be counseled and educated about policies and programs of their employers which can only be achieved through mentoring. This is important because it has been argued that proper subordinate mentoring is capable of instilling organizational culture through interaction and promotion of organization vision which is a panacea for influencing work behavior and attitude. As a matter of fact, when there is team spirit and mutual communication between superior and subordinates, mission and objectives assigned by the organization are better achieved and job satisfaction is assured.

Recommendations

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

1. University management should regularly organize workshops and seminar where importance of mentoring would be emphasized among the stakeholders.
2. There is need to build team spirit within organizations with participants drawn from different operational units/departments that is aimed at imparting skills to enhance creativity, behavioral modifications, communication effectiveness and divergent thinking.
3. Top and middle level staff of the University should operate open-door policy so as to encourage their mentees and to expose them to technical skills of assigned tasks.
4. Newly recruited staff should be made to undergo compulsory induction programs and be attached to mentors who could teach him/her University culture so as to be able to fit into the system and contribute to the growth of the institution.
5. Periodic determination of managers and employees' perceptions of key management processes and practices is necessary to examine the extent to which management goals accurately translated and implemented throughout the organization.

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