



Perceptions of Budding Lecturers on ... Ekpiwre, C. A. (2025)

Perceptions of Budding Lecturers on Mentoring Practices in Yusuf Maitama Sule Federal University of Education, Kano State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study adopted the descriptive survey design to investigate perceptions of lecturers on the mentoring practices in Yusuf Maitama Sule Federal University of Education, Kano, Nigeria. The study's population comprised all lecturers in the university estimated to be about 525. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 50 lecturers, of the ranks of lecturer 1 and below, who had spent at least eighteen (18) months in the university, out of which 30 of them gave their consent to participate in the study. A 39-item researcher developed structured questionnaire titled "Budding Lecturers' Mentoring Experience Survey" (BLMES) was administered to collect numerical data. The face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts in Education at the university. To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient Statistics was used and a correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, with ≥ 2.5 serving as the criterion mean for decision. The findings, among others, revealed that budding lecturers are aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers. The study concludes that there is connection between effective mentoring and the opportunities for the expansion of the professional development and career advancement of budding lecturers. It then recommends, amongst others, that universities should intensify efforts at improving fruitful mentoring relationships between experienced lecturers and their novice counterparts.

Keywords: Perceptions, Budding Lecturers, Mentoring, Practices

Introduction

Conventional forms of education provides ample opportunities for developing skills as well as developing lecturers' competencies (Kutsyruba et al., 2019; Amoke, 2019). But as asserted by Little (1994), budding/novice or junior academic staff, that is, the set of individuals who are emerging or developing in their careers as university lecturers, often with the goal of establishing themselves in their field (Austin, 2002; Clegg, 2008), may still require further support and guidance. The academic qualification possessed by budding lecturers may not to prepare them enough for the challenges embedded in academic career hence the need for proper mentoring of this cadre of academic staff (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2016). Mentorship is often the mechanism through which such support and guidance is given. Mentoring has been defined by Bozeman and Feeney (2007) "as a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development;" They further stated that "mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)." While Leavit (2011) viewed mentoring as a relationship which involves a more experienced and/or knowledgeable individual (mentor) who acts as a counselor, role model, teacher and guidance of a less experienced or knowledgeable individual (mentee) for the purpose of sharing ideas, knowledge and guidance and offering support for personal and professional development of mentee.

In the academic setting, Johnson (2007) asserted that academic mentoring entails a relationship between an experienced academic and a novice academic where the experienced academic provides guidance, assistance, support and encouragement to facilitate the novice's academic and professional development. Olasupo (2013) stated that an academic mentor is usually a senior faculty member who guides a junior faculty member by way of advice, guidance, support and other relevant means in matters connected to the attainment of academic success; the protégé, on the other hand, is the junior faculty member who is the beneficiary of the mentorship.



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Several mentoring styles have been identified, however, with two (formal and informal mentoring) been found prevalent among academic staff in universities in Nigeria (Emoefe, 2016). While formal mentoring is performed at the institutional level, with well-defined objectives, a coherently established program, scheduled meetings, precise and anticipated actions, and formative evaluations, informal mentoring is performed through sporadic, voluntary meetings, training activities, without planning or evaluation. In an informal relationship, mutual guidance and advice is changed sporadically as needed, without a pre-set schedule or formal agenda (Leslie et al., 2005). Numerous studies that have analyzed the two types of mentoring, formal and informal, have not been able to conclude, for a certainty, that one is superior to the other (Trorey & Blamires, 2006). Mentoring at the university level has been conceived as a better model for helping lecturers expand their knowledge and expertise in classroom instruction. It is associated with positive outcomes such as assisting the mentees in establishing clear learning goals and professional relationships and improving both their theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham, 2017). Mentoring is valuable as it provides the mentee the chance to feel connected, integrated and eventually legitimized into his or her future role (Young, Klossner, Docherty & Mensch, 2013). Socialization into the professional role of lecturing is often successfully navigated through mentorship and has been documented as important element of role learning and role transition for lecturers (Mazerolle, Eason, Clines & Pitney, 2015). Mentoring in academic settings may be undertaken in the areas of research/publications, practical instruction method, career/professional development, psychosocial support and community service. It is difficult, however, to determine to what degree mentoring impacts on teacher professional development and effectiveness, since there are vast differences among the structures that each school chooses to implement (Smith & Lynch, 2014). But as Harris and Miles (2009) pointed out, "in academia mentoring appears to concentrate on the development of the person" or mentee (p. 273).

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

Effective mentoring, generally, relies on several key factors, which can be categorized into four main areas: mentor-related, mentee related, relationship-related and institutional factors. First, it demands mentors who are experienced and are: experts in their areas of specialization, available and approachable, good listeners, honest, willing to provide constructive feedbacks, empathetic and understanding. Mentoring is effective when mentors are willing and capable of helping mentees identify and address challenges they face, helping them explore their career options, developing their skills, and building their networks, establishing a safe space where mentees can share their experiences and concerns without fear of judgment, and providing encouragement and motivation to help mentees stay on track and persevere through challenges. Secondly, effective mentoring takes place when mentees are humble, motivated, self-starters, willing to learn and work with their mentor, open to feedback, aware of their strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. Thirdly, effective mentoring involves establishing a strong, trusting relationship. Mentors and mentees can successfully relate when both share common interests, for instance similar research focus, there is trust and mutual respect between them and when there is a clear communication strategy that works both of them. Fourthly, effective mentoring thrives in an institution that fosters positive mentoring environment, that values and supports mentoring, that motivates mentors and provides training programmes and mentorship frameworks with clear goals and expectations (Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham, 2017). Although several studies have identified certain obstacles and difficulties encountered in implementing effective mentoring practices between experienced and novice lecturers (Johnson, 2007; Boice, 2000), by considering the foregoing factors,



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universities can create an enabling environment that fosters effective mentoring and helps budding lecturers develop their expertise and confidence ((Mazerolle, Eason, Clines & Pitney, 2015). This study was guided by the Albert Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory' (1977) that proposed that people acquire new behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions through observation, imitation, and modeling, particularly in social contexts. It suggests that learning can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even without physical practice or direct reinforcement. This theory also acknowledges the role of cognitive processes like attention, memory, and motivation in the learning process. In addition, the theory explained that learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. Actions that are rewarded are more likely to be imitated, while those that are punished are avoided (Cherry, 2024; Bandura, 1977). Based on this theory, it invariably signifies that new lecturers can learn and adapt their teaching practices by observing and imitating the behaviors of experienced, successful lecturers. Not only could experience serve as role models, budding lecturers may observe experienced lecturers' teaching styles and interactions with students, in the process impacting on their own practices. It also signifies that experienced lecturers' positive feedback can motivate new lecturers to continue to improve.

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

Objectives of the study

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

Research Questions

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

Methodology

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



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

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1:

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

Table 1: Mean responses regarding the structure and organization of mentoring practices in YUMSFUE, Kano.

n = 30				
S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	There is a university policy that makes mentoring mandatory	1.93	0.81	Disagreed
2	There are activities that are structured to provide adequate mentoring support for career development	1.97	0.76	Disagreed
3	Mentoring activities are deeply incorporated into the university’s culture	1.87	0.72	Disagreed
4	Workshops and seminars are regularly organized for lecturers on mentoring	2.53	1.02	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.08	0.835	Disagreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

Results from Table 1 indicates that the mean responses of the respondents ranged between 1.87 and 2.53. The grand mean of 2.08 being below the criterion mean of 2.50 indicate that the formal mentoring programmes are poorly structured and organized in the university. Also, the grand standard deviation of 0.835 suggests a high level of consensus among respondents in their responses.

Research Question 2:

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

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

n = 30				
S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Enhances ability to write and publish research articles	3.07	0.57	Agreed
2	Boosts confidence in academic roles	2.67	0.87	Agreed
3	Improve teaching skills	2.97	0.79	Agreed
4	Encourages the use of more effective instructional strategies and resources in teaching	2.67	0.91	Agreed
5	Improves the ability to address diverse learning needs within the classroom	2.80	0.79	Agreed
6	Provides valuable guidance on career advancement and professional growth	2.57	0.88	Agreed
7	Provides opportunities for professional networking	2.70	1.04	Agreed
8	Facilitates a more student-centred instructional approach	2.77	0.99	Agreed
9	Enhances ability at assessing students’ understanding of the subject matter	2.40	0.92	Disagreed
10	Improves time management skills	2.57	1.05	Agreed
11	Helps in navigating the challenges of being a novice lecturer	2.50	0.88	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.70	0.89	Agreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

The result in Table 2 shows that except for item 9 which had a mean score of 2.40, the other mean responses ranged between 2.50 and 3.07. The grand mean of 2.70 being above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates a positive awareness of the



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potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers in YUMSFUE. Also, the grand standard deviation of 0.88 suggests a high level of consensus/agreement among respondents in their responses.

Research Question 3:

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

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

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

Source: Field Work, 2025

The result in Table 3 reveals that out of the six items on the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in the university, items 1, 2 and 3 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, while items 4, 5 and 6 had mean scores below the criterion mean. The grand mean of 2.48, which is slightly below the criterion mean, suggests that the respondents perceived as negative the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers towards mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano. But a grand standard deviation of 1.054 suggests a low level of consensus/agreement among respondents on this issue.

Research Question 4:

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

Table 4: Mean responses regarding the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in YUMSFUE, Kano. n = 30

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



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10	Lack of flexible and adaptable approach between senior lecturers and their protégés	2.77	0.95	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.64	0.94	Agreed

Source: Field Work, 2025

The result in Table 4 revealed that out of the ten items identified as challenges, only items 2 and 6, with mean scores of 2.23 and 2.20 respectively, were below the criterion mean value. The other eight items had mean scores above the criterion mean. The grand mean of 2.64 being above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates that the respondents identified the items as challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in YUMSFUE. Also, the grand standard deviation of 0.94 suggests a high level of consensus/agreement among respondents in their responses.

Research Question 5:

How do budding lecturers perceive the strategies for implementing effective mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano?

Table 5: Mean responses on the strategies for implementing effective mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano.

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	Std	Decision
1	Increasing resources and support for mentoring activities would improve mentoring quality	3.00	0.73	Agreed
2	Establishing clear objectives and expectations would improve mentoring quality	2.57	0.84	Agreed
3	Regular training of mentors on effective mentoring techniques would improve mentoring quality	3.03	0.71	Agreed
4	Recognizing and rewarding mentors' contributions would boost their motivation	2.57	1.02	Agreed
5	Mentor-mentee matching based on shared research interests or needs would enhance mentoring outcomes	2.73	0.89	Agreed
6	Regular meetings between mentors and mentees would enhance their relationships	2.90	0.60	Agreed
7	Constructive feedback would help mentors improve	2.63	1.11	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.78	0.84	Agreed

n = 30

Source: Field Work, 2025

The result in Table 5 shows that the mean responses on the strategies for implementing effective mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano ranged between 2.57 and 3.03. With a grand mean of 2.78, the mean responses were above the criterion mean of 2.50. This suggests that most strategies are viewed positively and a grand standard deviation of 0.84 suggests a high level of consensus/agreement among respondents regarding the strategies for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano.

Discussions of Findings

The study investigated the perceptions of budding lecturers on the mentoring practices in YUMSFUE, Kano, Nigeria. With regards to its first objective, the result revealed that mentoring practices were poorly structured and organized in the university. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong (2012) who found that there are no formal mentoring programmes to ease the absorption of new and novice academic staff into the university system or any other tertiary institution of learning in the country. The result also revealed that budding lecturers are aware of the potential benefits of effective mentoring for emerging lecturers. This finding aligns with the findings of several other empirical researches (Kutsyruba et al., 2019; Amoke, 2019) that have consistently showed that mentoring plays a crucial role in developing lecturers' competencies. Lecturers who undergo mentoring programmes, demonstrate improved instructional techniques and higher students' engagement and fosters their reflective teaching practices, allowing them to evaluate and refine their approaches to delivering critical content and managing classroom activities (Achinstein & Davies, 2016). Regarding how budding lecturers perceive the attitude and behaviours of experienced lecturers' towards mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano, the finding revealed that experienced lecturers displayed negative attitude towards mentoring. This



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could lead to ineffective mentoring activities. This assertion is made against the backdrop of the study by Barrett, Mazerolle & Nottingham (2017) that found that mentoring is effective when mentors are available and approachable, good listeners, honest, willing to provide constructive feedbacks, empathetic and understanding. Also, this study examined the challenges impeding effective mentoring practices in YUMSFUE, Kano. Its findings are in affirmation with the findings of several studies (Johnson, 2007; Boice, 2000) about the obstacles and difficulties encountered in implementing effective mentoring practices between experienced and novice lecturers. Furthermore, in terms of determining the strategies for implementing and sustaining effective mentoring in YUMSFUE, Kano, the findings of the study are in consonance with Barrett, Mazerolle and Nottingham (2017)'s contention that effective mentoring thrives in an institution that fosters positive mentoring environment, that values and supports mentoring, that motivates mentors and provides training programmes and mentorship frameworks with clear goals and expectations.

Conclusion

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

Recommendations

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

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