

## **INFLUENCE OF ATTENDANCE TO COURSES AND MENTORING ON JOB PRODUCTIVITY OF TEACHERS IN OGUTA LGA, IMO STATE NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The general purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of attendance to courses and mentoring on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used for this study using questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This study covered the entire population of 661. Out of these, 501 copies of the questionnaire representing 75.8% were duly completed and returned for analysis. Student's t-test was used to analyze the research questions. The finding showed that short and part time courses had no significant influence on the job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria ( $F_{cal} = 7.86$ ;  $t_{vale} = 6.117$ ;  $p > 0.005$ ). Finding also showed that mentoring significantly influence job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria ( $F_{cal} \text{ value} = 58.62$ ;  $t_{value} = 22.478$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This study recommended that, there should be a review of the curriculum and an in-built quality-control measure on the content delivery of course (short/part time) study attended by teachers. This will ensure that there is no room left for compromise of quality and standard of course programmes and also ensure that the approaches are relevant to job functions of teachers or else the aim of development action will be defeated.*

**KEY WORDS:** attendance, courses, mentoring, job productivity, teachers

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Attendance to Course which are usually internal or external are aimed at equipping professionals with specialized knowledge, skills to perform certain tasks and professional attitude towards employees' work environment. Training courses are basically concerned with skills and knowledge development of professionals. It involves internal, external or correspondence activities that focus on acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes through course work and exercise (Egungwu, 1992). Mentoring involves a continuing flow of instructions, comments and suggestions from the manager to the subordinate in learning process for effective job productivity (Jordan and Jones, 1995). Mentoring is not a new concept in teaching but has recently been

emphasized in education as there is a growing need for high job performance standard and the desire for teachers in Nigeria to compete comparatively with other teachers in the world (Joshi, 1999; Vashishth and Mishra, 1999).

The term productivity is defined by Yukl (2006) as how much and how well we produce from the resources used. Fadehan (2010) defines productivity as a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory, system in converting inputs into useful outputs. Moseng and Rolstadis (2001) defined productivity as the ability to satisfy the market's need for goods and services with a minimum of total resources consumption. Just as the economic health of any nation is an indication of the wealth of productivity in its firms, so it is with the institutions. The quality of services rendered by the teachers coupled with the nature and quality of teaching are indications of the organization productivity. One can then infer that productivity is of such importance that organizations neglecting it do so at their own detriment. Productivity is not attained in a vacuum; it has always been tagged to workers performance whether or not the other factors that affect performance are x-rayed. For instance, it is not possible to hire only the brain and hand; the owner of that brain and hand must always come along for the equation to balance. The ability to accommodate employee needs is a healthy and positive advance to increasing efficiency of personnel.

Toplin and Winterton (2002) proffer advice for high level productivity, these are-employing qualified and competent hands; assigning specific jobs to specific staff and holding them accountable; trustworthy relationship between the leader and the subordinate quickly and competently; recognition and incentive for a job well done innovation and clear identification of tasks and gaps that are needed to achieve goals. Webb (2011) expresses that the attitude of staff affects their productivity in many ways without the awareness of employees themselves. While the positive attitude results in increased productivity, the negative can have the opposite effect and can also be infectious to other employees who may quickly pick them up and adopt them.

According to Holtz and Harold (2013), the availability and regular supply of the factors of production, a motivated work force and good management are some of the factors that directly impact on productivity. The authors' further stress that management factors (issue of leadership and the style adopted) is usually relegated to the background while the most verified in terms of productivity is labour. According to Mullis (2015), productivity is a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine or system in converting inputs into useful outputs. Attainment of high productivity is of primary concern to management and employees of most organizations. Johnson (2015) views productivity as reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources. Sheahan (2013) links productivity to employee morale. According to the author, productivity increases when employees are happy at work and have more motivation; that poor morale causes employees to be disengaged because productivity is the watch-word for every organization desirous of survival.

According to Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007), high productivity remains dependent on the effective management of the workforce. Productivity at work is the effort made by an employee within an organization in order to achieve particular predetermined results through the use of

available resources (Abdel-Razak, 2016). According to Robbins and Coutler (2013), productivity in the workplace is the accumulated results of activities that an employee performs; it comprises what an employee does in the workplace toward the achievement of organizational goals and the outcomes of his actions which are measurable. According to Judge, Bono, Thoreson and Patton (2001) as well as Susanty, Miradipta and Jie (2013), when workers have positive attitudes in an organization their level of commitment is high and this invariably enhances their work productivity. In the light of the foregoing, this study therefore, seeks to investigate influence of attendance to courses and mentoring on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

- i. What is the influence of attendance to courses on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the influence of mentoring on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria?

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The intention of attendance to courses may be to introduce new entrants to the profession with the basic skills required to update and upgrade experienced workers on various topics or to provide a means of refreshing those returning to work after a career break (Gorman, 2003). Sometimes, practitioners require knowledge of certain fields other than core specialization, to interact intelligently with other professionals, each interface courses take care of cognitive as well as psychomotor abilities (vashishth and Mishra, 1999:74).

The contents of professional course aim to successfully achieve the course objectives, which are represented in terms of specific competences, thus, acquired, equip the professional with adequate knowledge, skills to perform job tasks (Joshi, 1999:40). Short courses may include lecture practical work and demonstrations (Egungwu, 1999:103). Externally based courses according to Gorman (2003:148) are valuable as a development method not only because they give the teachers the opportunity to be immersed in and concentrate on a particular area of new knowledge, but because of the benefit of interacting with others in the learning process, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas with others representing different organizations, show common experience and provide networks of contacts for future experience, while internal (in-house) courses may be a better route to take by an organization, if it has the resources for it. This method can best be described as earning while working without any encroachment on one's job and also provide increase communication across departments; increasing the assistance that each can provide to the other and enhancing work relationships.

Courses of study by mail otherwise known as correspondence or on-line development, Internet-based courses and virtual schools rely on self-directed learning approach and are gaining in popularity with the rise of podcast, video conferencing, live chat, web based course, document sharing and streamlining video and audio, and other instant messaging (Benardin, 2016:265).

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Programmes run through the Internet allow trainees the convenience to access course materials according to their own schedule and trainers do not have to be present in person during teaching process but maintain the benefits of classroom delivery of courses electronically. On-line courses allow participation in courses previously out of reach due to geographical travel or cost considerations (Mathis and Jackson, 2004:262). More recently, on-line courses are becoming increasingly attractive option for staff training and development as Pollock and Squire (2016) outline five features of successful online courses as; tutorial support, guidance, conversation, discussion and immediate feedback. The trouble with courses is the lecture system sometimes used in classroom instruction encourages passive listening and reduced learner's participation. Sometimes trainees have little opportunity to ask question, clarify and discuss the lecture materials (Palloff and Pratt, 2014; Mathis and Jackson, 2004:264).

Walters (1992) suggests that teachers should be attending courses to update their knowledge at least once in two or three years. The school manager or school management could choose who should attend a course, though it is important everyone should be given a chance to go for courses on rotational basis. Courses should be geared towards meeting the need of the teachers and for the purpose of acquiring new skills or updating knowledge (Ikoro, 2015). Mumford (2015) recommends that courses can and should be designed around explicit learning concepts, not on superficial and anecdotal statement.

Mentorship represents an increasing trend towards helping the individual take charge his or her learning; the primary driver of acquisition of knowledge and skill becomes the teacher; the coach or mentor who is available to give guidance, insight and encouragement in learning process (Clutterbuck and Wynne, 1994). In contrast, mentoring functions can be performed by someone other than the immediate supervisor while coaching is a role filled by employee's immediate superior that require direct extrinsic feedback.

Somers (2016) distinguishes mentoring from coaching in terms of mentoring as input and coaching as extraction. However the basic difference is that coaching is always about performance improvement (often over a short time) in a specific skill area with the goals or sub goals primarily belongs to the learner while the coach owns the process; mentoring is more holistic, about the whole individual relating primarily about to the identification and nurturing of potentials for the whole person. Both are techniques for developing people but in practice, mentoring tends to be a longer relationship where the goals may change but always set by the learner. The learner owns both the goals and the process (koontz and Wehrich, 2004; Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2015).

Mentoring is defined as a process whereby an experienced senior staff member helps to develop technical, interpersonal and organizational skills of a less experience junior staff member, who is called the protégé (Darwin and Palmer, 2009). It is the idea of an older manager choosing a younger manager for whom he will act as a coach, counselor or sponsor (Beverly and Jacobson, 1995 and Kuyer-Rushing, 2013). Mentoring also is a personal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate that emphasizes on teaching and learning and facilitating improved productivity and development (Scandura, 1998; Munde, 2000; Golian-Lui, 2003; Bonntte, 2004; Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2008). Mentoring consist of, the process of forming and maintaining intensive and lasting developmental relationships between a variety of developers (i.e.

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people who provide career and psychosocial support mentor) and a junior person (the protégé, if male; or protégé, if female (Daloz,1990; Dansky, 1996; Bolye and Boice, 1998; Bozeman and Feeney, 2007; kreitner and kinicki, 2007).

It is also managerial process or technique that aims at improving organizational working relationship, culture and philosophy (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2015:37). The purpose of mentoring programme should be to acquire skills that have been described as; “understanding the underlying values, traditions and unwritten behaviour codes of teachers; effectively managing a productive career in education; establishing and maintaining a network of professional colleagues” (Leslie, Lingard and Whyte, 2005). In work situations, a mentoring relationship brings about sponsorship, acceptance, exposure and visibility, work production, role modeling, challenging assignment, counseling, facilitating improved performance, learning or development and change (Mosey, 2005). This makes mentoring a strategy for socialization and acculturation, which aim to maintain the existing cultural values, norms and ethics and maintain the purpose of change (Zachary, 2005 and Johnson, 2015).

Mentoring has four main applications; improving performances, career development (for mentor as well as mentee), advice, support and knowledge sharing (VanAvery, 1992). Lankua and Scandura (2014) enumerate the functions and roles that characterized monitoring to include that mentors provide career-enhancing functions such as sponsorship and coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility and offering challenging work or protection, all of which help the protégé to establish a role in the organization, learn the roles and prepare for advancement in the modeling, counseling, confirmation and friendship, which help the protégé develop a sense of professional identity and competence. With the advent of technology in today’s knowledge environment, more mentoring relationships are being provided by electronic format. Electronic mentoring (E-mentoring) has also been called online mentoring, virtual mentoring or telementoring (Bernardin, 2016:309). It involves mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and protégé which occurs primarily through electronic means (e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms and social networking spaces) it can occur as part of formal or informal mentoring programmes (Bernardin, 2016:210). Although informal mentoring occurs daily in all types of organizations, higher educational institutions are making mentoring more comprehensive and reachable by introducing formal and group mentoring programmes (Darwin and Palmer, 2009:126).

According to Turban and Dougherty (1994), these developments have increased mentoring sustainability to being offered as part of structured programmes of continuing professional development. Successful formal mentoring is based on the fact that (i) mentor and protégé participation is voluntary (ii) mentors are chosen on the bases of their past record in developing employees, willingness to serve as a mentor and evidence of positive coaching communication and listening skills (iii) the purpose of the programme is clearly understood (iv) the length of the programme is specified (v) mentor and protégé are encouraged to pursue the relationship beyond the formal period (vi) a minimum level of contact between the mentor and protégé is specified (vii) protégé’s are encouraged to contact one another to discuss problems and share successes (viii) the mentor programme is evaluated (ix) employee development is rewarded, which shows managers that mentoring and other development activities are worth their time and effort.

Whether mentoring is conceptualized as a process or set of activities, the overarching role is that it helps learners build wider networks, from which to learn and influence; it acts as counselor, advocator, emotional support and role model. Good work environment and productivity are built on human relationships and interactions. This explains Moemeka and Onyeagwu (2012) citing Bandura (1976) social learning theory which provides explanation for understanding social relationship in learning States that learning would be laborious if not hazardous, if people had to resolvedly on the effect of their own action to inform than what to do. Moemeka and Onyeagwu (2012:93) maintain that most human behaviours are learned idea of how new behaviours are formed and on later occasions, it is coded. The social cognitive theory also acknowledged observation as an important modeling behaviour as that found between mentor and mentee.

Ivancevich, konopaske and Matteson (2008:46) have pointed out that for an employee to see and attract a mentor, he should possess certain characteristics namely emotional stability, ability to adapt their behaviour to the situation and high need for power and achievement. Mentoring programme can benefit both mentors and mentees. A mentor will receive extrinsic rewards such as “enhanced professional” recognition when mentees perform well, and for a mentee it provides a great opportunity for career support, networking, collaboration and interpersonal skills (Young and Perrewe, (2014). Also Bryant and Terberg (2016) enumerate the advantages of mentoring to include increased success, increased retention, increased knowledge, creation and sharing, offers great commitment, increased publication rate, professional friendship and networking. There could be challenges when implementing mentioning programme. Such challenges could be cross cultural issues, especially when the mentoring programme adopts a traditional approach. Also not everyone identified as a mentor is a competent mentor (Darwin and Palmer, 2009:126).

However, Ike (2007) recommends that mentoring programmes should be encouraged across the country is it provides training grounds for grooming future leaders as well as for providing for succession within the profession. Whereas, professional coaching is often concerned with using instructions, demonstration and practice to pass on facts or theoretical knowledge, skills and competences from saddled individual to an individual or small group (Parsiloe and Wray, 2000 and Flaherty, 2005). Bernadin (2016:313) summarizes coaching as an ongoing process of helping employee's enhance their work performance; analyze performance, provide reinforcement and feedback.

Peer coaching is another means to p wide opportunities for staff to learn from each other. It is a confidential formative process that can aid librarians in fostering skills they need to perform their better (Levene and Frank, 1993). Benefits of organizations that provide of coaching are improved operational efficiency and employee productivity, development of soft skills, increased employee morale and motivation, better career progression and successive planning and creating a culture that promote loyalty (Woodruff, 2016). However, there is danger that the coach will neglect training responsibilities or pass on to the trainee inappropriate management practice, lack of time and interpersonal relationship (Zemke, 1996).

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study using questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is titled “influence of attendance to courses and mentoring on job productivity of teachers Questionnaire” (**IACMJPO**). A total of 661 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools in Oguta, LGA, Imo State, Nigeria. Out of these, 501 copies of the questionnaire representing 75.8% were duly completed and returned for analysis were duly completed and returned for analysis. No sample size was drawn from the population, this is because the population of the study is small and accessible. The census method was used to ensuring that opinions of all the teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria were captured for the study. Student’s t-test was used to analyze the research questions.

### Analysis

#### Research Question 1

What is the influence of attendance to courses on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Student’s t-Test Analysis of Influence of Attendance to Courses on Job Productivity of Teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria**

SN	Description	Mean	Std Dev	Obs	t-value	Prob	Decision
a	Gain more clarity of your job task	3.72	0.59	501	46.461	<0.0001	Significant
b	Become more confident to do your work	3.44	0.79	501	26.416	<0.0001	Significant
c	Identify your lack of skills and competences	1.31	0.58	501	-46.124	1.0000	Not Significant
d	Stop giving excuses about job task	1.85	0.95	501	-15.369	1.0000	Not Significant
e	Relate with library users in a more friendly manner	3.15	0.91	501	15.874	<0.0001	Significant
f	Pay more attention to job details	2.26	0.95	501	-5.623	1.0000	Not Significant
g	Enhance your work ethics and values	2.92	0.92	501	10.144	<0.0001	Significant
h	Build up your capacity as a team player	2.60	1.01	501	2.144	0.0162	Not Significant
	<b>Attendance to Courses</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>6.177</b>	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>	<b>Significant</b>

\*=Significant at 2.66 Mean Value

At the calculated t-test mean value of 2.66 and probability value of 0.0001 as shown on Table 1, attendance to courses whether short or part time influenced four aspects job productivity of teachers. These four areas were that it made teachers to gain more clarity of their job tasks (mean = 3.72); become more confident to do their work (mean = 3.44); related with library users in a more friendly manner (mean = 3.15) and enhance their work ethics and values (mean= 2.92).

### Research Question 2

What is the influence of mentoring on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Student's t-Test Analysis of influence of Mentoring on Job Productivity of Teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria**

SN	Description	Mean	Std Dev	Obs	t-value	Prob	Decision
a	Enhance your job potentials	3.94	0.24	501	135.543	<0.0001	Significant
b	Enhance your Interpersonal relationship with your superiors	3.13	0.84	501	16.738	<0.0001	Significant
c	Expand knowledge of your career path and options	2.12	1.19	501	-7.169	1.0000	Not Significant
d	Develop an intimate relationship with your mentor/mentee or coach	1.91	1.23	501	-10.746	1.0000	Significant
e	Gain more clarity of job task	3.77	0.50	501	56.512	<0.0001	Significant
f	Improve networking and collaboration at workplace	3.51	0.71	501	31.929	0.0001	Significant
g	Attract relevant influence and attention on your job and career path	2.63	1.05	501	2.859	0.0022	Not Significant
h	Develop initiatives and working under minimal supervision	3.69	0.68	501	39.474	<0.0001	Significant
	<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>22.478</b>	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>	<b>Significant</b>

\*=Significant at 3.09 Mean Value

Analysis on Table 2 shows that mentoring positively influenced five aspects of the job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria, based on the calculated t-test mean value of 3-.09



and probability value of 0.0001. They in enhancing one's job potentials (mean = 3.94); enhancing one's interpersonal relationship with superiors (mean = 3.13); gaining more clarity of job task of job task (mean = 3.77), improving networking and collaboration at workplace (mean = 3.51) and developing initiatives and initiatives and working under minimal supervision (mean – 3.69).

## **FINDINGS**

Finding showed that short and part time courses had no significant influence on the job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria (F cal= 7.86; t-vale =6.117; p >0.005). This study reveals that against the popularity of attendance to courses among teachers, they have no joint significant influence on the job productivity of teachers. This may be because of the nature of the course design and the objective of such courses in relation to the job done by the teachers concerned. Attendance to short or part time courses may be a way of sending a stubborn teacher away from the work place not necessarily to learn anything that has direct bearing to the job performed. This again questions the views of Egungwu {1992} and Gorman (2003) who posit that the intention of courses was to introduce new entrants to the profession with the basic skills required and to update the knowledge of older teachers. This has not been justified by this research outcome. This calls for in-depth review of the nature of courses that teachers should attend.

Finding also showed that mentoring significantly influence job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria (F-cal value= 58.62; t-value = 22.478; P<0.05). This is a confirmation that mentoring had influence on job productivity of teachers by making them to gain clarity of their duties, develop initiatives and working under minimal supervision and enhanced their jobs than those who did not. This finding confirms the outcomes of the research by Schmidt (2003) and Hamlin and Sage (2011) that mentoring provides better opportunities for teachers to learn on the job and to cope with challenges of their work schedule. It also makes teachers to have a better understanding of their duties, enhances their output and operational efficiency.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Attendance to courses has no significant contribution on job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria. Courses that deal on current and up-to-date topics are unique source of acquiring new knowledge. Mentoring has been proved to be a huge source of influence on the job productivity of teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State, Nigeria, and should be encouraged. Mentoring is used to build teachers confidence and inculcate in them abilities to carry out independent learning, acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, work ethics, attitudes and behaviours needed for effective job productivity.

This study recommended that, there should be a review of the curriculum and an in-built quality-control measure on the content delivery of course (short/part time) study attended by teachers. This will ensure that there is no room left for compromise of quality and standard of course programmes and also ensure that the approaches are relevant to job functions of teachers or else the aim of development action will be defeated. Again, teachers should encourage and insist on mentoring

programmes by adhering to certain policies, procedures and guidelines that will not discriminate among staff but guide them in actualizing the goals of mentoring programmes.

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