IMPACT OF MENTORING ON STAFF RETENTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: AN EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF FOUR PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

Sunday Alewo Omale *Ph.D*
Department of Business Administration
Veritas University Abuja
(The Catholic University of Nigeria)

Daniel Oguche *Ph.D*
Department of Banking and Finance
Veritas University Abuja
(The Catholic University of Nigeria)

Chika Ebenezer Duru *Ph.D*
Department of Entrepreneurship Studies
Veritas University Abuja
(The Catholic University of Nigeria)

Idodo Momodu Daniel *M.Sc*
Department of Management Studies
Dorben Polytechnic Garam
Niger State-Nigeria

_____

ABSTRACT: *This research study explored the impact of mentoring on staff retention through knowledge transfer with specific reference to selected private universities in Nigeria. Mentoring is a natural one-on-one, mutual, committed relationship formed between a mentor and mentee designed to promote personal development beyond any particular institutional goals. However, Knowledge transfer seeks to build, systematize, otherwise distributes knowledge and guarantees its accessibility for future users. In an organizational setting, the goal of employers is usually to decrease employee turnover, thereby decreasing training costs, recruitment costs and loss of talents and organizational knowledge. Employers can improve retention rates and decrease the associated costs of high turnover with the aid of mentoring and knowledge transfer. The material used for this investigation was sourced from both primary and secondary data such as text books, management journals and internet. A well-structured open ended questionnaire was the main tool for data gathering. The questionnaire was designed for all the selected employees of private universities in the North central zone of Nigeria. The data through which responses were given in the questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted with the use of students 't' distribution test in the analysis of data. The findings indicate that mentoring improves staff retention in private universities in Nigeria and transfer of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian universities. The review of literature suggests that knowledge transfer and conceptualization of mentoring is required for staff retention in organizations. For effective staff retention and knowledge transfer, it was recommended that mentoring should be utterly deliberated and not forced on the participants ''the mentors and the mentees'' and privacy should*

be indispensable in this relationship. Conclusively, knowledge transfer encompasses a wide variety of activities to sustain mutually beneficial collaborations between mentors and the mentees, universities, and the public sector. It is all about the transfer of tangible and intellectual expertise, skills and learning between academic and the non-academic community.

KEYWORDS*: Staff, Mentoring, Retention, Knowledge, Staff Retention and Knowledge Transfer.*

INTRODUCTION

The word mentoring came from Greek word "Mentor" a trusted friend of Odysseus charged with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus. The term has continued to reflect a "trusted counselor or guide" in a variety of situations. In an ideal world, mentors act as role models, review the mentees work and progress, push them toward short and long term goals, invest in their potential, and support in the advancement of their careers. Mentors are open to hearing about emotional and personal issues, sharing their relevant experiences and finding resources for the mentee's needs.

One educational definition of a mentoring relationship is stated, "a naturally formed, one-on-one, mutual, committed relationship between a junior and a senior person designed to promote personal and professional development beyond any particular curricular or institutional goals" (Rose et al, 2005). Brookfield (1986) argues that effective mentoring requires voluntary engagement of partners, mutual respect, shared responsibility and empowerment of the mentee. This requires establishing rapport, determining purpose, assessing current situation, setting objectives, developing methods, implementing actions, and assessing results.

In mentorship, one is dealing with a relationship between a mentor, who is more skilled, well-informed, and wise; and a dependent that is less experienced, younger, and sometimes unreliable and vague. A mentor will often be more prominent than the mentee, or more skilled in a particular field. The mentor is then the teacher of the dependent, and serves as the guide for the mentee to do better in the field. Serving as a guide for somebody is absolutely not an easy duty. It requires experienced and wise individuals to be able to share knowledge and wisdom, and likewise, you need to know how to share your knowledge and wisdom well enough in order to be totally understood. The mentors need to know how to empower and encourage mentees, and make them feel better about themselves without babying the mentees. In the mentor and mentee relationship, the mentor acts as a guide, not as someone who commands; a guide will steer a student through to the right path, but you do not point it out directly.

Conversely, employee retention is an organization's effort to retain its employees. In this logic, retention becomes the strategy rather than the result. It is vital to first point out the root cause of the retention issue before implementing a program to address it. Once identified, a program can be tailored to meet the unique needs of the organization through knowledge transmission. Employee retention policies are designed at addressing the various needs of employees to enhance their job satisfaction and reduce the substantial costs involved in hiring and training new staff. However, knowledge transfer involves a dilemma of transferring knowledge from one part of the firm to another by the knowledge holder. Knowledge transfer seeks to build, systematize,

otherwise distributes knowledge and guarantee its accessibility for future users. Argote & Ingram (2000:151) define knowledge transfer as "the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another". They further opine that, transfer of organizational knowledge (i.e., routine or best practices) can be observed through changes in the knowledge or performance of recipient units. They maintain that, transfer of organizational knowledge, such as best practices, can be quite difficult to achieve. It is on this premise that this investigation seek to examine *t*he impact of mentoring on staff retention through knowledge transfer with reference to selected private universities in Nigeria).

Research Questions
The following research questions are presented for this exploration.
1.   Does Mentoring improve staff retention in private Universities in Nigeria?
2.   To what extent does Transfer of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian Universities?

Objectives of the Study
The ample aim of this study is to explore the degree to which mentoring enhances staff retention through knowledge transmits using selected Nigerian Universities for the investigation.
Principally, the study seeks to:
1.   Determine the extent to which mentoring improves staff retention in private Universities in Nigeria.
2.   Ascertain whether transfer of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian universities.

Research Hypotheses
A hypothesis is a proposal made as a basis for reasoning without any statement of its fact. As a result, the following hypotheses are offered.
1.   Mentoring improves staff retention in private Universities in Nigeria.
2.   Transmission of Knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian Universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring is multifaceted. It varies from one situation to another. It is interpreted in diverse ways by different people. It is significant that the rationale and intentions of mentoring in a particular context are plain. Stakeholders, particularly mentors and mentees should debate what mentoring is to be in their particular context in order that a mutual understanding and vision of mentoring can be shared as they embark on their relationship.

Mentoring is hard to describe. Many scholars believe that there are different definitions of mentoring. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995:13) maintain that mentoring is 'off line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking'. Montreal (1988) argues that mentor is 'someone who helps 'learner' or the 'mentee' to become what that person aspires to be'. However, a mentor is someone who helps another person through an essential transition of major change in personal circumstances, or career development.

Mentoring is one form of support rendered to the mentee. Individuals may be supported by colleagues, line managers, counselors, teachers' friends or parents etc. It is essential to recognize that an individual may have a variety of support, for a variety of reasons, including more than one mentor; at any one time and that this mix of support may vary over a period of time. The traditional form of mentoring is one on one mentoring but there are other models of mentoring such as co-mentoring or peer mentoring and group mentoring. Mentoring can also be mentee initiated and can happen informally when an individual seeks advice and support from another individual. Often people do not recognize that they have a mentor or have been mentoring. This kind of mentoring may occur within or outside an organization.

The terms 'Mentor' and 'Mentoring' are becoming more common, even though they mean different things to different people. Mentoring is just one way of helping someone else but it can be a very powerful and rewarding way, particularly in terms of learning. Conversely, employee retention is the ability of an organization to retain its employees. In an organizational setting, the goal of employers is usually to decrease employee turnover, thereby decreasing training costs, recruitment costs and loss of talents and organizational knowledge. Employers can improve retention rates and decrease the associated costs of high turnover. Nevertheless, Employers can seek positive turnover whereby they aim to maintain only those employees whom they consider to be high performers.

However, knowledge transfer is a practical problem of transferring knowledge from one part of the organization to another that seeks to organize, create, capture or distribute knowledge and ensure its availability for future users. Knowledge resides in organizational members, and can be transferred through mentoring process. Argote & Ingram (2000: 151) describe knowledge transfer as "the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another". They further point out the transfer of organizational knowledge (i.e., routine or best practices) can be observed through changes in the knowledge or performance of recipient units.

Values and Principles Underpinning Mentoring
The mentoring process is underpinned by the following values and principles:
Recognizing that people are okay (Hay, 1995), realizing that people can change and want to grow (Hay, 1995), understanding how people learn, recognizing individual differences, empowering through personal and professional development, encouraging capability, developing competence, encouraging collaboration not competition, encouraging scholarship and a sense of enquiry, searching for new ideas, theories and knowledge, equal opportunities in the organization, reflecting on past experiences as a key to understanding, looking forward (Reflexion) and developing the ability to transfer learning and apply it in new situations, realizing that we can create our own meaning of mentoring (Hay, 1995 & Jowett, Shaw & Tarbitt, 1997).

10 Ways to Improve Employee Retention

John opines that in an increasingly competitive business world, top talent is in high demand. If you are not making your top workers happy, another company may come along to steal them away. John provided ten tips that will help managers keep employees around for many years.

Create the Right Culture
Finding employees who will feel a strong bond with your company starts with creating an environment that attracts those employees. Your company culture should match the type of employee you want to employ, whether you opt for a by-the-book, strict workplace or a more casual, laid-back atmosphere.

Hire the Right Employees
As you are screening candidates, pay close attention to signs that you may have a job-hopper. While there is nothing wrong with someone switching jobs if it provides career advancement, look for someone who is interested in growing with your company rather than getting experience to take somewhere else.

Offer Training
Businesses expect their professionals to arrive fully trained and certified. Yet too many are not willing to invest in helping them maintain those credentials. Whether you send employees to learning center or you provide membership to one of the many e-learning sites available, when you take your employees' education seriously, they see it as an investment in their career.

Provide Guidance
Your employees should be fully aware of their job duties and how they are performing them. If an employee feels confused about his role in your organization, he's more likely to feel disgruntled and begin searching for something else.

Pay Well
As difficult as it is to pay competitive salaries when funds are low and budgets are tight, calculate the cost to replace employees. It can cost as much as 30 percent to 50 percent of an entry-level employee's annual salary just to replace him. Employees often find they can enjoy a 10 to 20 percent salary increase by simply moving from one company to the next, which makes jumping ship attractive.

Do not Punish Competence
Managers often spend much of their time on employees who are struggling, leaving the talented ones completely neglected. Over time, this can lead to resentment as star employees start to feel unnoticed and unsupported. Managers must make an effort to let top performers know their hard work is not going unnoticed.

Be More Flexible
Workers often express a preference for flexible working conditions. If you expect your best employee to answer his phone when a client calls at seven o'clock on a Friday night, you should also understand when that employee comes in late one morning or needs to take off early.

Offer Benefits

Small businesses often struggle to compete with larger corporations in providing benefits. While you do not have to beat big business in the healthcare options you offer, you can offer things they won't get elsewhere, such as the ability to work from home, more flexible vacation offerings, and performance bonuses.

Provide Unique Perks

Another way businesses can compete without breaking the budget is through offering perks they cannot get elsewhere. The infamous Silicon Valley has free meals and nap pods, but you can increase retention by coming up with creative perks.

Do not Take Yourself Too Seriously

As much work as you do try and make your company attractive to talented people. The truth is employees might be leaving because of their bosses. People tend to quit their bosses, not companies. If you can cultivate an environment where employees feel rewarded and gratified, you'll already be ahead of a great deal of other bosses out there.

Types of Knowledge

Knowledge remains a prevailing trait in our society, though gaining an understanding of what types of knowledge exist within a firm may promote internal social structures that will facilitate and support mentoring and learning in all organizational domains. Collins (1993) suggested classification of knowledge types to being: embrained, embodied, encultured, embedded and encoded. It is central to note that these knowledge types could be indicative of any organization, not just those that are knowledge-based heavy.

Embrained knowledge: knowledge is said to be embrained when dependent on conceptual skills and cognitive abilities. This could be practical, high-level knowledge, where objectives are met through perpetual acknowledgment and revamping. Tacit knowledge may also be embrained, even though it is mainly unintentional.

Embodied knowledge: Embodied knowledge is action oriented and consists of contextual practices. It is more of a social acquisition; as how individuals interact and interpret their environment creates this non-explicit kind of knowledge.

Encultured knowledge: Encultured knowledge deals with achieving shared understandings through socialization and acculturation. Language and negotiation become the discourse of this type of knowledge in an enterprise.

Embedded knowledge: Embedded knowledge is tacit and resides within systematic routines. It relates to the relationships between roles, technologies, formal procedures and emergent routines within a complex system.

Encoded knowledge: Encoded knowledge deals with information that is conveyed in signs and symbols. For instance, books, manuals, data bases, among others and decontextualized into codes

of practice. Rather than being a specific type of knowledge, it deals more with the transmission, storage and interrogation of knowledge.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The material and method used for this investigation was sourced from both primary and secondary data such as text books, management journal and internet. Questionnaire and interview guide were the main tools for data gathering. The questionnaire was designed for all the staff in the selected private universities in the North central zone of Nigeria. The data through which responses were given in the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted with the use of students 't' distribution test in the analysis of data. Conclusion was then based on the analysis of data.

Data Presentation

Data are presented in tabular forms and as a result discussed in brief. A well-structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to the sampled employees of the selected private Universities in Nigeria. The test of hypotheses was employed, using students 't' distribution test to analyze the data.Three hundred and forty six (346) questionnaires were printed and distributed but only three hundred and twenty one (321) were filled and returned. Table 4.1 shows the questionnaire distribution and collection schedule.

Table 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Collection Schedule

No Distributed	No returned	No rejected	No accepted	No not returned
346	321	0	321	25
100	92.7%	0.9%	92.7%	7.2%

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.1 portray that 346 questionnaire representing 100% were prepared and distributed, 321 (Representing 92.7%) out of 346 were correctly filled and returned, while 7 questionnaires representing 7.2% were not returned. Hence, the researchers based their analysis on the number that was filled and returned.

Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

Table 2 Mentoring improves staff retention in private universities in Nigeria.

Option	Responses	Percentage
Strongly agreed	119	37.1
Agreed	136	42.4
Disagreed agreed	17	5.3
Disagreed	13	4.0
No idea	36	11.2
Total	**321**	**100**

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.2 shows that 119 respondents representing 37.1% strongly agreed with the fact that mentoring improves staff retention in private Universities in Nigeria, 136 respondents representing

42.4% agreed with the statement, 17 respondents representing 5.3% strongly disagreed and 4.0%, that is, 13 respondents disagreed while 36 respondents representing 11.2% failed to provide answer. This means that mentoring improves staff retention in private Universities in Nigeria.

Table 3 Transmission of Knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian Universities.

Option	Responses	Percentages
Strongly Agreed	121	37.7
Agreed	137	42.7
Strongly Disagreed	32	9.9
Disagreed	18	5.6
No idea	13	4.0
Total	**321**	**99.9**

Source: Researcher, Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.3 reveals that 121 respondents representing 37.7% were of the view that transmission of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian Universities, 137 respondents representing 42.7 agreed with the statement, 9.9%, that is, 32 respondents strongly disagreed, while 18 respondents representing 5.6% disagreed entirely. The analysis above indicates that transmission of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian Universities.

Testing of Hypotheses
For objective view and clearer analysis, the hypotheses as formulated earlier are represented for assessment analysis.
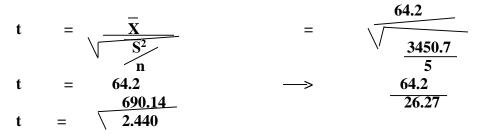
Hypothesis one
Hi: Mentoring improves staff retention in private universities in Nigeria
Ho: Mentoring does not improves staff retention in private universities in Nigeria

Contingency Table 4.2.1

X	X-$\overline{\text{X}}$	(X-$\overline{\text{X}}$)²
119	54.8	3003.04
136	81.2	5155.24
17	-47.2	2227.84
13	-51.2	2621.44
36	-28.2	795.24
ΣX = 321		Σ(X⁻$\overline{\text{X}}$)²
		13802.8

$$n = 5, \quad \overline{X} = \frac{321}{S} = 64.2$$

$$S^2 = \frac{13802.8}{4} = 3450.7$$

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}}{\sqrt{\dfrac{S^2}{n}}} \qquad = \qquad \sqrt{\dfrac{64.2}{\dfrac{3450.7}{5}}}$$

$$t = \frac{64.2}{\sqrt{690.14}} \qquad \longrightarrow \qquad \frac{64.2}{26.27}$$

$$t = \sqrt{2.440}$$

Tabulated t 0.05 for (5-1) that is 4 d.f for two tail test is 2.78. Since calculated t (2.44) is less than tabulated t 0.05 (2.78) for 4 d.f., Ho may be accepted at 5% of significance and we may conclude that mentoring improve staff retention in private universities in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two
Hi: Transfer of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian universities.
Ho: Transfer of knowledge does not enhance staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian universities.

Contingency Table 4.3.1

X	X-X	(X-X)
121	56.8	3226.24
137	72.8	5299.84
32	-32.2	1036.84
18	-46.2	2134.44
13	-51.2	2621.44
ΣX = 321		Σ(X-X̄)²
		14318.8

$$n = S \quad \underline{X} = \frac{321}{5} = 64.2$$

$$S^2 = \frac{14318.8}{4} = 3579.7$$

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}}{\sqrt{\dfrac{S^2}{n}}} \qquad = \qquad \frac{64.2}{\sqrt{\dfrac{3579.7}{5}}}$$

$$t = \frac{64.2}{\sqrt{715.94}} \qquad = \qquad \frac{64.2}{26.752} \qquad = \quad 2.399$$

$$t = 2.40$$

Tabulated t 0.005 for (5-1) that 4 d.f for two tailed is 2.78. Since calculated t (2.40) is less than tabulated t 0.005 (2.78) for 4 d.f., Ho may be accepted at 5% of significance and we may conclude that transmission of knowledge enhances staff mentoring in private universities in Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Our finding reveals that mentoring improves staff retention and knowledge transfer in private universities in Nigeria and conceptualization of mentoring is required for staff retention in organizations as the goal of employers is usually to decrease labour turnover, thereby decreasing recruitment costs, training costs, and loss of talents associated with managerial knowledge. Secondly, it was noted based on data analysis that transfer of knowledge enhances staff mentoring and retention in Nigerian universities as knowledge transferred provides a realistic problem solving mechanism from one part of the organization to another and seeks to systematize, create, capture or distribute knowledge and ensure its availability for potential users.

CONCLUSION

The ideal of this paper has been to arouse research and thinking about the rational for mentoring, staff retention and knowledge transfer as sources from which organization maintain low labour turnover and individuals accept mentoring assistance in their careers. However, Knowledge transfer encompasses a wide variety of activities to sustain mutually beneficial collaborations between mentors and the mentees, universities, and the public sector. It is all about the transfer of tangible and intellectual expertise, skills and learning between academic and the non-academic community. The review of literature suggests that a knowledge transfer and conceptualization of mentoring is required for staff retention in organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For effective staff retention and knowledge transfer, mentoring should be utterly deliberate and not forced on the participants, ''the mentors and the mentees'' and privacy should be indispensable in this relationship. However, both the mentors and mentees should entirely know the reasons and limits of their involvement.

REFERENCES

Allen, D.G. (2008). *Retaining Talent*. Retrieved from http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/ research/documents/retaining%20talent-%20final.pdf.

Argote, L. & Ingram, P. (2000). *"Knowledge transfer: A Basis for Competitive Advantage in Firms". Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes. 82 (1): 150–169.*

Carr, Mentors Peer Resources, retrieved at *http://www.peer.ca/mentor.html*, September 22, 2005.

Davidson, J. R. & Middleton, C.A. (2006). Networking, networking, networking: The role of professional association memberships in mentoring and retention of science librarians. *Science & Technology Libraries*, 27(1) 203-224.

Eby, L. Butts, M.L., Simon, A. & Shana, A. (2004) Protégés' negative mentoring experiences: construct development and nomological validation. *Personnel Psychology* , 57(2) 411-447.

Freeman, J. (2008). U.S. attitudes toward organizational learning. [Personal communication] Google Scholar.

Friedman, A. & Phillips, M. (2002). The role of mentoring in the CPD programmes of professional associations. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 21 (3), 269-284.

Golian-Lui, L. (2003) Fostering librarian leadership through mentoring . Adult Learning, 14(1) 26-28.

Goodyear, M. (2006) Mentoring: A learning collaboration. Educause Quarterly, 29(4) 51-53.

Hay, J. (1995). *Transformational Mentoring.* McGrawHill Book Company.

Jowett, J.V., Shaw E.D. & Tarbitt, V. (1997). *A guide to mentoring,* Leeds Metropolitan University.

Megginson D. & Clutterbuck, D. (1995). *Mentoring in action:* A practical guide for managers.

Zachary, L. (2000). *The Mentor's Guide.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.