

**MENTORSHIP PRACTICES AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS
EDUCATORS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN EDO AND DELTA STATES**

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this study was carried out by **Prosper Omoro UGBINE (PG/EDU1804472)**, in the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Almighty God for His grace and infinite mercies all through the period of this programme.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. Six research questions guided the study and six corresponding hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The study employed a correlational survey research design. The population of the study consisted of fifty-eight (58) business educators in four public universities in Edo and Delta States. As a result of the manageable size of the population, the entire population was used as the sample size, hence census. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire.

The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Business Education and a Psychometrician from the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology (EECP), all in the University of Benin. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out on 20 business educators in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, who were not part of the study's sample. The data collected were analyzed using test-retest statistics to determine its internal consistency, and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The instrument for the study was administered to the respondents in their respective institutions with the help of four research assistants; that is one for each. The return rate was 100%. The data collected were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The findings revealed that there was a significant and strong relationship between mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The study therefore, concluded that mentorship practices significantly correlate with the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The study recommended, among others, that universities should establish standardized and well-structured mentorship programmes and ensure equitable access to effective mentorship for all business educators.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The educational sector in Nigeria has undergone numerous reforms aimed at improving the quality and relevance of its programmes, which include Business Education, a crucial programme designed to equip students with entrepreneurial, vocational and managerial skills to thrive in a competitive economic environment. Business education, therefore, is a component of vocational and technical education designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for effective participation in the world of work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning. It can also be seen as a discipline within vocational and higher education that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies which will enable them participate in the business world as employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

According to the National Universities Commission's Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (2023), business education is a professionalized programme designed to provide students with knowledge, skills, and competencies that lead to employability and advancement in office occupations, pedagogical skills for teaching business subjects; self-employment, and capabilities to operate as employers of labour. In Nigerian public universities, business education encompasses several areas of specializations that align with the country's economic needs and educational standards. According to Adebayo (2021) and Ibrahim and Bello (2023), the following are notable areas of specialization in business education within these institutions: Business Management, Marketing, Accounting, Human Resource Management, Entrepreneurship and Office Technology Management (OTM), among others. These sub-areas of

business education aim to equip students with practical knowledge and skills for success in business and vocational careers; and they are taught and applied by business educators.

Business educators are professional teachers, lecturers, or instructors who are trained and specialized in teaching business education courses at various educational levels, such as secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities. They are responsible for imparting business knowledge, developing entrepreneurial skills, and equipping learners with the competencies required for gainful employment or self-reliance in business and vocational occupation. According to Eze and Okoli (2024), business educators are professionally trained personnel who possess both pedagogical and occupational competencies required to prepare learners for careers in business, office occupations, and entrepreneurship. This means that they are not just subject-matter experts, but also skilled teachers who apply appropriate instructional strategies to ensure students acquire both theoretical and practical knowledge. Business educators are agents of human capacity development who utilize modern instructional resources and methods to produce competent graduates that can function effectively in the dynamic business environment. They play a crucial role in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world business practices, human capital development, entrepreneurial development, and economic growth. Moreover, to be able to fit into these roles, business educators depends not only on curriculum design but also on effective guidance and support systems such as mentorship.

Mentorship, therefore, refers to the structured professional relationship in which an experienced individual (mentor) provides guidance, knowledge, support, and career advice to a less experienced colleague (mentee), measured in terms of career guidance, teaching support, research supervision, and psychosocial support. It is a developmental process that enhances the

personal and professional growth of individuals through the transfer of knowledge, skills, values, and opportunities from a mentor to a mentee. Black and Fade (2020) define mentorship as a dynamic, reciprocal relationship that fosters personal and professional growth, guided by a trusted mentor. They emphasize the relational aspect and the mutual benefit that can arise from mentorship. Basically, there are two types of mentorship which include: formal and informal mentorship.

Formal mentorship refers to a structured and organized relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is intentionally established by an institution, organization, or educational body to achieve specific developmental goals. It involves clearly defined objectives, timelines, procedures, and evaluation mechanisms. The relationship is usually guided by institutional policies or programmes rather than occurring naturally or informally. According to Ezeani and Okafor (2024), formal mentorship is a planned institutionalized relationship designed to foster the personal and professional growth of mentees through systematic guidance, training, and support from experienced mentors. This implies that the process is not accidental but strategically created to enhance learning and professional development. Formal mentorship can take various forms depending on the goals of the mentoring practices, institutional culture, and available resources. Each form contributes uniquely to the professional and career development of business educators in higher education settings. Some of these forms of formal mentorship include; one-on-one formal mentorship, group formal mentorship, and electronic formal mentorship, among others.

One-on-one formal mentorship is the most traditional form of mentorship where one mentor is officially assigned to one mentee. The relationship is clearly defined, and meetings occur regularly within a structured institutional framework. According to Akinsanya and Olatunji

(2023), one-to-one formal mentorship allows for personalized attention, deeper communication, and tailored career guidance that addresses the unique needs of each mentee. It enhances individual and professional growth through direct mentorship, strengthens pedagogical competence and research capacity, builds confidence and academic identity among early career educators, and encourages knowledge transfer and networking with experienced colleagues. In Nigerian universities, this model is commonly used during academic staff induction, probationary mentoring, or postgraduate supervision.

Group formal mentorship refers to a form of formal mentorship where one or more mentors guide a group of mentees who share similar professional goals or are at the same career stage. The mentoring activities are structured around seminars, workshops, and collaborative projects. Ezeani and Okafor (2024) describe group mentorship as an efficient and collaborative approach that promotes teamwork, peer learning, and professional networking among mentees. It helps mentees develop leadership and communication skills; and also promotes a culture of continuous learning through group discussions and training. Group mentorship is effective in resource-constrained institutions and aligns with the collegial structure of universities.

Electronic formal mentorship (E-mentorship) is a technology-mediated mentoring relationship that uses digital platforms such as emails, video conferencing, or learning management systems for communication and guidance. Ede and Ezenwafor (2025) describe e-mentorship as a modern model of formal mentorship that enhances accessibility, flexibility, and continuity of mentoring across geographical boundaries. It facilitates remote mentoring and collaboration between experienced mentors and mentees. Also, it improves digital literacy and adaptability in digital teaching environments. E-mentorship promotes research collaboration and publication mentorship; and encourages inclusivity by connecting educators across institutions.

This model has gained importance in post-pandemic education systems, especially with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration in Nigerian universities.

On the other hand, informal mentorship is a spontaneous, natural, and unstructured relationship between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced person (mentee), developed voluntarily based on mutual interest, respect, and shared professional or personal goals. Unlike formal mentorship, it is not officially organized or directed by an institution but evolves naturally through professional interaction, friendship, or workplace relationship. In the words of Ogbuanya and Arome (2021), informal mentorship is a voluntary and naturally occurring relationship in which the mentor and mentee develop mutual trust and collaboration for professional and personal growth without formal institutional arrangements. This definition emphasizes the organic and flexible nature of the relationship, which allows it to be more adaptive to the mentee's needs. Eze and Okoli (2024) have identified the major types of informal mentorship to include peer mentorship, situational mentorship, and spontaneous mentorship, among others.

Peer mentorship occurs between individuals who are at similar career or academic levels. In this arrangement, colleagues provide mutual guidance, share experiences, and support each other's growth informally without any institutional assignment. According to Chinweuba and Nwachukwu (2022), peer mentorship fosters mutual learning and collegiality, allowing educators to share teaching techniques, research ideas, and coping strategies in an informal setting. It encourages collaboration and teamwork among colleagues, enhances communication, teaching and research skills, and promotes confidence, problem-solving, and innovation. Peer mentorship is especially common in Nigerian public universities, where new lecturers learn academic and administrative procedures from their peers through informal interaction.

Situational mentorship is a form of informal mentorship which occurs when a mentor provides guidance or support in response to a specific issue, challenge, or need faced by the mentee. The relationship often emerges temporarily and ends once the situation is resolved. Ogbuanya and Arome (2021) describe situational mentorship as a context-based mentoring relationship that develops when a mentee seeks expert advice on a particular academic or professional matter, such as research supervision or classroom management. It provides quick, focused solutions to immediate professional challenges. Also, it enhances decision-making and critical thinking skills. This type of informal mentorship is practical in universities, where junior lecturers often seek advice from senior colleagues for short-term academic needs like preparing for accreditation or publishing.

Spontaneous or natural mentorship is a form of informal mentorship that arises unexpectedly and grows naturally from regular interactions, friendship, or shared professional goals. There is no initial intention to mentor or be mentored, it simply develops over time due to mutual trust and admiration. Brown and Johnson (2021) refer to this as a naturally occurring mentorship, where both parties recognize value in each other's experience and form a developmental relationship without formal acknowledgment. It encourages organic learning and professional bonding. Also, it promotes openness, honesty, and mutual respect. This type of mentorship is common among educators who share similar research interest, teaching experiences, or career aspirations. All these types of mentorship, if properly harnessed, would play a pivotal role in enhancing the career development of business educators in Nigerian public universities.

Career development refers to the lifelong and continuous process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences that enable them to plan,

manage, and progress in their chosen professions. It involves both self-directed efforts such as goal setting, skill acquisition, and professional networking, and organizational or institutional support such as mentoring, training, promotions, and opportunities for growth. Essentially, career development is about helping individuals align their personal aspirations with available opportunities, thereby enhancing their professional competence, job satisfaction, and long-term employability. Super (2017) defines career development as a lifelong process that encompasses the various stages of an individual's career evolution, including growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. He emphasizes the importance of self-concept in career choice. In public universities, career development represents a strategic process through which academic staff, including business educators, are supported to acquire the competencies, experiences, and opportunities necessary for professional growth and institutional advancement.

According to Ezeani and Okafor (2024), the career development of business educators can be measured using specific indices or indicators that reflect progress in professional practice, academic achievement, and institutional contribution. These indices which help determine how well educators are evolving in their profession include: professional competence, research productivity, leadership capacity, job satisfaction, career advancement and promotion, professional networking and collaboration, and innovation and creativity.

Professional competence refers to the ability of business educators to effectively perform their teaching, administrative, and research roles with the required knowledge, pedagogical skill, and ethical standards. It involves indicators such as mastery of subject matter and instructional strategies, application of ICT in teaching and research, participation in training, workshops, and seminars, and adherence to professional ethics and standards.

Research productivity involves the ability of business educators to produce and disseminate knowledge through quality publications, conference papers, and innovative projects. It includes indicators such as number and quality of journal publications, participation in academic conferences and workshops, collaboration in research projects, and acquisition of research grants.

Leadership capacity refers to the ability of educators to take initiative, manage responsibilities, and influence positive change within their departments, faculties, or institutions. It determines the readiness of business educators for future management roles in academia. Leadership capacity involves indicators such as holding academic or administrative positions, leading committees, projects, or departmental tasks, mentoring junior colleagues or students, and exhibiting decision-making and conflict management skills.

Job Satisfaction refers to the sense of fulfillment and motivation educators derive from their teaching, research, and service activities. Business educators who are satisfied with their jobs tend to perform better, mentor others, and remain committed to institutional growth. Job satisfaction include indicators such as positive attitude toward work and students, commitment to institutional goals, low turnover intention or burnout, and balance between professional and personal life.

Career advancement and promotion reflect the progress educators make through ranks and recognition within the university system. It includes; academic promotion (e.g.; Assistant Lecturer to Professor), recognition and awards for excellence, invitations to speak at academic events, appointment to leadership or administrative positions.

Professional networking and collaboration involves building relationships with colleagues, researchers, and industry professionals, for mutual academic and career growth. It helps expand

knowledge, visibility, and opportunities for collaboration; and it includes indicators such as membership in professional associations, participation in collaborative projects and conferences, engagement in interdisciplinary networks, and online academic presence.

Innovation and creativity, as an index of career development, refers to the ability of educators to adopt or develop new ideas, teaching methods, and research approaches that improve educational outcomes. It involves the use of technology in teaching and assessment, development of new course materials or curricula, adoption of entrepreneurial and experiential learning methods, and engagement in community-based or problem-solving research. These indices of career development serve as benchmarks for assessing the growth and effectiveness of business educators in public universities, where continuous professional development and academic excellence are vital for sustaining institutional quality and achieving educational goals.

Public universities, being centres of teaching, research, and community service, play a pivotal role in shaping the career trajectories of educators by providing structured pathways such as mentoring, training programmes, research grants, conference participation, and promotion systems. Through these mechanisms, career development not only enhances individual educators' productivity and job satisfaction but also strengthens the overall quality of instruction, research output, and service delivery in public universities, thereby fulfilling their mandate of producing competent graduates and contributing to national development. Public universities, therefore, are higher educational institutions that are established, funded, and managed primarily by government, whether at federal, state, or regional level, with the mandate to provide affordable, accessible, and quality education to the public. Their funding largely comes from government allocations, although they may also generate revenue through tuition fees, research grants, and consultancy services. Public universities are designed to serve as centres for teaching,

research, and community services, offering opportunities for higher learning to a wide population irrespective of socio-economic background. In the Nigerian context, public universities include both federal universities, established and funded by the Federal Government, and state universities, owned and financed by state government. According to Brennan and Shah (2021), public universities are institutions that are primarily funded by state governments, designed to serve the educational needs of the public and promote social equity. They emphasize the role of public universities in providing accessible education to a diverse population.

Moreover, it appears that public universities in Nigeria may currently offer a constrained environment for the career development of business educators. Due to persistent resource shortfalls, heavy teaching loads, and uneven access to up-to-date ICT and research support, lecturers might be experiencing slower research productivity, limited promotion opportunities, and variable professional competence. Institutional professional development programmes could be weak or inconsistently applied, which may leave academics reliant on informal, ad hoc learning and networks. As a result, some early-career staff might feel less satisfied or consider alternative career paths, and overall institutional capacity for innovation and leadership development could be reduced.

Therefore, both formal and informal mentorship practices could plausibly mitigate many of these problems. Structured mentorship practices might provide clearer pathways for promotion, targeted skills transfer, especially in research methods and digital pedagogy, and more equitable access to professional networks. Informal mentoring such as peer mentorship, reverse mentorship and role-modeling could help spread practical know-how quickly and affordably, while sponsorship style mentoring might improve visibility and career advancement of promising business educators. If universities were to combine modest institutional support

(training for mentors, recognition, small research funds, among others), with encouragement of organic mentoring relationships, career development outcomes among business educators might improve, thereby leading to higher research outputs, greater job satisfaction, and stronger leadership capacity over time.

Business education in Nigerian public universities serve as a vital platform for developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective participation in business and vocational occupations. Business educators, who are central to this mandate, are responsible for imparting practical and theoretical competencies that prepare students for the dynamic world of work. However, their own career development may be hindered by limited institutional support, inadequate professional training opportunities, and evolving technological and pedagogical demands. Mentorship, both formal and informal, have emerged as a key mechanism that could enhance the professional growth, research productivity, leadership capacity, and job satisfaction of business educators. Through guided relationships, mentoring can help bridge knowledge gaps, foster continuous learning, and support the attainment of academic excellence. Therefore, examining the relationship between mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States is essential to improving instructional quality and strengthening the overall effectiveness of business education in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of any educational system is significantly influenced by the competence and continuous career development of its educators. In the context of business education, the need for highly motivated, well-trained, and professionally supported educators cannot be overemphasized. Business educators are instrumental in equipping students with practical business knowledge, entrepreneurial skills, and managerial competencies needed for national

development. However, despite their crucial role, business educators in public universities across Nigeria, including those in Edo and Delta States, seem to face substantial challenges related to professional growth and career advancement. One of the most persistent and under-addressed challenges may include the lack of structured mentoring systems within university environments. Mentoring is widely recognized as a crucial tool for supporting academic staff, particularly early-career lecturers, in navigating institutional experiences, building scholarly profiles, and achieving promotion. In developed academic environments, formal mentoring practices are integrated into faculty development policies, ensuring that younger lecturers receive consistent guidance and support. However, in many Nigerian universities, mentoring practices seems to be either informal, sporadic, or completely absent. This might have resulted in a vacuum in the professional development continuum of business educators, especially in public universities where systemic support structures are weak or inadequately enforced.

In Edo and Delta States, universities such as the University of Benin, Benin City, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Delta State University, Abraka, and University of Delta, Agbor, seem to operate within educational systems affected by budgetary constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, and administrative inefficiencies. These constraints may have further limited opportunities for structured mentorship, research collaboration, and professional networking, which are core components of effective career development. Moreover, it is possible that the lack of institutional mechanisms that help match mentors with mentees or monitor the effectiveness of existing mentoring relationships exacerbates the problem.

Furthermore, it seems that the absence of mentoring practices has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable academic groups, including female educators and newly recruited lecturers, who may find it difficult to integrate into the academic environment or access opportunities for

growth. This situation might possibly pose serious implications for job satisfaction, productivity, and retention rates of qualified academic staff. In the long-run, the absence of mentoring and career development systems might not only affect individual educators but also weakens the overall capacity of business education departments to deliver high quality education aligned with global standards.

Although there is growing scholarly interest in the importance of mentoring and professional development, empirical studies that specifically focus on business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States remain scarce to the best of the researcher's knowledge. The few available studies either lack a regional focus or fail to link mentoring practices directly with measurable career development outcomes. This gap in literature underscores the need for a context-specific investigation into how mentoring or the lack thereof affects the career trajectories of business educators in these two states. Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore the current mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. Specifically, the study determined:

1. The relationship between one-on-one formal mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
2. The relationship between group formal mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

3. The relationship between electronic formal mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
4. The relationship between peer informal mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
5. The relationship between situational informal mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
6. The relationship between spontaneous informal mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between one-on-one mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
2. What is the relationship between group mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
3. What is the relationship between electronic mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
4. What is the relationship between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
5. What is the relationship between situational mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
6. What is the relationship between spontaneous mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States?

Hypotheses

Research questions one to six were hypothesized and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
2. There is no significant relationship between group mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
3. There is no significant relationship between electronic mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
4. There is no significant relationship between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
5. There is no significant relationship between situational mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
6. There is no significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study, when published in reputable academic journals, presented at conference proceedings and research related reports, and uploaded online, would be of immense benefits to various stakeholders including business educators, students, educational policy makers, university administrators, curriculum developers, and future researchers.

Specifically, the findings of this study would provide useful insight into how mentorship relationships relate to professional competence, job satisfaction, research productivity, and leadership development among business educators in public universities. Also, the findings may help them understand how different mentorship relationships can contribute to their professional

advancement and academic growth. The study could also encourage business educators to engage more actively in mentoring relationships that promote research collaborations, leadership development, and self-improvement. It might further enhance their awareness of how mentorship opportunities can strengthen professional identity and job commitment within the university system.

For university administrators and faculty leaders, the results of this study may provide evidence that could guide the design and implementation of structured mentorship programmes. Such programmes might promote knowledge sharing between senior and junior staff, improve staff retention, and enhance institutional effectiveness. The study could also suggest ways that mentorship might contribute to better leadership succession planning and improved staff morale within public universities.

Prospective and current students in public universities might have indirect benefits from the findings of this study. If business educators receive adequate mentoring support, the quality of their teaching and supervision could improve, which may, in turn, enhance students' learning outcomes, skill acquisition, and employability. This might contribute to producing graduates who are more competent and better prepared for the changing demands of the modern business environment.

Educational policy makers and government agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Federal Ministry of Education could use the findings of this study to develop policy frameworks that encourage and sustain mentorship in public universities. Such evidence might support initiatives for staff training, academic promotion, and continuous professional development that align with global best practices.

For curriculum developers and teacher-education planners, the study might help highlight the potential value of embedding mentorship into career development programmes for business educators. This could promote sustainable teacher growth and ensure that academic programmes remain responsive to industrial and technological trends.

Future researchers may use the findings of this study to further make inquiry into mentorship and career development in higher education. The study could provide baseline data for comparative or longitudinal studies, particularly those examining how mentorship influences business educators' productivity, motivation, and institutional engagement across different contexts.

Sequel to these, the researcher aspires to make the outcomes of this study available upon completion of this programme to the specified beneficiaries through prospective publication of the research paper, either online or in a reputable journal. Ultimately, the findings are poised to serve as a basis for further research on the topic and as additional point of reference for other related studies.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on determining the relationship between mentoring practices and career development of business educators in selected public universities located in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. It specifically investigated both formal and informal mentorship relationships, comprising one-on-one, group, and electronic mentorship under formal mentorship, and peer, situational, and spontaneous mentorship under informal mentorship. The study explored how these forms of mentorship relate to key indices of career development such as professional competence, research productivity, leadership capacity, job satisfaction, career advancement, and professional networking among business educators.

Geographically, the study was confined to Edo and Delta States, two states in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, to ensure in-depth analysis within a manageable scope. Specifically, the research will involve public universities within these States, such as; University of Benin, Benin City (Edo State), Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (Edo State), Delta State University, Abraka (Delta State), and University of Delta, Agbor.

More so, the study targeted business educators, that is, academic staff who teach and conduct research in the field of Business Education or closely related disciplines such as Accounting Education, Marketing Education, Office Technology and Management, and Management Studies within education faculties or vocational and technical education departments.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is intended to review related literature on Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators, with reference to public universities in Edo and Delta States, and it is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Mentorship
- Concept of Career Development
- Concepts of Business Education and Business Educators
- Concept of Public Universities
- Formal Mentorship
 - *One-on-One Mentorship*
 - *Group Mentorship*
 - *Electronic Mentorship*
- Informal Mentorship
 - *Peer Mentorship*
 - *Situational Mentorship*
 - *Spontaneous Mentorship*

- Formal Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators
- Informal Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators.
- Review of Related Empirical Studies
- Summary of Reviewed Literature.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by Albert Bandura (1977) and the Career Development Theory developed by Donald Super (1957). The Social Learning Theory (SLT) focused on the predictor variable (mentorship), while the Career Development theory focused on the criterion variable (career development).

The Social Learning Theory (SLT)

This theory was propounded by Albert Bandura, a foremost Canadian-American psychologist, in 1977. According to Bandura (2018), Social Learning Theory is a model of learning that emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modeling in acquiring new skills, behaviours, and attitudes. SLT is built on the premise that learning is not solely a result of direct instruction or trial-and-error, but also occurs when individuals observe others, process the observed behaviours cognitively, and reproduce them in appropriate contexts. This makes it a relevant lens for examining how mentorship influences the career development of business educators in public universities.

Bandura argued that people are active information processors who can observe others, reflect on those observations, and decide whether to adopt certain behaviours. He proposed that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context, involving the following core principles:

- ❖ *Observation (Modeling)*: Individuals learn new behaviours by watching others perform them. Through this process, mentees not only acquire technical and pedagogical skills but also develop a sense of professional identity and self-efficacy, which are two essential components of career growth.
- ❖ *Attention*: For learning to occur, the mentee must pay attention to the mentor's demonstration or advice. For example, a junior business educator attentively observes a senior colleague's approach to engaging students in a large lecture.
- ❖ *Retention (remembering the behaviour)*: The learner must remember what was observed for future use. For example, a mentee recalls and applies a mentor's strategy for integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into business education lectures.
- ❖ *Reproduction (practicing the behaviour)*: The learner must have the ability to replicate the observed behaviour. After observing, the mentee applies similar techniques in his own teaching or research work.
- ❖ *Motivation (being encouraged to continue the behaviour)*: The Learner must have a reason or incentive to apply the learned behaviour. Motivation may come from positive reinforcement (praise, promotion) or intrinsic satisfaction.

Social Learning Theory (SLT) is sometimes called the Observational Learning Theory or Modeling Theory. It is relevant to mentorship and career development in the following ways:

- i. *Role Modeling*: Senior educators serve as professional models for mentees, who observe their work ethics, problem-solving style, and academic leadership.
- ii. *Skill Transfer*: Teaching strategies, research methods, and administrative competencies are learned through observation and imitation.
- iii. *Career Guidance*: Mentors demonstrate how to navigate university politics,

secure research grants, or publish in reputable journals, thereby guiding mentees to do the same in navigating through their career trajectories.

- iv. *Self-Efficacy Development*: Bandura also highlighted the concept of self-efficacy in 1986, which refers to individuals' belief in their capacity to execute task successfully. He emphasized that seeing a similar person succeed increases belief in one's own ability.
- v. *Professional Identity Formation*: Through observation, mentees develop a sense of what it means to be a competent, ethical business educator.

Furthermore, Akpan and Umoren (2021) highlight that SLT aligns with teacher professional growth, as it prioritizes role modeling, interactive learning, and constructive feedback, which are all core elements of effective mentorship. For business educators, this implies that mentorship relationships should be structured to allow mentees to observe mentors' pedagogical strategies, academic writing processes, and professional decision-making approaches. Iwuoha and Osuji (2022) further support the application of SLT to mentorship in higher education, noting that it promotes collaborative learning, adaptability, and reflective thinking. These attributes are essential for business educators who must continually adapt to changes in technology, curriculum reforms, and industry expectations. Similarly, Ogunleye and Adebayo (2023) found that SLT-driven mentorship improves research output, professional networking, and grant acquisition skill, which are critical components of academic career development. For business educators in Edo and Delta States, these outcomes are especially relevant given the competitive demands of academic promotion and tenure systems.

In a more recent study, Thomson and Adedokun (2024) argue that SLT-based mentorship programmes provide a platform for reciprocal learning, where both mentors and mentees benefit

from shared experiences. This dynamic exchange not only advances individual career goals but also strengthens institutional capacity in Nigerian universities. Finally, Chen and Lu (2025) emphasize that incorporating SLT into mentorship design ensures that learning is authentic, contextually relevant, and sustainable, as it allows mentees to apply observed strategies in their own teaching and research practices over time.

Social Learning Theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how mentorship can enhance the career development of business educators. By facilitating observations, guided practice, reflective learning, and reciprocal exchange, SLT explains the mechanisms through which mentorship relationships contributes to professional growth, institutional development, and long-term career success in academia. Therefore, by applying Social Learning Theory, this study conceptualizes mentorship as a dynamic process of skill acquisition, professional socialization, and career advancement. The theory underscores that effective mentorships practices in business education are not merely transactional but transformational, thus creating lasting impacts on both teaching performances and career trajectories. This makes Social Learning Theory not only relevant but foundational to understanding the mechanisms through which mentorship influences the career development of business educators in public universities. The theory supports the view that mentorship fosters knowledge transfer, innovation, and professional growth.

Career Development Theory

The Career Development Theory, originally proposed by Donald Super in 1957, and later updated by Mark Savickas in 2013, is one of the most influential frameworks explaining how individuals choose, grow, and advance in their careers throughout their lifespan. The theory suggests that career growth is a lifelong process shaped by self-concept, experiences, and

environmental factors. It emphasizes stages of career development such as exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. Thus, the theory views career not as a single decision but as a continuous progression involving multiple stages, transitions, and roles. Super's theory integrates psychological, sociological, and developmental perspectives, recognizing that individuals' interests, values, and competencies evolve over time, leading to changing career behaviours and aspirations. His work laid the foundation for modern perspectives like Career Construction Theory (CCT), which focuses on how individuals build meaningful careers in response to dynamic life contexts.

Super's model rests on several key assumptions, which include the following, among others:

- Career development is lifelong - It begins from childhood and continues through retirement, involving continuous learning and adaptation.
- Self-concept is central - People choose occupations consistent with how they perceive themselves, their values, interests, and skills.
- Career maturity - The ability to make appropriate career choices increases with age, experience, and exposure to opportunities.
- Roles and life stages - Individuals occupy multiple life roles (e.g., student, worker, citizen, parent), and their careers develop through various stages influenced by these roles.
- Dynamic interaction - Career development results from interactions between personal factors (ability, interests) and external factors (education, social class, economy, mentorship).

Super (1980) identified five major stages in career development, referred to as the Life-Span Model, which include the following:

- i. *Growth (Birth - 14 years)*: This stage involves the development of self-concept, attitudes, and basic understanding of work.

- ii. *Exploration (15 - 24 years)*: This stage involves trial and exploration of different occupational options through education and early work experience.
- iii. *Establishment (25 - 44 years)*: This involves entry and stabilization in a career, pursuit of advancement, and consolidation of skills.
- iv. *Maintenance (45 - 64 years)*: This involves sustaining performance, updating skills, and adjusting to organizational or personal changes.
- v. *Decline or Disengagement (65+ years)*: This involves gradual reduction in work activity and preparation for retirement.

These stages are not rigid but flexible, and individuals may revisit stages due to career changes, retraining, or new opportunities.

Also, Super (1990) introduced the Life-Space Model to illustrate how career development interacts with life roles. The “life-space” concept acknowledges that career choices are influenced by roles such as being a student, worker, spouse, or community member. A balance among these roles contributes to career satisfaction and well-being. This model recognizes that mentorship and institutional support play key roles in helping individuals navigate multiple life roles successfully, especially in academic settings where educators juggle teaching, research, and family responsibilities.

Savickas (2013) extended Super’s ideas through the Career Construction Theory (CCT), emphasizing the narrative and adaptive nature of career development. According to this view, individuals actively construct meaning in their careers based on personal stories, social contexts, and adaptability. CCT introduces four dimensions of career adaptability, which include the following:

- ❖ **Concern** - This involves planning and preparing for future career tasks.

- ❖ Control - This is the act of taking responsibility for shaping one's career path.
- ❖ Curiosity - This refers to exploring new opportunities and environments.
- ❖ Confidence - This has to do with believing in one's ability to succeed and overcome challenges.

These adaptability dimensions are essential for modern educators navigating technological, institutional, and pedagogical changes in higher education.

Moreover, Career Development Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how mentorship influences the career development of business educators in the following ways:

- Mentorship helps mentees progress through Super's stages, offering guidance during exploration, feedback during establishment, and support during maintenance.
- Mentors help mentees recognize their strengths, refine professional identities, and align goals with institutional expectations.
- Mentorship fosters the career adaptability traits proposed by Savickas, enabling educators to respond effectively to career challenges.
- Through social learning and psychosocial support, mentors help mentees balance multiple life roles - teaching, research, service, and family - which aligns with Super's Life-Space model.
- Mentorship promotes continuous career development and adaptability, essential for sustainable career progression in academic environments.

Umukoro and Okurame (2018) found that mentorship significantly improved career adaptability and tolerance for ambiguity among Nigerian professional, aligning with Savickas's adaptability dimensions. Also, Okoro (2024) reported that mentorship leadership practices positively influenced academic productivity and career progression among educators in Edo and

Delta States. In the same vein, Kuijpers (2025) emphasized career competencies (learning, reflection, and networking) as key outcomes of mentorship and training in modern universities. Wang and Li (2024) reaffirmed that career construction is facilitated through structured interventions such as mentorship, coaching, and reflective dialogue. These studies confirm that mentorship serves as a vital mechanism for facilitating career development, particularly in higher education settings where professional growth is continuous and multifaceted.

In essence, the Career Development Theory underscores that career growth is not a single event but a lifelong, adaptive, and socially influenced process. Within the context of business educators, mentorship acts as a practical and psychological support system that helps educators construct meaningful careers, adapt to institutional demands, and attain long-term professional fulfillment. Thus, the theory provides the conceptual basis for understanding how mentorship influences the career development of business educators in Nigerian public universities.

Concept of Mentorship

Mentorship is a developmental relationship where a more experienced or knowledgeable person (the mentor) provides guidance, support, and advice to a less experienced individual (the mentee). This relationship can help the mentee grow personally and professionally, develop skills, gain knowledge, and navigate challenges. Mentorship can take place in various contexts, such as in academic settings, workplaces, or personal development, and can involve discussions, feedback, and sharing of experiences to foster the mentee's growth. In this study, mentorship is conceptualized as a structured developmental relationship where a more experienced academic (mentor) supports a less experienced academic (mentee) in their professional growth, skill acquisition, and career progression within the higher education environment. This understanding

aligns with recent scholarly definitions which emphasize both career support and psychosocial support as critical to the mentorship process.

In the opinion of Johnson and Thomas (2021), mentorship is a relational process where an experienced individual (mentor) provides guidance, emotional support, and access to resources to assist the mentee's career and personal development. The International Mentoring Centre (2023) further expands the scope of mentorship by describing it as a collaborative, dialogic, and reflective learning relationship with mutual learning agreements and shared responsibilities to facilitate the personal and professional development of the individual. This positions mentorship as a reciprocal learning process, which is critical in academic environments where knowledge transfer and collaboration are essential for career development. Similarly, Elon University (2023) frames mentorship as developmental, learner-centred relationship that promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways. This integrative approach is particularly relevant for business educators who must balance teaching, research, administrative responsibilities, and professional networking. From a structural and process-oriented perspective, Nuis, Segers, and Beusaert (2023) define mentorship in higher education as a formalized process based on a developmental relationship between two persons in which one person is more experienced (mentor) and supports the other (mentee) in competence development and career development. This formalized view supports the notion that effective mentorship programmes in Nigerian universities require institutional frameworks, policies, and training. Mentorship encompasses a developmental alliance where both mentor and mentee engage mutual learning, with the goal of fostering innovation, confidence, and professional identity.

Moreover, according to Ekanem and Asuquo (2019), in many Nigerian universities, mentorship practices tend to be predominantly informal, relying on personal relationships, departmental networks, and shared academic interests. In the opinion of Afolabi and Laseinde (2021), this informality often allows for flexibility and mutual trust but can result in uneven access to mentoring opportunities, particularly for early-career academics who lack strong professional networks. However, Oduwaiye and Oyesoji (2022) explain that there has been a growing shift toward structured and policy-driven mentorship programmes, especially in universities with strong research mandates. For example, some institutions have introduced formal mentorship guidelines linking newly recruited lecturers with senior faculty to accelerate skill transfer and professional integration.

In addition, Onyema and Ogu (2023) emphasize that the methods and focus areas of mentorship in Nigerian universities typically include guidance on publishing in reputable journals, supervising postgraduate students, securing research grants, integrating technology into teaching, and developing leadership skills for administrative roles. Moreover, mentorship is increasingly being recognized as a strategy for addressing gender disparities in academia. As stated by Obiageli and Nwosu (2021), initiatives targeted at female academics, for instance, provide mentorship on balancing work-life commitments, navigating academic politics, and overcoming systemic barriers to promotion. However, Okeke and Ogbogu (2019) explain that despite these positive developments, challenges such as limited institutional funding, high teaching workloads, and inadequate training for mentors persistently hinder the effectiveness of mentorship programmes. Additionally, Nwosu and Ekueme (2024) posit that cultural factors such as hierarchical academic structures and the perception of mentorship as a favour rather than a professional responsibility often reduce the sustainability of mentoring relationships.

Therefore, mentorship in higher education may be essential for fostering professional growth, enhancing skills, and promoting career advancement. When well-structured and supported, it may help strengthen academic excellence, nurture future leaders, and sustain institutional developments. Moreover, mentorship in higher education can play a critical role in fostering the professional and personal development of faculty members, particularly in relation to teaching effectiveness, research capacity, career progression, and academic leadership.

Objectives of Mentorship Practices

The objectives of mentoring practices are multifaceted and aimed at achieving both individual and institutional goals. They include the following among others:

- ❖ *Enhancing Research Productivity and Scholarly Output:* According to Eby, Allen, Evans, Nig, and DuBois (2019), effective mentorship helps mentee develop the skills necessary to conduct and publish high-quality research, apply for research grants, and build academic reputations.
- ❖ *Supporting Career Development and Advancement:* Mentorship also aims to facilitate career advancement by guiding mentees through the complexities of academic promotions, tenure decisions, and leadership roles (Obiageli & Nwosu, 2021).
- ❖ *Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness and Pedagogical Skills:* Onyema and Ogu (2023) basically suggest that mentors often help new lecturers navigate the challenges of managing classroom dynamics, implementing technology, and integrating research into teaching.
- ❖ *Building Academic and Professional Networks:* By connecting mentees with other academics, researchers, and leaders within and outside their institutions,

mentors help them build valuable relationships that can open doors for collaborative research, conferences, and other professional opportunities (Roberts & Smith, 2020).

- ❖ *Ensuring Institutional Sustainability and Knowledge Transfer:* At the institutional level, mentorship also plays a crucial role in ensuring sustainability. Through mentorship, experienced faculty members pass on institutional knowledge, including departmental policies, teaching methods, and research practices to less experienced faculty members. This knowledge transfer helps create a more sustainable academic environment by ensuring that future generations of faculty members are well-equipped to continue the institution's mission of excellence.
- ❖ *Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:* Mentorship programmes also aim to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in academia. As suggested by Obiageli and Nwosu (2021), gender-sensitive mentorship, for example, can address the specific challenges faced by female academics, such as balancing family and career, and help break down barriers to leadership roles.
- ❖ *Promoting Work-Life Balance and Personal Growth:* Beyond professional development, mentorship in higher education also focuses on supporting personal growth and work-life balance. Ekanem and Asuquo (2019) state that in a demanding academic environment, especially in Nigeria, mentorship programmes that consider the mental health and well-being of mentees can enhance faculty retention and job satisfaction. These objectives align mentorship with the broader mission of higher education, which is to produce competent educators, advance

knowledge, and maintain quality standards in teaching and research.

Concept of Career Development

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional trajectories of business educators, especially in Nigerian public universities. Beyond immediate guidance, mentorship fosters a sustained environment of learning, collaboration, and career planning. This naturally leads into the broader concept of career development, which is both a goal and an outcome of effective mentoring relationships.

Career development, therefore, is a multifaceted process that involves the lifelong progression of a person's work-related experiences, learning and growth, which culminates in the achievement of his or her career goals. According to Brown and Lent (2020), it encompasses the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experiences that enable individuals to make informed career choices and adapt to changes in the labour market. Other scholars have conceptualized career development from different perspectives, emphasizing its role in fostering both personal fulfillment and organizational productivity.

For instance, Crump and Dykeman (2023) view career development as a continuous process of skill enhancement and educational growth throughout an individual's lifetime. This perspective emphasizes that career development is not limited to formal education or initial job training. Instead, it recognizes the importance of ongoing learning and adaptation to changing job markets and technologies. Thus, employees are encouraged to pursue additional certifications, training, and experiences that align with their career aspirations.

According to Obidike and Eze (2023), it is the deliberate preparation for career success through targeted capacity building in academia. In addition, Ezeani and Okoro (2024) see career development as a continuous process of growth, mentorship, and skill refinement in the academic profession. While, Okojie and Uche (2025) view it as the lifelong journey of building expertise, credibility, and influence in one's chosen field. From these scholarly perspectives, career development emerges as a dynamic, lifelong, and context-dependent process. In the context of Nigerian universities, particularly for business educators, career development is inextricably linked to institutional policies, mentorship availability, funding, opportunities, and the capacity to adapt to the demands of rapidly evolving academic and business environment. This makes mentorship a critical catalyst for equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to achieve sustained career growth and make significant contributions to their discipline.

Mentorship and career development are intrinsically connected processes that together shape the professional trajectory, job satisfaction, and long-term productivity of academics, particularly business educators. As stated by Allen and Eby (2020) and Hall (2021), mentorship provides the guidance, resources, and psychosocial support necessary for individuals to navigate career pathways; while career development represents the structured progression of professional growth across different stages of one's working life. Also, Bello, Adebayo, and Nwosu (2021) explain that mentorship is a key driver of career development for business educators because the discipline demands continuous professional updating, integration of new technologies, and alignment with industry standards. In Nigerian universities, where infrastructural and funding limitations can hinder academic growth, mentorship serves as a coping mechanism and a source of encouragement for business educators striving to achieve set career milestones (Ogunyemi,

2022). Furthermore, Musa (2023) opine that in higher education, effective mentorship acts as a catalyst for career advancement by facilitating skill acquisition, providing networking opportunities, and increasing access to research and funding resources.

Thus, the link between mentorship and career development can be conceptualized through three interrelated dimensions:

- ❖ *Skill and Knowledge Transfer*: As stated by Nwangwu and Agboeze (2022), mentors provide practical teaching tips, research methodologies, and administrative skills that prepare mentees for leadership positions and professional recognition.
- ❖ *Career Navigation and Advancement*: Uche and Akinyemi (2022) posit that mentors guide mentees through promotion processes, encourage participation in conferences and workshops, and advise on specialization areas aligned with market and institutional needs.
- ❖ *Professional Networking and Visibility*: According to Bello and Musa (2023), through mentorship, business educators gain access to local and international networks that can open doors to collaborative research, joint publications, and consultancy opportunities.

Overall, mentorship and career development are mutually reinforcing processes. While career development provides the structural framework for professional progression, mentorship supplies the relational and experiential support necessary to achieve those career goals. For business educators, this synergy is not optional, but essential for sustained academic excellence, institutional competitiveness, and personal fulfillment.

Indices of Career Development as It Relates to Business Educators

Indices of career development refer to the specific dimensions, indicators, or measurable components used to assess the level, quality, and progress of an individual's growth over time. Greenhaus, Callaman, and Godshalk (2019) describe career development as a multidimensional

process, meaning it cannot be measured through a single factor. Therefore, they describe indices of career development as the various elements that collectively show whether an individual is improving, stagnant, or declining in their career trajectory. According to Ololube (2019), the indices of career development for business educators can be grouped into the following major areas:

Professional Competence

Professional competence refers to the comprehensive combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and abilities that enable educators to perform their professional duties effectively and adapt to changing educational contexts. In the university system, professional competence is regarded as a core determinant of academic quality, as it shapes teaching performance, research productivity, and institutional engagement (Uzorka, Namara, & Olaniyan, 2023). According to Negrin-Medina, Rodriguez-Garcia, and Martinez-Sierra (2022), professional competence is a dynamic construct that evolves with continuous learning, technological advancement, and changing professional demands. It is not static but develops progressively through formal education, mentoring, professional development, and reflective practice. Business educators, therefore, must continuously improve their competence through research, mentorship relationships, and participation in academic and professional development programmes.

Within the Nigerian university system, professional competence has become increasingly important due to reforms emphasizing quality assurance, digital pedagogy, and employability of graduates. Izekor and Ojeaga (2021) observed that many vocational and business educators require sustained professional development to meet modern demands for entrepreneurship and

digital literacy. Hence, competence is both a measure and an outcome of career development for educators.

Scholars view professional competence as multidimensional, incorporating cognitive, technical, interpersonal, and ethical components. For business educators, the following dimensions are particularly relevant:

- *Subject-Matter and Business Domain Expertise:* This dimension entails mastery of the core content areas of business education such as accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship, management, and office technology. Adequate domain expertise enhances instructional quality and strengthens educators' credibility (Frontiers in Education, 2024).
- *Pedagogical and Instructional Competence:* This reflects the ability to plan, deliver, and assess instructions effectively. It includes curriculum design, use of student-centred methodologies, assessment literacy, and classroom management. Eze and Okolie (2019) emphasized that effective pedagogy is a hallmark of a competent educator and directly correlates with improved student outcomes.
- *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Digital Competence:* Uzorka et al. (2023) reported that lecturers' ability to adapt to a technology-mediated teaching environment significantly determines their professional competence.
- *Research and Scholarly Competence:* This involves the ability to conduct research, publish scholarly work, and apply research findings to improve teaching and community engagement. Competence in research enhances career development through academic promotion and institutional recognition. Izekor and Ojeaga (2021) observed that educators who engage in active research not only improve their professional standing but also influence curriculum innovation and policy reforms within the discipline.

- *Ethical and Professional Responsibility:* Ethical competence entails adherence to academic integrity, fairness, punctuality, discipline, and professional values. It underscores the educator's responsibility as a role model for students. Olatunji and Ojo (2020) highlighted that ethical professionalism reinforces institutional trust and shapes the moral climate of academic departments.
- *Reflective and Adaptive Competence:* Negrin-Medina et al. (2022) found that teachers who reflect critically on their practices and adapt to emerging pedagogical and technological changes show higher levels of professional growth. Thus, professional competence is both an indicator and facilitator of career development among business educators. (Okolie & Ehioghae, 2022).

Research Productivity

Research productivity refers to the measurable outcomes of an academic's research activities, often assessed through the quantity and quality of publications, research grants, conference presentations, and other scholarly contributions. According to Bland, Center, and Finstad (2019), research productivity encompasses both tangible and intangible products of scholarly engagement, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, and creative works that advance knowledge in a given discipline.

As stated by Warraich and Tahira (2021), research productivity is widely recognized as an essential determinant of career development. It represents not only the intellectual contributions of faculty but also a key metric for promotion, recognition, and professional growth. For business educators whose roles encompass teaching, curriculum design, consultancy, and applied research, research productivity serves as a critical index of career development because it validates their expertise, enhances professional visibility, and reflects their engagement with

emerging trends in business and education (Egboka & Okeke, 2019; Ryazanova, 2022). Consequently, understanding the dynamics of research productivity is central to evaluating the professional trajectories of business educators in Nigerian public universities.

Moreover, scholars employ multiple metrics to assess research productivity and scholarly output.

These include:

- *Quantitative Indicators*: Warraich and Tahira (2021) see these as the number of publications, books, conferences papers, and technical reports produced by an academic.
- *Quality and Impact*: This refers to citation counts, journal impact factors, and the Hirsch index (h-index), as stated by Carpenter, Cone, and Sarli (2018).
- *Funding and Grants*: According to Egboka and Okeke (2019), this has to do with the number and value of research grants, fellowships, and consultancies.
- *Scholarly Recognition*: Mlambo and Adebayo (2020) view this as awards, keynote invitations, and editorial board memberships.
- *Non-Traditional Outputs*: These include patents, policy briefs, and community-based projects, particularly important in applied disciplines such as business education (Okiki, 2017).

Research productivity is determined by the following factors:

- ❖ Individual Factors; such as self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.
- ❖ Mentorship and Collaboration.
- ❖ Institutional Factors like funding, research infrastructure, and workload policies.
- ❖ National and Policy Factors which include the national research environment, availability of grants, and language of publication.

In addition, Adewale and Osabuohien (2023) opine that research productivity serves as a direct and measurable indicator of career development because it correlates with professional recognition, promotion, and enhanced self-efficacy. For business educators, scholarly publications and research engagement demonstrate academic competence and leadership potential, both of which are prerequisites for advancement in higher education (Ezeani & Igwe, 2016). Moreover, Okiki (2017) shows that active research participation enhances teaching effectiveness, as educators integrate current knowledge and practices into their instruction. It also positions them as credible mentors for emerging scholars, thereby sustaining a culture of continuous learning and professional growth within departments.

However, despite the importance of research productivity among business educators in Nigeria, it is constrained by several factors which include the following:

- ❖ Inadequate research funding and infrastructural deficits.
- ❖ Heavy teaching workloads that leave little time for research.
- ❖ Weak mentorship and limited collaboration networks.
- ❖ Limited access to international journals and databases.

Addressing these challenges requires institutional reforms that promote mentorship, provide research incentives, and ensure equitable access to funding opportunities.

Leadership Capacity

Leadership capacity is a vital index of career development, particularly in academic contexts where educators are expected not only to teach and conduct research but also to guide, inspire, and influence others within and beyond their institutions. In higher education, leadership capacity refers to the ability of academic staff to mobilize people, resources, and ideas toward achieving institutional and professional goals. For business educators, leadership capacity

encompasses the competence to lead departments, mentor colleagues and students, initiate academic programmes, and contribute meaningfully to institutional governance.

Harris and Jones (2018) define leadership capacity as the extent to which individuals possess and apply leadership knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions in their professional practice. In the words of Northouse (2022), it embodies an educator's ability to inspire collaboration, drive innovation, make informed decisions, and nurture others toward achieving organizational objectives. Also, Eze (2020) and Abiodun (2022) opine that business educators with strong leadership skills often demonstrate greater adaptability, professional visibility, and academic influence. In academic settings, leadership capacity is demonstrated through scholarly initiative, mentorship, committee participation, curriculum development, and institutional representation. Business educators who display strong leadership capacity not only advance their own career but also enhance the effectiveness of their departments and faculties (Okorie & Alabi, 2021).

Several scholars have identified key dimensions of leadership capacity relevant to educators and they include the following

1. *Strategic Visioning*: This is the ability to articulate and pursue clear academic and organizational goals (Day, Cu, & Sammons, 2017).
2. *Interpersonal Competence*: This refers to skills in communication, collaboration, empathy, and conflict resolution that foster healthy relationships in academic settings (Harris & Jones, 2018).
3. *Decision-Making and Problem-Solving*: According to Northouse (2022), this refers to the capacity to make informed, ethical, and effective decisions that impact teachings, research, and administration.

4. *Mentorship and Talent Development*: This is viewed as the ability to nurture and guide others, particularly younger colleagues and students, toward achieving professional excellence (Ragins & Kram, 2019).
5. *Innovative Thinking*: Okorie and Alabi (2021) describe this as the capacity to drive educational reforms, integrate technology, and promote research-driven practices.
6. *Ethical and Transformational Leadership*: This is commitment to integrity, accountability, and transformational change within the academic community.

These dimensions collectively determine an educator's readiness for leadership roles and their contributions to institutional growth and career progression.

Furthermore, Okorie and Alabi (2021), state that career development among business educators is strongly tied to leadership capacity because universities increasingly rely on capable academic leaders to drive teaching, research, and community service initiatives. Educators with strong leadership capacity exhibit initiatives, confidence, and the ability to collaborate effectively; and according to Eze (2020), these are traits that contribute to promotion, recognition, and academic influence. Leadership capacity also enhances self-directed learning and adaptability, enabling educators to thrive amid institutional reforms and changing educational landscapes (Harris & Jones, 2018). Consequently, leadership capacity can be viewed both as a competence developed through career progression and as a precursor to further career advancement.

Additionally, several factors influence the development of leadership capacity in academics, particularly among business educators. They include the following among others:

- Mentorship and Role Modeling.
- Institutional Support and Leadership Opportunities.
- Professional Development Programmes such as workshops, conferences, and management

training programmes.

- Research Productivity and Scholarly Engagement.
- Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Skills.

Leadership capacity is both an outcome and a determinant of career development among business educators. It encompasses vision, decision-making ability, emotional intelligence, and the capacity to mentor and inspire others. Business educators with strong leadership skills exhibit higher self-efficacy, greater job satisfaction, and readiness for administrative and academic advancement. Therefore, building leadership capacity should be central to policies on career development in Nigerian public universities.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has long been recognized as a key determinant of employees' motivation, performance, and overall career trajectory. In academic contexts, job satisfaction refers to the degree to which educators find fulfillment, purpose, and contentment in their professional roles (Oshagbemi, 2016). It embodies the affective orientation of an academic towards teaching, research, service, and other institutional responsibilities. For business educators in Nigerian public universities, job satisfaction represents a critical index of career development because it influences commitment, productivity, retention, and the willingness to engage in mentorship relationships and professional learning (Akinyemi & Bolarinwa, 2021; Abiodun, 2022).

According to Darma and Ali (2019), job satisfaction is both a psychological and organizational construct, since it reflects how institutional factors (such as compensation, recognition, and working conditions) and personal factors (such as motivation and achievement) interact to determine an individual's career growth and development. Hence, understanding job satisfaction among business educators provides insights into their level of engagement,

enthusiasm for self-development, and readiness to contribute to institutional and personal advancement.

Job satisfaction has been conceptualized in diverse ways across disciplines. It is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences. In this sense, it reflects the balance between what employees expect from their job and what they actually receive. Similarly, Spector (2018) viewed job satisfaction as the extent to which employees like or dislike their work, emphasizing that it is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For educators, job satisfaction encompasses satisfaction with teaching load, student interaction, administrative support, promotion prospect, remuneration, and opportunities for scholarly engagement (Oshagbemi, 2016; Nwagwu, 2020). Akinyemi and Bolarinwa opine that when these conditions are favourable, educators are more likely to remain committed and to pursue activities that foster career development such as mentorship, research, and leadership participation.

Moreover, job satisfaction is multi-dimensional, encompassing various facets that contribute to an individual's overall sense of professional fulfillment. Key dimensions include:

- *Intrinsic Satisfaction:* This refers to satisfaction derived from the nature of the work itself, such as autonomy, creativity, achievement, and the sense of contributing to knowledge (Spector, 2018). For business educators, intrinsic satisfaction is associated with teaching impact, mentoring students, and producing scholarly outputs.
- *Extrinsic Satisfaction:* This relates to external conditions of employment, including salary, job security, promotion opportunities, supervision quality, and institutional climate (Darma & Ali, 2019).
- *Social Satisfaction:* This involves interpersonal relationships with colleagues,

superiors, and students. According to Akinyemi and Bolarinwa (2021), positive relationships enhance collaboration, reduce stress, and increase overall satisfaction.

- *Career Advancement Satisfaction*: According to Abiodun (2022), this refers to satisfaction with professional development opportunities, mentorship experiences, and access to training or workshops. It is directly linked to career development in academic institutions.

These dimensions collectively influence an educator's attitude towards work, performance levels, and long-term career aspirations (Miah & Bird, 2020). Furthermore, Eze and Chidi (2020) posit that business educators who experience recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for advancement are thus more likely to experience job satisfaction and pursue continuous career development.

Job satisfaction serves as an essential index of career development because it reflects how well an employee's professional aspirations align with organizational opportunities and personal growth (Darma & Ali, 2019). According to Miah and Bird (2020), in academia, satisfied lecturers are more likely to invest in research, pursue higher qualifications, engage in mentorship, and assume leadership roles. Conversely, dissatisfaction may lead to burnout, low productivity, and attrition (Ogunleye, 2019). As satisfaction improves, educators become more innovative and are motivated to achieve excellence in scholarly output.

There are several determinants of job satisfaction among business educators, which include the following among others:

- ❖ Institutional Factors such as institutional policies, promotion criteria, leadership style, and availability of resources.
- ❖ Economic Factors, including remuneration and welfare packages.

- ❖ Workload and Work-life Balance.
- ❖ Mentorship and Career Support.
- ❖ Recognition and Promotion.

Globally, research has established a positive link between job satisfaction and career development. Miah and Bird (2020) found that academic staff satisfaction significantly predicted engagement in professional development activities and publication output. Similarly, Warraich and Tahira (2021) observed that job satisfaction fosters intrinsic motivation, leading to sustained career growth among university lecturers. In Nigeria, Akinyemi and Bolarinwa (2021) discovered that satisfaction with supervision, recognition, and promotion opportunities predicted business educators' commitment to their career goals.

Based on these premise, empirical and theoretical evidence suggests several strategies to enhance job satisfaction and, consequently, career development among business educators:

- ❖ *Improving Working Conditions:* Provision of modern teaching and research facilities improves morale and productivity (Ogujiuba et al., 2021).
- ❖ *Mentorship and Professional Development:* Ragins and Krams (2019) state that structured mentorship and regular workshops improve skills, confidence, and satisfaction.
- ❖ *Transparent Promotion and Recognition:* Clear criteria for promotion and recognition of merit encourage continuous development (Eze & Chidi, 2020).
- ❖ *Adequate Remuneration:* Darma and Ali (2019) argue that competitive salaries and welfare support reduce stress and promote loyalty.
- ❖ *Participatory Leadership:* Inclusion in decision-making enhances a sense of belonging and trust (Akinyemi & Bolarinwa, 2021).

Career Advancement and Promotion

Career advancement and promotion are fundamental indicators of career development in any profession, especially in academia. They reflect not only individual growth and performance but also institutional recognition of competence, productivity, and leadership (Ofoegbu & Anyaogu, 2018). According to Eze (2020), in universities, career advancement refers to the upward mobility of academic staff through hierarchical positions such as Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor. Promotion, on the other hand, represents the formal acknowledgment by an institution of an educator's achievements in teaching, research, mentorship, and community service.

As stated by Akinyemi and Bolarinwa (2021), for business educators, career advancement and promotion are particularly crucial because they determine access to leadership roles, research funding, academic influence, and professional satisfaction. In Nigerian public universities, promotion criteria often emphasize research productivity, teaching effectiveness, and service contributions, all of which align with the broader concept of career development (Abiodun, 2022). Thus, career advancement and promotion serve both as outcome and motivators of professional growth in higher education. Furthermore, Eze (2020) emphasizes that in university system, promotion is merit-based and depends on measurable achievements in teaching, research, publications, professional activities, and community service. The process serves as a performance appraisal mechanism, rewarding merit and motivating continuous professional development. However, studies indicate that institutional factors such as leadership style, mentorship, and organizational climate influence how educators perceive and achieve advancement (Okorie & Alabi, 2021). Therefore, transparent and supportive promotion systems foster motivation, while politicized or bureaucratic ones hinder morale and career progression (Ogujiuba, Olayiwola, & Atuma, 2021). As stated by Abiodun (2022) for business educators,

promotion is also tied to technological proficiency, entrepreneurship education expertise, and ability to adapt to contemporary business trends. Hence, continuous professional development, mentorship, and scholarly productivity are integral to career advancement.

Career advancement and promotion among business educators are determined by the following factors:

- ❖ Mentorship.
- ❖ Research and Scholarly Output.
- ❖ Institutional Climate characterized by transparent policies, supportive leadership, and fair appraisal systems.
- ❖ Professional Development and Training.
- ❖ Performance Evaluation Systems.

However, despite its importance, career advancement in Nigerian universities faces several challenges, which include the following among others:

- Limited Research Funding.
- Bureaucratic Delays.
- Mentorship Gaps.
- Favouritism and Politics.
- Workload Pressure.

Addressing these challenges require systemic reforms that align promotion processes with global best practices. Therefore, to foster effective career advancement, the following strategies were recommended by scholars:

- i. *Structured Mentorship Programmes*: This involves pairing younger educators with experienced mentors to guide publication, grant writing, and teaching (Ragins &

Kram, 2019).

- ii. *Transparent Promotion Policies*: Institutions should establish clear, measurable and merit-based criteria for promotion (Ofoegbu & Anyaogu, 2018).
- iii. *Professional Development Opportunities*: This includes encouraging attendance at conferences, workshops, and research collaborations (Day et al., 2017).
- iv. *Institutional Support and Funding*: This involves providing research grants, library resources, and administrative support to enhance productivity (Ogujiuba et. al., 2021).
- v. *Recognition and Incentives*: According to Abiodun (2022), rewarding outstanding performance motivates continued engagement and excellence.

Professional Networking and Collaboration

In the 21st-century academic environment, professional networking and collaboration have emerged as indispensable components of career development, especially among educators in higher institutions. Networking connects individuals to professional communities, while collaboration enables the sharing of ideas, research resources, and expertise that promote innovation and growth (Okebukola, 2020). Ibrahim and Musa (2021) state that in academia, these activities are not only essential for knowledge exchange but also for enhancing research productivity, visibility, and professional advancement. For business educators, professional networking and collaboration facilitate engagement with industry, government agencies, and educational institutions, enabling them to stay current with market trends and pedagogical innovations (Ogunyemi, 2019). According to Ajayi and Okwu (2022), such interactions enrich curriculum design, improve employability-focused education, and support career mobility through partnerships, co-publications, and academic exchanges. Hence, professional networking

and collaboration are critical indicators of career development among business educators in Nigerian universities.

Kram and Ragins (2019) define professional networking as the deliberate process of establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with individuals and organizations in one's field for career and knowledge advancement. It involves interaction through professional associations, conferences, workshops, research groups, and digital platform (Aina & Akintunde, 2021). Collaboration, on the other hand, is the process through which individuals or groups work jointly on academic or professional activities such as teaching, research, or project development, to achieve common goals (Amadi & Odo, 2020). Ibrahim and Musa (2021) emphasize that in higher education, collaboration often manifests through co-authored publications, interdisciplinary research, mentorship partnerships, and institutional linkages. Together, professional networking and collaboration contribute to career development by promoting exposure, mutual learning, innovation, and shared professional growth. They serve as platforms for capacity building, especially in research and mentorship, which are key determinants of career progression among educators. Also, Ajayi and Okwu (2022), state that business educators who cultivate strong professional ties often gain better access to mentorship, research funding, and collaborative projects, all of which promote career development. More so, networking and collaboration enable business educators to engage in collective learning, share pedagogical innovations, and develop expertise relevant to their field (Amadi & Odo, 2020). As stated by Aina and Akintunde (2021), networking and collaboration contribute to the accumulation of human capital by providing exposure to new knowledge, skills, and research methodologies that advance career growth.

Professional networking and collaboration play several critical roles in academic career development, which include the following among others:

- Networking and collaboration foster research productivity among business educators.
- They provide platforms for mentoring relationships that nurture emerging scholars.
- They expose educators to grants, conferences, and collaborative research opportunities.
- Collaboration enables the sharing of innovative teaching methods and materials.
- Networking and collaboration promote career mobility and recognition.

According to Ogunyemi (2019), in the field of business education, professional networking and collaboration are particularly important due to the dynamic nature of global business practices and technological advancement. Business educators often collaborate with industry professionals, entrepreneurs, and international partners to align educational content with market realities (Abubakar & Sule, 2022). Such collaboration enhance teaching relevance, research applicability, and students' employability. Participation in professional bodies like Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) and the Nigerian Vocational Association fosters relationships that provide access to workshops, seminars, and conferences, which are key platforms for career development (Okebukola, 2020). Furthermore, Ibrahim and Musa state that digital networking such as ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and Google Scholar have revolutionized academic collaboration by enabling global visibility, citation tracking, and international partnerships.

Moreover, Aina and Akintunde suggest that networking and collaboration are integral components of career development because they provide access to knowledge exchange,

mentorship, and collaborative research opportunities. Through networks, business educators acquire career-related information, develop interpersonal competence, and enhance their scholarly profile, which in turn influence career development (Ajayi & Okwu, 2022). Also, Amadi and Odo (2020) opine that collaborative relationships contribute to career satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging and professional identity. When educators participate in collaborative projects, they gain confidence, recognition, and improved visibility within their professional communities.

Despite its importance, several obstacles hinder effective networking and collaboration among business educators in Nigerian universities, some of which include the following:

- Lack of financial support which restricts participation in conferences and collaboration research.
- Bureaucratic procedures and inadequate administrative support.
- Competition and Individualism.
- Limited internet access and inadequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure
- Lack of Mentorship.

Therefore, to strengthen professional networking and collaboration among business educators, the following strategies are essential:

- ❖ Universities should reward joint publications and partnerships through promotion points or recognition.
- ❖ Formal mentorship initiatives should link junior lecturers with senior academics to foster professional networking.

- ❖ By providing access to online collaboration tools, such as Zoom, Research Gate, and Google Meet.
- ❖ Collaborations with foreign universities.
- ❖ Active participation in associations like ABEN and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

Innovation and Creativity

Innovation and creativity are central to professional growth and sustainable career development in contemporary higher education. They enable educators to adapt to emerging educational technologies, develop new pedagogical strategies, and enhance students' learning outcomes (Okebukola, 2021). According to Akinola and Iroegbu (2020), in today's dynamic academic environment, where knowledge and technology evolve rapidly, the ability to think creatively and apply innovative solutions distinguishes successful educators. For business educators, innovation and creativity are particularly critical, as their discipline is closely tied to entrepreneurship, management, and technological applications. Innovative educators contribute to curriculum reform, pedagogical advancements, and institutional competitiveness (Abiodun, 2022). Thus, innovation and creativity are vital indices of career development, reflecting an educator's capacity to generate ideas, solve problems, and lead transformation within the university system.

Creativity refers to the generation of original, valuable, and practical ideas, while innovation is the process of applying these creative ideas to produce tangible improvements in products, services, or processes (Amabile, 2018). Eze (2020) emphasizes that in academia, creativity manifests in new research ideas, instructional methods, or curriculum designs, whereas innovation involves implementing those ideas to enhance learning and institutional outcomes.

According to Dyer, Gregersen, and Christensen (2019), innovation is a deliberate process that transforms imaginative concepts into reality through experimentation and collaboration. In educational context, this means introducing new teaching models, leveraging digital tools, or developing entrepreneurial curricula that respond to societal needs (Akinola & Iroegbu, 2020). As stated by Okebukola (2021), creativity precedes innovation, therefore, educators must cultivate creative thinking to innovate effectively in their teaching, research, and administrative roles.

Amabile (2018) proposed three key components of creativity, which include: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and task motivation. For business educators, these components translate into subject expertise, creative teaching techniques, and intrinsic motivation to innovate. He emphasizes that creative outcomes are most likely to occur when educators possess the freedom and institutional support to explore new ideas. Okoye (2022) suggests that in universities, innovation adoption depends communication channels, leadership encouragement, and peer influence. Business educators who are early adopters of innovative practices tend to achieve greater recognition and career advancement.

Innovation and creativity contribute significantly to career progression and institutional effectiveness in the following ways:

- ❖ Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.
- ❖ Creative thinking fosters new research perspectives, leading to groundbreaking discoveries and publications.
- ❖ Promotion of Professional Growth among educators.
- ❖ Ensures Institutional competitiveness.
- ❖ Promotes Mentorship Development.

Furthermore, business education inherently requires innovation because it bridges academic learning with real-world business practices. According to Abiodun (2022), innovative business educators integrate entrepreneurship, ICT applications, and experiential learning to prepare students for the changing economic landscape. The Nigerian business education system is evolving, and educators are expected to employ innovative teaching strategies such as simulation-based learning, project-based assignments, and digital collaboration tools (Okoye, 2022). Creativity enables them to design problem-solving tasks that promote entrepreneurial thinking and adaptability among students. As stated by Akinola and Iroegbu (2020), collaboration with industries, professional bodies, and research institutes foster innovation in business education curricula. Such partnership not only enhance the quality of instruction but also support the educator's professional growth and institutional recognition.

Moreover, innovation and creativity are directly linked to career development in academia. They influence the quality of teaching, research productivity, and leadership capacity, all of which determine promotion and professional recognition (Eze, 2020). Amabile (2018) posits that innovative educators are often more adaptable to institutional changes, more open to mentorship, and better positioned for leadership roles. According to Akinola and Iroegbu (2020), innovation-driven educators demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy and motivation, which translate into greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Creativity also contributes to career development by enhancing personal branding. Educators who develop unique teaching methods, research approaches, or administrative models often gain institutional visibility and professional respect (Okebukola, 2021). Thus, innovation and creativity form both the foundation and evidence of career development in higher education.

Determinants of innovation and creativity among business educators include the following among others:

- Supportive institutional environment that encourages risk-taking and experimentation fosters creativity.
- Transformational leadership that values new ideas.
- Exposure to diverse perspectives through networking.
- Regular workshops, seminars, and sabbaticals.
- Reward systems and recognition programmes.
- Access to ICT tools that enhances creative teaching, e-learning innovation, and digital research output.

Globally, studies have shown that innovation and creativity are key drivers of professional growth. In Nigeria, Okebukola (2021) reported that innovative practices among university lecturers lead to improved research output and teaching quality. Abiodun (2022) noted that innovative business educators achieve higher rates of promotion and recognition due to their proactive contributions to curriculum innovation. Despite their benefits, however, several challenges hinder innovation and creativity among business educators in Nigerian universities:

- Inadequate funding and limited access to modern technologies.
- Institutional conservatism and bureaucratic bottlenecks.
- Absence of recognition or financial rewards for innovation.
- Poor Leadership Support.
- Work Overloads due to excessive administrative duties.

Therefore, to promote innovation and creativity among business educators, the following strategies are essential, as stated by scholars:

- *Leadership Empowerment*: Transformational leadership should encourage risk taking and idea generation (Eze, 2020).
- *Capacity-Building Programmes*: Regular training in technology integration, creative pedagogy, and research innovation should be undertaken by educators (Akinola & Iroegbu, 2020).
- *Institutional Incentives*: There should be recognition and rewards for creative teaching and research outcomes (Amabile, 2018).
- *Collaborative Platforms*: Team-based innovation projects and interdisciplinary collaboration should be promoted (Abiodun, 2022).
- *Mentorship*: Experienced educators should mentor younger colleagues in creative problem-solving and innovation (Ragins & Kram, 2019).
- *Technological Investment*: Digital tools and modern classrooms that support innovative instruction should be provided (Okebukola, 2021).

Concept of Business Education and Business Educators

Business Education is a broad field of study that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for effective participation in business, industry, and entrepreneurship. It integrates both academic and vocational learning, preparing learners for meaningful careers in business-related occupations and for self-reliance in a dynamic economic environment.

According to Okoli (2020), business education is a skill-oriented and career-focused programme that provides learners with both theoretical and practical knowledge in areas such as accounting, marketing, office technology, entrepreneurship, and management. It aims to produce competent individuals capable of contributing to economic development through effective business practices and innovations. Similarly, Njoku and Nwosu (2021) define business education as a comprehensive discipline that prepares students for roles as producers, consumers, and entrepreneurs by developing their managerial and technological competencies. The programme also emphasizes ethical conduct, innovation, and leadership in both public and private sectors. More so, Smith (2022) explains that business education equips individuals with the skill and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of the business world, emphasizing critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and effective communication. Collins (2023) emphasizes that business education aims to cultivate critical thinking, analytical skills, and ethical frameworks in students, preparing them for global business challenges and responsible citizenship. It therefore serves both as an educational foundation and as a career-development tool for teachers, administrators, and entrepreneurs.

In the Nigerian context, National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) recognizes business education as a component of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) designed to provide learners with the skills necessary for gainful employment and economic participation. In public universities, business education programmes typically train students to become business educators, managers, and entrepreneurs, contributing to national development and workforce efficiency. Furthermore, business education consists of various components, and some of the major components include the following:

- ❖ *Accounting Education*: This is a component of business education that provides

knowledge of financial management, bookkeeping, and auditing.

- ❖ *Marketing Education*: This component of business education focuses on market analysis, consumer behaviour, and sales management.
- ❖ *Office Technology and Management (OTM)*: This component emphasizes ICT, secretarial skills, and administrative efficiency.
- ❖ *Entrepreneurship Education*: This component of business develops creative thinking, innovation, and business start-up skills in learners.

According to Okwuanaso and Nwadiani (2019) and Umeh and Balogun (2025), the objectives of business education include the following:

- To equip students with business, communication, and ICT skills relevant to modern workplaces.
- To foster entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance and national development.
- To develop professional business educators capable of teaching and managing business-related subjects effectively.
- To prepare individuals for career in business organizations and public institutions.
- To promote ethical standards and responsible citizenship in economic activities.

In public universities in Edo and Delta States, business education serves a dual function, which include:

- *Academic Purpose*: It contributes to the development of teaching, research, and extension services in business-related disciplines.
- *Career Development Purpose*: It provides a platform for continuous professional growth of business educators through mentorship, training, and research productivity.

Moreover, the quality of business education delivery depends largely on the competence, motivation, and career progression of business educators. Therefore, mentorship becomes a crucial mechanism for ensuring continuous career development, effective teaching, and sustainable innovation within the field.

Business educators, on the other hand, are academic professionals responsible for imparting theoretical knowledge and practical skills in various fields of business, including accounting, management, marketing, finance, entrepreneurship, and office technology management (OTM). They play a vital role in shaping the future of business education. According to Kelvin, Liang and Ling (2020), business educators are professionals who not only impart business knowledge but also nurture critical skills such as problem-solving, leadership, and ethical reasoning in their students. Escobar and Gonzalez (2021) defined business educators as facilitators of learning who adapt to the rapid changes in the business environment, integrating technology and experiential learning into their curricula. In the opinion of Patricia and Hefferan (2022), a business educator is a mentor who cultivates students' abilities to analyze business situations critically, applying real-world knowledge to academic learning. Smith (2023) describes it as an individual who understands the interdisciplinary nature of business and aim to create a curriculum that prepares students for the complexities of the global market. More so, business educators are not merely instructors; they are change agents who inspire innovation and adaptability in their students to meet the challenges of the future business landscapes (Wilson, 2023).

Adebayo and Nwosu (2021) emphasize that in the context of Nigerian public universities, business educators play a pivotal role in preparing students for participation in the global economy by equipping them with the competencies necessary for entrepreneurial ventures,

public sector service, and corporate employment. Also, Bello and Musa (2023) emphasize the fact that their responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching to include curriculum design, academic advising, research, community engagement, and the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning.

The role of business educators in public universities is shaped by national education policies, institutional goals, and the evolving demands of the business environment. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) minimum academic standards emphasize the development of graduates who are not only academically competent but also innovative, self-reliant, and capable of contributing to national development (NUC, 2021). As opined by Ajayi and Emecheta (2018), business educators are therefore expected to act as facilitators of knowledge, mentors to students, and contributors to research that advances business education theory and practice.

According to Ogunyemi (2022), in Nigerian public universities, business educators often face challenges such as inadequate teaching resources, heavy workloads, and limited access to professional development opportunities. Despite these constraints, they remain central to the mission of producing graduates who can thrive in a competitive, technology-driven business environment. As such, continuous professional development, through workshops, conferences, advanced research training, and mentorship, is vital for maintaining their relevance and effectiveness in delivering high-quality education (Uche & Akinyemi, 2022).

The functions of business educators can be grouped into three main domains:

- *Instructional Delivery*: As stated by Nwangwu and Agboeze (2022), business educators design and implement learner-centred pedagogy, incorporate case studies, simulations, and industry projects to enhance student engagement.

- *Research and Knowledge Production:* Ezeani and Igwe (2019) suggest that business educators conduct researches that address both local and global business challenges, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and contribute to the body of knowledge in business education.
- *Professional and Community Engagement:* Bello and Musa (2023) emphasize that business educators serve as consultants to industry, engage in community based projects, and contribute to economic development through entrepreneurship promotion.

Moreover, business educators also serve as a bridge between academia and industry by aligning curricula with current market trends and technological innovations. For example, Adebayo and Nwosu (2021) state that the integration of digital marketing, data analytics, e-commerce, and financial technology (FinTech) into business education reflects the shifting demands of employers and the global economy. This alignment is particularly important in public universities, which have the responsibility of producing a workforce that can compete both locally and internationally.

Business educators are not only transmitters of knowledge but also role models and mentors who shape students' attitudes towards lifelong learning, ethics, and professional conduct. According to Ng and Feldman (2022), by fostering critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and ethical decision-making, they contribute to the holistic development of graduates who can adapt to diverse work environments. In the context of Edo and Delta State public universities, the role of business educators is especially significant given the economic and industrial diversity of the region. With sectors such as oil and gas, manufacturing, agriculture, and services driving local economies, business educators are tasked with preparing graduates who can meet the

region's specific economic needs while also competing on a global scale. As suggested by Bello and Musa (2023), this requires not only up-to-date knowledge and teaching methods but also strong linkages with industry and government to ensure that academic programmes remain relevant and impactful.

Furthermore, business educators in Nigerian public universities are key agents of economic transformation, innovation, and national development. Their effectiveness depends on the quality of their academic preparation, access to continuous professional development, and the institutional support provided for teaching, research, and community service. Strengthening their capacity through structured mentoring programmes, adequate funding, and policy reforms will ensure that they remain competitive in delivering high-quality, industry-relevant education.

As emphasized by Adebayo and Nwosu (2021), the unique nature of business education, of combining theoretical instruction with practical applications, demands that educators continuously update their skills in curriculum design, technological integration, and industry-relevant pedagogy. Therefore, Nwangwu and Agboeze (2022) noted that career development for these educators involves targeted training programmes, mentorship, conference participation, scholarly publications, and industry collaborations. A strong career development pathway ensures that educators remain competitive, adaptable, and capable of producing graduates who can thrive in a dynamic economic environment. Bello and Musa (2023) explain that mentoring plays a pivotal role in shaping this development, as it facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge, supports research guidance, and fosters professional identity formation. In Nigerian public universities, career development for business educators is further influenced by policy frameworks such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) guidelines on academic promotion, which emphasize a balance between teaching, research, and community service

(NUC, 2021). According to Ogunyemi (2022), factors such as institutional culture, administrative support, access to ICT resources, and funding availability significantly shape the trajectory of professional growth. For educators in Edo and Delta States, the integration of structured mentoring into career development frameworks is particularly important for overcoming challenges such as inadequate funding, heavy workloads, and limited exposure to global best practices.

Akinyemi and Olatunji (2021) opine that career development process for business educators in public universities typically follows structured stages that align with professional growth models in academia. Although frameworks vary, most scholars agree on five key stages, namely:

1. *Exploration Stage*: This is the entry phase where individuals assess their interests, teaching abilities, and commitment to the field of business education. Business educators at this stage often work as graduate assistants, tutorials facilitators, or early-career lecturers, gaining exposure to pedagogical practices and academic culture. They explore research areas, participate in mentorship programmes, and begin to publish in academic journals.
2. *Establishment Stage*: In this phase, business educators secure permanent or tenure-track positions, build professional networks, and define their specializations. They focus on teaching excellence, active research engagement, and curriculum development. Career growth at this stage is marked by recognition through publications, conference presentations, and participation in departmental decision-making.
3. *Mid-Career Maintenance Stage*: This stage involves consolidating previous

achievements and maintaining professional relevance. Educators work on securing research grants, supervising postgraduate students, and assuming leadership roles such as Head of Department or Faculty Committee Chair. They also contribute to policy formulation and mentor junior colleagues, thereby playing significant role in knowledge transfer.

4. *Advancement Stage*: At this point, educators attain senior academic ranks such as Associate Professor or Professor. They exert greater influence in academia through leadership, scholarly publications, and active participation in national and international professional associations. Their career focus shifts towards policy advocacy, educational consultancy, and high-level research projects.
5. *Disengagement or Late Career Stage*: This is the pre-retirement or retirement phase where educators gradually reduce active teaching and research engagement. They may serve as emeritus professors, external examiners, or consultants. The emphasis here is on legacy building, capacity development for younger academics, and documenting best practices for the discipline's sustainability.

Ultimately, the career development of business educators is a multidimensional process requiring a combination of self-directed efforts, institutional support, and sustained mentoring relationships. In the rapidly changing educational landscape, institutions that invest in mentoring as a core strategy for career development are more likely to retain high-quality educators, enhance academic productivity, and improve overall learning outcomes.

Concept of Public Universities

Public universities are institutions of higher education owned and operated by government authorities, whose primary funding comes from public resources such as taxes, grants, and

government allocations. Their primary mandate is to advance learning, research, and community service for the socio-economic development of society.

According to Okebukola (2019), public universities are government-established institutions aimed at providing quality tertiary education to citizens at a subsidized cost, fostering manpower development and national growth. Similarly, Olayemi and Edeh (2021) define public universities as universities financed and supervised by government agencies to ensure equitable access to higher education and promote national objectives through teaching, research and service. In view of Adebayo and Oyetade (2023), public universities are educational institutions whose operations, policies, and programmes are guided by government laws and are largely dependent on public funding for sustainability and accountability.

- As stated by Smith (2019), public universities are institutions that primarily receive funding from state governments, which influences their governance structures and mission to serve the public good. Garcia (2021) argue that public universities are designed to provide access to higher education for a diverse population, focusing on equity and inclusion. This definition emphasizes the commitment of public institutions to serve not just a select group of students but the broader community. In the study of Lee (2020), public universities are described as institutions with a dual mission of education and research, also serving their communities through outreach programmes. This aspect highlights the broader role these institutions play in societal development. According to a research by Johnson (2022), public universities are critical players in promoting social mobility, especially for lower-income and first-generation college students. This definition focuses on the role of public institutions in transforming individual lives and communities. Roberts (2023) discusses the increasing demands for accountability in public universities, whereby their definitions have expanded

to include performance metrics relating to graduation rates, job placement, and community engagement.

Formal Mentorship

Formal mentorship refers to a structured, institutionally organized mentoring relationship in which a mentor and mentee are intentionally paired by an organization or a programme to achieve specific developmental objectives. It is typically guided by predefined goals, time frames, and evaluation criteria. Unlike informal mentorship, which occurs spontaneously through personal relationships, formal mentorship is initiated through an official process, often by an academic department, faculty, or university administration, to enhance professional competence, research productivity, and career advancement among staff members.

Eby (2021) identifies formal mentorship as a systematically implemented programme that pairs mentors with mentees based on specific criteria and objectives, with structured activities and assessments to ensure progression towards defined outcomes. Also, D'Abate and Eddy (2022) view formal mentorship as a relationship bound by organizational policies that identify roles, responsibilities, and expectations for mentors and mentees, aiming to promote career development, retention, and skill enhancement across various industries. Johnson (2023) highlights that formal mentorship occurs within an institutional framework where the relationship is mediated by set guidelines and evaluation processes, thereby professionalizing the mentorship experience to maximize benefits for parties involved. In the same vein, Smith and Stone (2024) consider formal mentorship as a strategic approach utilized by organizations to build leadership talent. It involves aligning mentor-mentee pairings with organizational goals and include evaluation metrics to measure success and areas for improvement. Moreover, Thompson and Lee (2025) portray formal mentorship as a purposeful engagement designed to foster the

mentee's professional identity and capability through consistent, goal-oriented interactions, often facilitated by organizational initiatives to support workforce development.

The characteristics of formal mentorship, as stated by Babalola and Adisa (2022) include the following:

- *Planned and Structured*: Relationships in formal mentorship are purposefully established with specific career and developmental goals.
- *Institutionally Supported*: The mentorship is often sponsored by the university's management, department, or faculty to promote staff development.
- *Time-Bound*: The mentoring process usually runs for a specified duration — for instance, six months to two years — after which progress is evaluated.
- *Goal-Oriented*: Both mentor and mentee agree on measurable outcomes, such as improvement in teaching skills, research publication, or academic promotion.
- *Documentation and Evaluation*: In formal mentorship, activities, meetings, and outcomes are documented for accountability and assessment purposes.

Furthermore, formal mentorship serve as an institutional mechanism to bridge the professional development gap between junior and senior educators. According to Okafor and Ede (2023), the core purposes of formal mentorship include the following:

- ❖ To facilitate professional socialization of new lecturers into the academic culture of the university.
- ❖ To enhance pedagogical and research competencies through continuous guidance.
- ❖ To promote career advancement and leadership readiness among mentees.
- ❖ To strengthen institutional productivity through knowledge transfer and collaboration.

There are several types of formal mentorship practices which include one-on-one mentorship, group mentorship, and electronic mentorship, among others.

One-On-One Mentorship

One-on-one mentorship is a deliberate, structured, and officially sanctioned developmental relationship between a senior professional (mentor) and a junior colleague (mentee) aimed at fostering personal and career growth, skill enhancement, and professional identity development. Allen and Eby (2019) define one-on-one mentorship as a dyadic developmental relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced one (the mentee), aimed at fostering the mentee's personal, academic, and professional growth. It is one of the most traditional and widely recognized forms of mentorship, characterized by direct, individualized interaction, where the mentor provides tailored guidance, feedback, and support to the mentee. According to Ragins and Verbos (2022), it is an arrangement whereby a specific mentor is assigned to a mentee through an institutional programme, and both parties operate within defined goals, time frames, and expected outcomes.

Features of One-on-One Mentorship

One-on-one mentorship has distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other mentorship models. Some of these features include the following among others:

- *Individualized Attention:* The mentor focuses on the specific developmental needs of a single mentee, ensuring personalized support (Allen & Eby, 2019).
- *Confidential and Trust-Based Relationship:* The dyadic nature encourages honest communication, mutual respect, and trust (Crisp & Cruz, 2019).
- *Structured or Semi-Structured Framework:* The relationship may follow a defined mentoring plan or evolve naturally, depending on the institutional context

- *Goal-Oriented Engagement:* The relationship is usually directed toward achieving specific academic, professional, or personal outcomes (Hu & Ma, 2022).
- *Long-Term Developmental Focus:* One-on-one mentorship often extends over a long period, allowing sustained learning and relationship growth (Bolarinwa & Adeogun, 2021).
- *Directed Feedback Mechanism:* The mentee receives individualized performance feedback and constructive evaluation (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2022).

Group Mentorship

Group mentorship refers to a structured, organized mentoring approach in which one or more experienced professional (mentors) provide guidance, support, and professional development to a group of mentees who share common career interests, developmental needs, or organizational goals. According to Dobson (2020), unlike the one-on-one model, group mentorship emphasizes collective learning and peer interaction, thereby expanding the mentoring process beyond the dyadic mentor-mentee relationship. Omeje, Ezeani, and Eze (2021) explain that for business educators, group formal mentorship provides a platform for academic exchange, professional networking, and knowledge sharing across ranks and disciplines. It supports new lecturers in adjusting to institutional expectations, developing research competencies, improving teaching practices, and learning administrative responsibilities through group discussions and joint reflections. Also, the group model facilitates cross-fertilization of ideas, where diverse experiences and insights enrich learning for all participants. In the words of Bozeman, Rimes, and Youtie (2022), the structure of group mentorship is formalized with specific objectives, time frames, and guidelines that define meeting frequency, content focus, and expected outcomes.

In Nigeria where universities face challenges such as inadequate staffing, limited research funding, and heavy workloads, group formal mentorship provides an effective platform for

collaborative learning and peer empowerment (Ezeani, 2021). Similarly, Omeje et al. (2021) opine that for business educators, group mentorship encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, stimulates innovative teaching methods, and fosters a sense of belonging among younger academics. Moreover, through shared mentorship, junior educators develop research partnerships that enhance productivity and career advancement (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2022). By institutionalizing group mentorship practices, Nigerian universities can build academic capacity, promote teamwork, and ensure sustainable professional development among business educators, thereby strengthening the quality of higher education delivery.

Features of Group Mentorship

Group mentorship is characterized by several defining features that make it different from other mentorship models. Some of the features of group mentorship include:

- ❖ *Structured Organization:* According to Bonzionelos (2020), group mentorship is systematically established with predetermined objectives, scheduled meetings, and institutional oversight to ensure effectiveness and accountability.
- ❖ *Multiple Participants:* Allen (2020) opines that group mentorship involves a group of mentees being guided by one or more mentors, promoting inclusivity and shared learning experiences.
- ❖ *Collaborative Learning Environment:* Group mentorship promotes dialogue, collective problem-solving, and peer-to-peer support among participants (Huizing, 2019).
- ❖ *Focus on Common Goals:* As stated by Dobson (2020), participants in group mentorship are often grouped based on shared academic disciplines, research interests, or career development needs.

❖ *Formal Evaluation:* Institutions often assess group mentorship effectiveness through periodic reviews, feedback sessions, and performance appraisals (Hobson, Ashby, and Malderez, 2019).

E-Mentorship

E-mentorship, also known as electronic mentorship or virtual mentorship, refers to a developmental relationship between a mentors and a men tee that is facilitated primarily through digital communication technologies such as email, video conferencing, social media, and online learning platforms. According to Single and Single (2021), it combines the traditional principles of mentorship, such as guidance, support, and career development, with the flexibility and accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Unlike conventional face-to-face mentorship, e-mentorship transcends geographical, temporal, and institutional boundaries, enabling mentors and mentees to interact synchronously or asynchronously through electronic means. In the words of Hu and Wang (2022), e-mentorship in higher education has emerged as a modern approach to academic and career development, particularly in response to globalization, technological advancement, and the increasing digitalization of teaching and learning.

Moreover, for business educators, e-mentorship provides a platform for accessing mentorship opportunities beyond local contexts, engaging in research collaborations, and sharing innovative pedagogical strategies with experts across institutions and borders (Ezeani, 2021). E-mentorship may take various forms, including email-based mentorship, web conferencing mentorship, discussion forums, and mobile app-based mentorship practices. Through these virtual interactions, mentors provide professional guidance, academic feedback, and psychosocial support while mentees gain digital competence, confidence, and access to global knowledge networks.

In the context of Nigerian higher education, e-mentorship plays an increasingly significant role in promoting the professional and career development of business educators. Given the challenges of inadequate mentorship structures, limited funding, and academic isolation, e-mentorship offers a viable alternative for knowledge sharing and career progression (Omeje, Ezeani, & Eze, 2021). As emphasized by Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022), through e-mentorship, Nigerian business educators can connect with mentors and peers across universities and international institutions to access updated pedagogical methods, participate in joint research projects, and engage in continuous learning communities. Moreover, it aligns with global trends in digital education and contributes to developing the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies needed for effective teaching and research in the 21st century (Ezeani, 2021). Thus, e-mentorship serves as a strategic mechanism for enhancing academic excellence, research productivity, and professional growth among business educators in public universities, making it a vital component of institutional capacity building and sustainable career development.

Features of E-mentorship

- It involves a technology-mediated communication through digital platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, WhatsApp, or institutional learning management systems.
- It promotes flexibility and accessibility, allowing participants to engage from different locations and time zones.
- E-mentorship can occur without the need for physical meetings, thus minimizing travel costs and time limitations.
- It facilitates proper documentation and continuity, which can be useful for tracking progress, assessments, and research purposes.

- E-mentorship opens opportunities for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning experiences, broadening the mentee's exposure.

Informal Mentorship

Informal mentorship refers to a naturally developed, voluntary relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced one (the mentee), aimed at fostering professional growth, personal development, and career advancement. Huizing (2019) defines informal mentorship as a type of mentorship that develops organically without institutional assignment, often driven by shared interests, mutual respect, or professional admiration. It is a naturally developed relationship without structured programmes or formal assignments. Informal mentoring relationships tend to be more flexible and may foster stronger personal bonds, which can enhance trust and knowledge sharing. In Nigerian public universities, informal mentoring often occurs between colleagues in the same department who collaborate on projects or share office space. For example, a senior lecturer spontaneously taking interest in a junior colleague's professional growth without an official mentoring arrangement. Unlike formal mentorship, which is institutionally organized and structured, informal mentorship arises spontaneously based on mutual respect, shared interests, and personal compatibility (Ragins & Verbos, 2022).

Furthermore, informal mentorship has been found to positively influence research productivity, career satisfaction, leadership development, and promotion readiness among academics (Bozionelos, 2020; Ragins & Verbos, 2022). More so, Allen and Eby (2019) posit that because the relationship is voluntary and trust-based, mentees are more likely to engage authentically, seek honest feedback, and emulate their mentors' successful career behaviours.

Mentors, on the other hand, benefit from enhanced leadership skills, renewed motivation, and the satisfaction of contributing to the professional growth of their colleagues. However, despite its advantages, informal mentorship is not without limitations. The absence of formal structures can lead to unequal access, where some educators, especially women or newly hired staff, struggle to find mentors (Bozeman & Feeney, 2020). Informal mentorship relationship, in the opinion of Ehrich et al. (2020), can also be affected by favouritism, personality clashes, or lack of commitment from either party. Nevertheless, when nurtured effectively, informal mentorship remains an invaluable development mechanism that complements formal mentorship practices in universities.

Ezeani (2021) emphasize that in the Nigerian context, informal mentorship is significant due to the limited institutionalized mentorship structures in many public universities. Business educators often depend on informal relationships with senior colleagues to navigate career challenges such as inadequate research funding, heavy workloads, and limited access to professional development programmes. Such mentorship relationships help sustain academic motivation, improve teaching quality, and ensure knowledge continuity in business education departments (Omeje et al., 2021). Thus, informal mentorship plays a pivotal role in fostering the career development of business educators by bridging the gap between institutional limitations and personal aspirations. It empowers educators with the necessary support, exposure, and confidence to achieve academic excellence, leadership capacity, and long-term professional advancement. Informal mentorship includes forms such as peer mentorship, situational mentorship, and spontaneous mentorship among others.

Peer Mentorship

Peer mentorship represents a collaborative, reciprocal form of mentorship that fosters professional development among individuals of equal status. It enhances learning, confidence, and collegiality while promoting research collaboration and teaching effectiveness. According to Colvin and Ashman (2019) and Terrion and Leonard (2020), peer mentorship refers to a developmental relationship in which individuals of relatively equal status, experience, or professional standing provide mutual guidance, support, and learning opportunities to enhance personal and career growth. Hu and Ma (2022), argue that in the context of higher education, peer mentorship involves colleagues or educators at similar career stages such as early-career lecturers, supporting one another through shared experiences, research collaborations, and emotional encouragement. Peer mentors assist one another in navigating institutional structures, improving teaching effectiveness, and developing scholarly productivity. Also, peer mentorship contributes to building collegiality and professional identity among educators, which crucial in fostering a supportive academic culture. For business educators in Nigerian universities, peer mentorship provides a cost-effective, accessible, and sustainable approach to professional and career development, especially in the absence of formal mentorship structures (Ezeani, 2021).

In the Nigerian university system, where mentorship structures are often weak or informal, peer mentorship serves as a viable mechanism for professional growth and knowledge exchange among business educators (Ezeani, 2021). Given the challenges of staff shortage, limited research collaborations, and career stagnation, peer mentorship provides a supportive platform for capacity building. Omeje, Ezeani and Eze (2021) observe that through peer mentorship, business educators can engage in joint research, co-teaching, academic discussions, and workshops aimed at improving instructional quality and scholarly visibility. It also helps to bridge the mentorship gap created by the retirement of senior professors, especially in public

universities in Edo and Delta States. Furthermore, peer mentorship encourages a collegial environment where educators support one another in navigating institutional challenges, publishing in reputable journals, and enhancing professional competence (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2022). By promoting a culture of shared learning and cooperation, peer mentorship contributes significantly to the overall career development of business educators and the achievement of institutional excellence.

Features of Peer Mentorship

Peer mentorship exhibits several distinct characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of mentorship. Some of these characteristics include the following among others:

- *Reciprocal Relationship*: Both participants act as mentors and mentees simultaneously, sharing experiences and offering mutual feedback (Holt & Lopez, 2019).
- *Equality Status*: Mentors and mentees are of comparable professional rank or academic level, which minimizes power distance and promotes openness (Terrion & Leonard, 2020).
- *Collaborative Learning*: Peer mentorship fosters a collaborative learning environment where participants jointly develop knowledge and solve professional challenges (Hu & Ma, 2022).
- *Informal Structured*: Although often informal, peer mentorship can be organized through departmental programmes or research clusters that encourage academic interaction (Colvin & Ashman, 2019).
- *Mutual Empowerment*: Both parties benefit from shared motivation, self-efficacy, and confidence in their teaching and research roles (Bierema & Merriam, 2020).

Situational Mentorship

Situational mentorship is a flexible, context-specific approach to career development where guidance is provided based on immediate needs or challenges. It is adaptive, short-term,

and highly practical, making it suitable for modern academic environments. According to Haggard (2020) and Clutterbuck (2019), situational mentorship refers to a context-driven mentoring relationship in which the mentor-mentee interaction is designed to address specific developmental needs or challenges that arise in particular situations or stages of career growth. Unlike traditional or long-term mentoring arrangements, situational mentorship is short-term, flexible, and problem-focused, emerging spontaneously or strategically to provide targeted guidance on defined issues (Allen & Eby, 2019).

Clutterbuck (2019) explains that situational mentorship emphasizes adaptability, as the nature, duration, and intensity of the relationship depends on the mentee's immediate goals and circumstances. For instance, a business educator may seek situational mentorship for help with research publication, curriculum design, or adapting to new technologies in teaching. Once the issue is resolved, the mentorship may naturally conclude. This model draws from Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) Situational Leadership Theory, which posits that effective leadership, and by extension, mentorship, depends on the readiness and competence of the follower (mentee) in a given situation. The mentor thus adjusts their style of guidance (directive, supportive, or delegative) based on the mentee's skill level and confidence regarding the specific task (Hu & Ma, 2022).

According to Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022), situational mentorship in higher education contexts supports professional agility among lecturers and fosters a culture of continuous learning and problem-solving. It is particularly relevant in the Nigerian university system due to the dynamic challenges faced by business educators, ranging from curriculum reforms to digital transformation and research expectations. Given the scarcity of formal mentorship structures, situational mentorship provides a pragmatic and context-sensitive approach to professional

growth (Ezeani, 2021). For instance, a business educator struggling with academic publication may receive short-term mentorship from a colleague experienced in research writing. Similarly, those adapting to e-learning technologies or preparing for accreditation visits may seek situational guidance from mentors proficient in those areas.

Features of Situational Mentorship

Situational mentorship is distinct in its contextual flexibility and focus on immediate needs, as opposed to long-term mentoring models. Its major features include the following among others:

1. *Context-Specific Engagement*: According to Clutterbuck (2019), the mentorship relationship is initiated to address a specific developmental or professional need rather than a broad career plan.
2. *Short-Term and Dynamic*: It typically lasts for limited period (days, weeks, or months) depending on the task or situation (Haggard, 2020).
3. *Adaptive Mentoring Style*: As stated by Hu and Ma (2022), the mentor adjusts their approach to match the mentee's level of competence and confidence for the given task.
4. *Goal-Oriented Relationship*: The focus is on achieving a specific outcome, such as completing a research paper, preparing for promotion, or mastering digital teaching tools (Allen & Eby, 2019).
5. *Mutual Professional Benefits*: Both mentor and mentee can gain new insights and skills through the process, especially when dealing with emerging or complex issues (Bozeman, Rimes, & Youtie, 2022).

6. *Flexible Duration and Termination*: The relationship naturally concludes once the mentee attains the targeted competence or goal (Clutterbuck, 2019).

Spontaneous Mentorship

Spontaneous mentorship represents an informal, naturally emerging developmental relationship that supports career and professional growth. According to Bierema and Merriam (2020), it refers to an unplanned, informal, and naturally occurring developmental relationship that emerges organically between individuals, typically when one person provides guidance, advice, or support to another without any formal structure or institutional arrangement. Unlike formal mentorship practices that are systematically organized, spontaneous mentorship arises instinctively from everyday professional interactions, shared interests, or situational needs (Hu & Ma, 2022).

Allen and Eby (2019) assert that spontaneous mentorship develops when a potential mentor identifies a mentee's need for support or when a mentee seeks advice from a more experienced colleague in a casual, unstructured setting. The relationship evolves naturally, driven by mutual respect, trust, and voluntary engagement rather than administrative assignment. Spontaneous mentorship is rooted in Social Exchange Theory stated by Homans in 1958, which suggests that human relationships develop through reciprocal interactions and perceived benefits (Clutterbuck, 2019). The relationship is often characterized by mutual learning and shared growth, as both mentor and mentee exchange ideas, experiences, and insights without formal boundaries.

As stated by Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022), in higher education, spontaneous mentorship plays a crucial role in supporting early-career academics, as many lack access to structured mentorship practices. For business educators, such informal relationships can offer critical

professional and emotional support, particularly in environments where formal mentorship systems are weak or inconsistent. Spontaneous mentorship is particularly valuable and prevalent in Nigerian public universities due to limited presence of structured mentorship practices. Business educators often rely on informal networks of colleagues, senior lecturers, and peers to navigate academic and professional challenges (Ezeani, 2021).

Moreover, through spontaneous mentorship, younger lecturers can receive guidance on research publication, teaching methods, assessment procedures, and professional ethics from more experienced educators without formal appointments. These interactions often occur during conferences, departmental meetings, or casual discussions and serve as practical, experienced-based learning opportunities. Spontaneous mentorship also helps to bridge generational and institutional gaps, fostering collaboration among educators from different academic backgrounds. Akinyemi and Abiddin opine that in Edo and Delta States, where mentorship structures are sometimes underdeveloped, spontaneous mentorship offers a natural mechanism for capacity building and career development, particularly for early-career business educators seeking direction and support. They also emphasize that by encouraging collegial relationships and open communication, institutions can strengthen spontaneous mentorship and leverage it as a strategic tool for improving academic productivity, teaching quality, and staff retention.

Features of Spontaneous Mentorship

Spontaneous mentorship differs from formal or structured mentorship models in several important ways. Its unique features include the following among others:

- ❖ *Unplanned Initiation*: According to Bierema and Merriam (2020), spontaneous mentorship relationship arises naturally, often through daily interactions, shared work experiences, or collegial conversations.

- ❖ *Voluntary Engagement*: Both parties willingly enter the relationship without external assignments or obligation (Dobson, 2020).
- ❖ *Flexibility*: The nature, duration, and frequency of the relationship are fluid, depending on mutual convenience and evolving professional needs (Hu & Ma, 2022).
- ❖ *Informal Communication*: Allen and Eby emphasize that spontaneous mentorship takes place in casual settings such as departmental offices, conferences, or virtual discussions rather than scheduled sessions.
- ❖ *Mutual Learning*: Both mentor and mentee benefit from exchanging experiences, reflecting the non-hierarchical nature of the relationship (Clutterbuck, 2019).
- ❖ *Trust and Rapport-Based*: The success of spontaneous mentorship relies heavily on personal chemistry, interpersonal trust, and shared professional interests (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2022).

Formal Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators

Formal mentorship has emerged as a critical driver of academic and professional growth, particularly within higher education institutions. According to Allen and Eby (2019), the relationship between formal mentorship and career development is anchored on the notion that structured mentorship relationships provide access to guidance, knowledge, and opportunities that facilitate career progression. In public universities, especially among business educators, formal mentorship serves as a mechanism for improving teaching competence, enhancing research productivity, fostering innovation, and preparing educators for leadership and administrative responsibilities (Omeje, Ezeani, & Eze, 2021; Bozeman & Feeney, 2020).

Moreover, formal mentorship is linked to career development of business educators in the following ways:

- *Enhancement of Professional Competence:* Formal mentorship plays a critical role in developing the professional competence of business educators. As business educators acquire advanced teaching competencies, their effectiveness and career readiness improve.
- *Improvement of Research Productivity:* Formal mentorship programmes expose junior academics to research skills such as proposal development, data analysis, academic writing, and publication strategies (Bozeman & Feeney, 2020).
- *Guidance on Promotion and Career Advancement:* Formal mentors provide mentees with clarity on promotion requirements, institutional expectations, and career pathways.
- *Leadership Development:* Formal mentorship programmes contribute to developing leadership skills among business educators.
- *Strengthening Professional Network:* Formal mentorship connects mentees to professional networks, academic associations, and scholarly communities.
- *Psychological Support and Job Satisfaction:* While formal mentorship is structured, it still provides psychosocial benefits such as emotional support, confidence-building, encouragement, and professional identity development.

Sequel to these, the relationship between formal mentorship and career development of business educators is strong and multidimensional. Through structured guidance, skill development, research support, leadership grooming, and network expansion, formal mentorship

significantly enhances the professional growth and career progression of business educators in public universities. In the Nigerian context where formal mentorship programmes are increasingly recognized as vital for academic excellence, formal mentorship serves as a strategic mechanism for improving the quality, productivity, and retention of business educators.

Informal Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators

Informal mentorship plays a crucial role in shaping the professional trajectories, scholarly productivity, and overall career development of business educators in public universities. Eby, Allen and Evans (2020) assert that unlike formal mentorship, which is institutionally engineered and structured, informal mentorship evolves naturally and voluntarily from interpersonal interactions, shared interests, or professional admiration. Such relationships are often characterized by flexibility, spontaneity, mutual trust, and personal commitment, making them highly influential in academic environments where collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collegiality drive professional growth.

Moreover, the relationship between informal mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities is both significant and multi-dimensional. Thus, informal mentorship correlates with career development of business educators in the following ways:

- ❖ *Enhances Teaching competence:* Informal mentors help junior business educators refine pedagogical skills through classroom observations, sharing of teaching materials, and guidance on course design.
- ❖ *Promotes Research Productivity and Scholarly Output:* According to Crisp and Cruz (2019), informal mentorship strongly correlates with increased research engagement and productivity.

- ❖ *Provides Psychosocial Support for Career Confidence:* A unique strength of informal mentorship is its provision of psychosocial support, which include encouragement, reassurance, role modeling, and stress management. This emotional support enhances job satisfaction, resilience, and self-efficacy among business educators (Ragins & Verbos, 2022).
- ❖ *Facilitates Networking and Professional Visibility:* Informal mentorship contributes significantly to professional networking, which is vital in academic career development.
- ❖ *Supports Leadership Development and Administrative Competence:* Informal mentorship grooms business educators for leadership roles such as Head Of Department (HOD), programme coordinator, or faculty representative.
- ❖ *Encourages Innovation and Creativity in Academic Practice:* Informal mentors act as sounding boards for innovative ideas, helping mentees develop the confidence to experiment in teaching and scholarly work.
- ❖ *Enhance Career Advancement and Promotion:* Empirical studies show that informal mentorship is positively associated with faster career advancement in academia (Allen & Eby, 2019).

Therefore, due to its flexibility and relational nature, informal mentorship often provides deeper and more sustainable benefits than formal mentorship. For business educators in public universities, especially in developing contexts like Nigeria, informal mentorship remains a critical mechanism for professional growth and long-term career success.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Ojeaga and Okolocha (2024) conducted a study on the assessment of mentoring practices influencing business educators in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States. Two research questions guided the study while three null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using a sample of 231 business educators. A 16-item questionnaire was utilized for the study. The Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded coefficient of 0.95 and 0.85 for the two sub-sections of the instrument with an aggregate reliability of 0.90. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The z-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypothesis. The findings of the research questions revealed that formal mentoring does not influence business educators. Informal mentoring was found to be the dominant mentoring practice influencing business educators in Edo and Delta States. Hypotheses testing showed no significant difference on mentoring practice of business educators either by gender, types of tertiary institutions, or state of domiciliation of institutions. This implies that management of tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States neither plans, implements nor evaluates mentoring practices for business educators. It was therefore concluded that mentoring practices for business educators in Edo and Delta States is inadequate to meet business educators' career growth and development needs. The researchers, however recommended among others that authorities of tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States especially of Department of Business Education should compulsorily institute formal mentoring practice in addition to the available informal professional mentoring for business educators. This could help give more opportunities to the young and inexperienced business educators to learn from the wealth of experience of the older and more experienced business educators so as to enhance their professional commitment. However, differences exist between the two studies. While the previous study employed a

descriptive design survey with a sample size of 231 business educators, the present study employed a correlational design with a sample size of 58 business educators. Also, two research questions guided the previous study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance; while six research questions and six corresponding null hypotheses guided the present study. The previous study assessed the influence of mentoring practices on business educators in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta States; while the present study examined the relationship between mentorship practices and the career development of business educators in four public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Nwosu and Ede (2023) investigated the relationship between mentoring practices and career satisfaction among 310 business education lecturers in federal and state universities in South-South Nigeria. The study employed a correlational research design. The Mentoring Practices and Career Development Questionnaire (MPCD) was administered to collect data, which were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Results showed that mentoring practices, such as guidance on publication, academic leadership, conference participation, and professional networking, were significant predictors of career satisfaction and intent to remain in academia. Respondents who benefited from structured mentoring were more motivated, reported greater career fulfillment, and demonstrated higher institutional commitment. The study concluded that effective mentoring is central to sustainable academic career development and recommended that universities adopt formalized mentoring policies to support educators at all career stages. This study was conducted in Federal and State universities in South-South, Nigeria; while the present study was conducted in four public universities in Edo and Delta States. Also, the previous study focused on the relationship between mentoring practices and career satisfaction of business educators; while the present study focused on the

relationship between mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The previous study used a sample size of 310 business educators; while the present study used a sample size of 58 business educators.

A research carried out by Okunbor and Omoniyi (2023) on “The Role of Peer Mentorship in the Career Development of Business Educators” was focused on exploring the role of peer mentorship in the career development of business educators in public universities, identifying the benefits and challenges associated with peer mentorship relationships among educators, and assessing the perception of business educators regarding the effectiveness of peer mentorship in enhancing their professional growth. The study involved a sample size of 80 business educators from various public universities in Edo and Delta States. A mixed-methods approach was employed in collecting the data, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data on peer mentorship experiences. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative insights from participants about their experiences and perceptions. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize findings, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify common themes related to the benefits and challenges of peer mentorship. The study found that peer mentorship plays a significant role in the career development of business educators. Participants reported that peer mentorship relationships provided essential support, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, which contributed to their professional growth. The study identified benefits of peer mentorship such as collaborative learning, emotional support, and increased confidence in teaching. Also, challenges such as time constraints, and lack of formal structure were identified. Overall, participants expressed positive perceptions of peer mentorship, emphasizing its importance in facilitating professional development and enhancing job satisfaction. The researchers, therefore, recommended the

establishment of formal peer mentorship programmes, training for peer mentors, and promotion of peer mentorship culture by universities. The study concluded that peer mentorship is a valuable component of the career development of business educators, emphasizing the need for universities to support the formalization of peer mentorship initiatives. By doing so, they can enhance the professional growth and job satisfaction of their faculty members.

In their research, Afolabi and Omoregie (2022) investigated “The Perception of Business Educators on the Importance of Mentorship for Career Development.” The study aimed to explore the perceptions of business educators regarding the importance of mentorship in their career development, identify factors that influence these perceptions and how they relate to educators’ professional growth, and assess the challenges faced by business educators in accessing mentorship opportunities. The study involved a sample size of 200 business educators from various public universities in Nigeria, particularly focusing on those in Edo and Delta States. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, along with focus group discussions for qualitative insights. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize perceptions and inferential statistics to identify relationships between variables. The findings of the study included that; a significant majority of business educators perceive mentorship as crucial for their career development, recognizing its role in skill enhancement and professional growth. Factors that influenced their perceptions included previous mentorship experiences, the perceived effectiveness of mentors, and institutional support for mentorship initiatives. However, the study reported challenges such as lack of formal mentorship programmes, insufficient time for mentoring relationships, and limited access to experienced mentors. Many educators expressed a strong desire for more structured mentorship programmes to facilitate better access to mentorship opportunities and enhance their career progression. As a

result, the researchers recommended that universities establish and promote formal mentorship programmes to support business educators in their professional journeys, train mentors, and conduct awareness campaigns to highlight the benefits of mentorship. The study concluded that business educators place significant importance on mentorship for their career development, highlighting the need for universities to invest in structured mentorship programmes to foster professional growth and improve career trajectories.

Okorie and Aigbiremolen (2022) examined the predictive power of mentorship on research productivity among 450 academic staff drawn from public universities in South-South Nigeria using a mixed-methods approach. The study adopted a sequential explanatory design combining survey and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using regression analysis, while qualitative responses provided contextual depth. Findings indicated that the presence of effective mentoring significantly predicted research output, publication rate, and grant acquisition. Qualitative insights revealed that mentors helped mentees navigate institutional challenges, improve proposal writing, and develop research confidence. The study highlighted that weak or absent mentorship structures often resulted in low research engagement and slow career progression. The implication is that universities should integrate mentoring into staff development policies to enhance scholarly output, a major index of career development among business educators.

Omoregie and Ighodaro (2021) conducted a related research on “Mentorship and its Impact on the Professional Development of Lecturers in Business Education. This study aimed at investigating the influence of mentorship on the professional development of lecturers in business education, identifying specific mentorship practices that contribute to the growth of educators in this field, and exploring the perceptions of lecturers regarding the effectiveness of

mentorship in their professional journeys. The study involved a sample size of 150 lecturers from various public universities in Edo and Delta States. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect quantitative data, along with interviews to gather qualitative insights. Also, the data were analyzed using statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, to assess the relationship between mentorship and professional development. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between mentorship and professional development of lecturers in business education. Mentorship was shown to enhance skills, knowledge, and confidence among educators. It was also discovered that lecturers who participated in mentorship programmes reported improved teaching methodologies, research capabilities, and overall professional competency. More so, specific practices such as regular feedback, guidance in research, and support in career planning were identified as crucial components of effective mentorship. The majority of lecturers felt that mentorship positively impacted their professional growth and expressed a desire for more structured mentorship opportunities. The researchers recommended that universities implement structured mentorship programmes that facilitate regular interactions between mentors and mentees, provide training for mentors to enhance their effectiveness in guiding emerging educators, and raise awareness among lecturers about the importance of mentorship in their professional development. The study concluded that mentorship plays a vital role in professional development of lecturers in business education, emphasizing the need for universities to invest in effective mentorship initiatives to foster growth and development among their faculty.

Johnson and Ridley (2021) carried out an investigation on “The Impact of Mentoring on Career Advancement in Higher Education: A Study of Business Faculty.” The study was aimed to investigate the impact of mentoring relationships on the career advancement of business faculty

in higher education institutions, explore the perceptions of business educators regarding the effectiveness of mentorship in facilitating professional growth and career opportunities, and identify specific mentoring practices that contribute to successful career advancement among business faculty. The study involved 150 business faculty members from various higher education institutions across the United States. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. The survey included questions about mentoring experiences, career advancement, and job satisfaction. Interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their mentorship experiences. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify correlations between mentorship and career advancement outcomes; while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to extract common themes and insights. Findings from the study revealed that mentorship significantly influences career advancement for business faculty. Educators who reported having strong mentoring relationships were more likely to experience promotions, increased visibility in their field, and greater job satisfaction. Participants expressed positive perceptions regarding the impact of mentorship on their professional growth. Many noted that mentorship provided not only career guidance but also emotional support and encouragement during challenging times. However, the study also identified barriers to effective mentorship, including time constraints, lack of institutional support for mentoring programmes, and mismatched expectations between mentors and mentees. The researchers, therefore, recommended the creation of structured mentorship programmes in higher institutions, training of mentors, and institutional support for mentoring programmes. The study concluded that mentoring plays a critical role in the career advancement of business faculty in higher education. It emphasized the importance of fostering

effective mentorship relationships and creating supportive institutional environments that encourage mentorship as a means of professional development.

Afolabi and Oloyede (2021) conducted a correlational study on “Mentoring and Career Progression among University Lecturers” in six public universities across Southwest Nigeria to examine the influence of mentoring relationships on academic staff career progression. The study employed a descriptive survey design with 320 lecturers selected through stratified random sampling. A validated questionnaire titled *Mentoring and Academic Career Development Scale (MACDS)* was used for data collection. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between mentorship quality and indicators of career development such as promotion, research output, and leadership involvement. Lecturers who reported regular mentor-mentee interactions exhibited higher productivity, obtained more research grants, and achieve faster promotions. The study concluded that structured mentoring programmes contribute substantially to lecturer’s professional growth and institutional success. It recommended institutionalization of formal mentorship schemes for academic staff, particularly for early-career educators. This finding supports the relevance of mentorship in enhancing the career development of business educators in public universities.

The work of Akpan and Okon (2020) titled “The Role of Mentorship in Career Development of Business Educators in Nigeria”. The study was conducted in public universities located in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine the role of mentorship programmes on the professional growth of business educators, identify the key mentorship practices that contribute to the career advancement of educators in business disciplines, and explore the perceptions of business educators regarding the effectiveness of mentorship in their career development. The study involved 150 business educators from various

public universities in Nigeria, with focus on those in Edo and Delta States. Surveys and interviews were conducted to gather qualitative and quantitative data from participants. The data were analyzed using statistical methods to determine the significance of mentorship on career development. The findings of the research revealed that mentorship significantly enhances the career growth of business educators by providing guidance, support, and networking opportunities. It also helps educators to improve their teaching skills, research capabilities, and professional competencies. Participants reported higher levels of job satisfaction, according to the study, due to the support received from mentors, which contributed to their career fulfillment. The study also revealed that mentorship facilitated connections with other professionals and academics, leading to collaborative opportunities and increased visibility in the field. However, the research also identified challenges such as lack of formal mentorship programmes, limited resources, and inadequate training for mentors. As a result, the researchers recommended that universities develop structured mentorship programmes to foster effective mentor-mentee relationships; provide training for mentors in order to equip them with the necessary skills to guide their mentees effectively, and provide institutional support for mentorship initiatives, ensuring that both mentors and mentees have access to resources. The study concluded that mentorship plays a critical role in the career development of business educators in Nigeria. It highlighted the need for universities to prioritize mentorship as a strategic approach to enhance the professional growth and job satisfaction of their educators.

Eze and Uche (2020) investigated how informal mentoring relationships influence professional development among business educators in federal and state universities in South-East Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, the researchers sampled 210 business education lecturers. Data were gathered through a self-structured questionnaire validated by experts and

analyzed with Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The results indicated that informal mentorship, through peer guidance, collegial interactions, and collaborative teaching, had a strong positive influence on professional competence, instructional innovation, and research output. The study found that informal mentors provided emotional and psychological support, improving job satisfaction and career stability. It emphasized that while formal mentoring programmes are vital, informal mentoring networks play an equally important role in professional growth. For your study, this underscores the need to examine both formal and informal mentoring dimensions as predictors of career development.

Usman and Ibrahim (2020) explored how mentorship contributes to lecturers' professional competence in 10 public universities in Northern Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving 280 academic staff selected through stratified random sampling. Data collected through a Mentorship Competence Assessment Scale (MCAS) were analyzed using Pearson correlation. Findings revealed that mentorship had a significant positive effect on lecturers' teaching skills, curriculum development, and research competence. Mentors provided guidance on pedagogical improvement, assessment strategies, and publication techniques. The study concluded that mentorship is vital for improving instructional quality and recommended training programmes to strengthen mentor-mentee relationships in universities.

The study conducted by Eze and Adebayo (2019) on "Analyzing the Effect of Mentorship on the Career Progression of Business Educators in Public Universities" was aimed at examining the impact of mentorship on the career progression of business educators in public universities, identifying the key factors that influence the effectiveness of mentorship in promoting career advancement, and assessing the perceptions of business educators regarding their mentorship experiences and career outcomes. This study involved a sample size of 120 business educators

from various public universities within Edo and Delta States. A questionnaire was administered to the participants to gather quantitative data regarding their mentorship experiences and career progression. Additionally, interviews were conducted for qualitative insights. The data were analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, to evaluate the relationship between mentorship and career progression. The study found that mentorship significantly affects the career progression of business educators. Those who engaged in mentorship programmes reported faster career advancement compared to those who did not. Key factors identified that influence the effectiveness of mentorship included the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship, the mentor's experience, and the availability of resources. This study also reported that most participants expressed positive perceptions of mentorship, highlighting its importance in providing guidance, support, and opportunities for professional development. Mentorship was also found to facilitate networking opportunities that contributed to career advancement for business educators. The authors recommended that universities establish formal mentorship programmes to systematically support the career progression of business educators, provide training for mentors, and encourage more business educators to actively participate in mentorship programmes to reap the benefits of guidance and support in their careers. The study concluded that mentorship plays a crucial role in the career progression of business educators in public universities, emphasizing the need for structured mentorship programmes to enhance career development and professional growth.

Adedoyin and Adeyemi (2018) examined the role of mentoring in career advancement among 320 lecturers across four public universities in the South-West region of Nigeria. The study utilized a correlational design and a self-structured questionnaire titled *Mentoring and Academic Advancement Scale (MAAS)*. Analysis through multiple regression revealed that

mentoring significantly predicted academic promotion, leadership opportunities, and international exposure. Mentees under consistent mentorship exhibited improved research collaboration and higher levels of institutional commitment. The study emphasized the need for universities to institutionalize structured mentorship programmes as part of academic staff development.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

This study presented a number of relevant literature relating to mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The Social Learning Theory and Career Development Theory which formed the theoretical framework of this study were critically examined.

The concept of mentorship was examined from classical and contemporary perspectives. The review showed that mentorship can occur formally through institutional programmes or informally through naturally evolving relationships within academic communities. The concept of career development was also explored extensively. Career development was presented as a lifelong process of enhancing skills, knowledge, professional competence, research productivity, promotion opportunities, job performance, and overall advancement within an academic career. The review also explained the nature and purpose of business education as a vocational and professional discipline that equips learners with business, office, managerial, entrepreneurial, and technological competencies required for employability and productivity in the modern economy. The study also explained the concept of public universities. Public universities in Nigeria, including those in Edo and Delta States, operates under the coordination of Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and are funded primarily by government.

Thirteen (13) comprehensive empirical studies relating to mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities were reviewed in this study. The review of related empirical studies demonstrated that mentorship has a strong positive relationship with career development in academic settings. Studies across Nigeria have shown that mentorship enhances research productivity, teaching effectiveness, professional competence, job satisfaction, and promotion. Empirical findings also established that formal mentorship predicts higher levels of career development, while informal mentorship predicts stronger psychosocial outcomes and long-term professional commitment. However, several empirical gaps were identified, which include: limited studies focused specifically on business educators; few studies examined mentorship in Edo and Delta State universities; and there is insufficient research comparing the effects of formal and informal mentorship on different dimensions of career development among business educators. These gaps justify the relevance and contributions of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method and procedure for conducting this study. They are discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Design of the Study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique

- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Design of the Study

A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. A correlational survey design is a research method that establishes and explores the relationships or degree of association between the research variables and also determines the strength and direction of the relationships. In this design, variables are measured as they occur naturally without any manipulation from the researcher. This approach is considered appropriate for this study because it fundamentally determines the relationship between the independent variable (mentorship practices) and the dependent variable (career development).

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised fifty-eight (58) business educators in public universities located in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. In Edo State, these institutions include Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and the University of Benin, Benin City. While in Delta State, the institutions include Delta State University, Abraka and the University of Delta, Agbor.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Business Educators in Public Universities in Edo and Delta States

S/N	Names of Institutions	Number of Business Educators
1.	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State	11
2.	University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State	17
3.	Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State	12
4.	University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State	18

Source: Office of the Director of Academic Planning of the various Institutions (2025).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the study comprised fifty-eight (58) business educators across the four (4) public universities under study in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. As a result of the manageable size of the population, the entire population was used in the study, hence census.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: “Mentorship Practices and Career Development Questionnaire (MPCDQ)”, designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was developed in line with the objectives, research questions, and variables of the study suitable for capturing information from a relatively large population. The instrument was divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A gathered demographic information on respondents. Section B contains 30 item statements designed to elicit responses on the research questions, and it is broken down into six (6) segments on mentoring practices, which include: one-on-one mentorship (1-5), group mentorship (6-10), electronic mentorship (11-15), peer mentorship (16-20), situational mentorship (21-25), and spontaneous mentorship (26-30). While Section C contains 15 item statements on career development. A 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point was used for all items in Section B and C.

Validity of the Instrument

To establish the validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument, purpose of the study, and research questions was given to two experts of business education and a psychometrician from Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology (EECP). Based on their

suggestions, ambiguous items were reworded, irrelevant items were removed, and additional items were included to strengthen the coverage of the variables - mentorship types and career development indices of business educators. The suggestions made by the experts were used to produce the final draft of the instrument in consultation with the researcher's supervisor.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot-tested on twenty respondents who were not part of the study. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were administered twice to Business Educators in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State. Using respondents outside the population for reliability test was to ensure that respondents in the target population are not exposed to the instrument and thus become familiar with it since such practice could pose a testing threat to the instrument. Thereafter, the test-retest statistics was used to determine its internal consistency in order to ensure that the instrument was reliable. After computation, a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was collected by the researcher with the help of four (4) research assistants who administered the instrument to the respondents. This method was chosen to ensure a high return rate and provide room for clarification where needed. The research assistants were properly briefed about the goal of the study as well as how to administer and retrieve the completed questionnaire. A letter of introduction from the researcher's Department accompanied the instrument to the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) for both the research questions and the corresponding hypotheses, with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) values were used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for the research questions was based on mean value such that any calculated mean equal to or greater than 2.50 was regarded as agreed (high), while any calculated mean less than 2.50 was regarded as disagreed (low). The decision rule for the correlation was, as suggested by Rosnow and Rosenthal (2021), as follows: any calculated r-value between 0.00 and 0.19 was regarded as no correlation, 0.20 and 0.39 was regarded as weak correlation, 0.40 and 0.59 was regarded as moderate correlation, 0.60 and 0.79 was regarded as high/strong correlation, while 0.80 and 1.00 was regarded as very high/strong correlation. The probability p-value was used for the hypotheses such that if p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypotheses was not accepted, otherwise it was accepted.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation of results and discussion of the findings.

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 2: Pearson r showing the relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
One-on-one Mentorship	58	2.98	0.70	0.46	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

Table 2 shows the significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The Table shows a mean of 2.98 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.70 and 0.64 for one-on-one mentorship and the career development respectively, indicating research question one. The correlation coefficient between one-on-one mentorship and the career development of business educators is 0.46 which is positive and moderate. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. This, therefore connotes that there is a significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 3: Pearson r showing the relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Group Mentorship	58	3.10	0.61	0.66	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

The analysis in Table 3 shows the significant relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The

Table shows that the correlation coefficient between group mentorship and the career development of business educators is 0.66, is positive and high. The data analysis for research question two also indicates that mean of 3.10 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.61 and 0.54 respectively were obtained for group mentorship and the career development respectively. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. Thus, that there is a significant relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 4: Pearson r showing the relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Electronic Mentorship	58	3.13	0.71	0.71	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

Table 4 shows the significant relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The Table shows a mean of 3.13 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.71 and 0.64 indicating research question three for electronic mentorship and the career development respectively. The correlation coefficient between electronic mentorship and the career development of business educators is 0.71 which is positive and high. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. This therefore connotes that there is a significant relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between peer mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 5: Pearson r showing the relationship between peer mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Peer Mentorship	58	3.19	0.69	0.81	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

The analysis in Table 5 shows the significant relationship between peer mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The Table shows that the correlation coefficient between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators is 0.81 which is positive and very high. The data analysis for research question four also indicates that mean of 3.19 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.69 and 0.64 were obtained for peer mentorship and career development respectively. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. Thus, that there is a significant relationship between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 6: Pearson r showing the relationship between situational mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Situational Mentorship	58	3.18	0.67	0.90	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

The data presented in Table 6 depicts significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta

States. The Table shows that the correlation coefficient between situational mentorship and career development of business educators is 0.90 is positive and very high. The data analysis for research question five also shows that mean of 3.18 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.67 and 0.64 were obtained for situational mentorship and career development respectively. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Hypothesis Six: There is no significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 7: Pearson r showing the relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Situational Mentorship	58	3.16	0.70	0.95	.000	Significant
Career Development		3.14	0.64			

Table 8 shows the significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The Table shows a mean of 3.16 and 3.14 as well as standard deviation of 0.70 and 0.64 for spontaneous mentorship and the career development respectively for research question six. The correlation coefficient between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators is 0.95 which is positive and very high. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was not accepted. This, therefore connotes that there is a significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of research question one revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States, as evidenced by the high mean scores and relatively high standard deviation values obtained from respondents.

The high mean values indicated that one-on-one mentorship significantly contributes to the career development of business educators. This implied that individualized mentoring relationships provide business educators with direct access to professional guidance, personalized feedback, and career support. In practical terms, mentees benefit from tailored advice on teaching methods, research productivity, publication strategies, and career progression pathways. Such outcomes align with mentoring theories which emphasize that close interpersonal relationships enhance skill acquisition, confidence, and professional growth. Furthermore, one-on-one mentorship fosters career advancement opportunities, such as promotion, networking, and leadership development. Business educators who engage in this form of mentorship are more likely to receive continuous encouragement, constructive criticism, and exposure to academic opportunities. This finding aligns with the findings of Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022) who reported that in one-on-one mentorship relationship, mentees receive individualized performance feedback and constructive evaluation which enhance their career growth, in terms of research productivity, teaching methodology, and leadership roles. The findings also corroborates the findings of Allen and Eby (2019) who opined that one-on-one mentorship is aimed at fostering the mentee's personal, academic, and professional growth, where the mentor provides tailored guidance, feedback, and support to the mentee.

The high standard deviation, however, indicated that while the overall perception is positive, there is variability in respondents' experiences. This variation may stem from

differences in the quality of mentor-mentee relationships, frequency and consistency of mentoring interactions, institutional support for mentorship practices, and individual motivation and commitment levels. This implies that not all business educators benefit equally from one-on-one mentorship. Some may experience highly impactful mentoring relationships, while others may have limited or less effective interactions. Therefore, although one-on-one mentorship is generally beneficial, its effectiveness depends largely on how it is structured and implemented.

The corresponding hypothesis findings indicated that there is a positive and moderately significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicates that as participation in one-on-one mentorship increases, there is a corresponding improvement in the career development of business educators. However, the relationship is not perfectly strong, suggesting that while mentorship plays a significant role, it is not the only factor influencing career development. Other variables such as institutional policies, access to research funding, years of experience, and personal motivation may also contribute to career growth. This finding supports the findings of Hu and Ma (2022) who reported that one-on-one mentorship relationship is directed towards achieving specific academic, professional, or personal outcomes for the mentee. More so, the finding is supported by the findings of Bolarinwa and Adeogun (2021) who opined that one-on-one mentorship often extends over a long period, allowing sustained learning and relationship growth between the mentor and mentee. However, Afolabi and Omoregie (2022) reported that challenges such as lack of one-on-one mentorship programmes, insufficient time for mentoring relationships, and limited access to experienced mentors may inhibit the access of business educators to effective one-on-one mentorship relationships.

The result of research question two indicated that there is a significantly high and positive relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicates that as participation in group mentorship increases, there is a substantial and consistent improvement in the career development outcomes of business educators. It implies that business educators who actively engage in group mentorship programmes tend to experience enhanced professional growth, improved competencies, and greater career advancement opportunities. This could be as a result of the collaborative nature of group mentorship where business educators benefit from multiple mentors and peers, thereby exposing them to diverse perspectives, shared experiences, and broader professional networks. This enhances knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving, exposure to varied teaching and research strategies, and increased access to academic, leadership development, career motivation and confidence, and professional opportunities. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Omeje, Ezeani, and Eze (2021) who reported that for business educators, group mentorship provides a platform for academic exchange, professional networking, and knowledge sharing across ranks and disciplines. It supports new lecturers in adjusting to institutional expectations, developing research competencies, improving teaching practices, and learning administrative responsibilities through group discussions and joint reflections. Also, the finding is supported by the findings of Dobson (2020) who explained that unlike one-on-one mentorship, group mentorship emphasizes collective learning and peer interaction, thereby expanding the mentoring process beyond the dyadic mentor-mentee relationship.

The corresponding hypothesis findings indicated that there is a high and positive relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public

universities in Edo and Delta States. This finding corroborates the findings of Omeje et al (2021) who opined that for business educators, group mentorship encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, stimulates innovative teaching methods, and fosters a sense of belonging among younger academics. More so, the finding is in agreement with the findings of Huizing (2019) who emphasized that group mentorship promotes collective dialogue, collective problem-solving, and peer-to-peer support among participants.

It was discovered in the findings of research question three that there is a high and positive significant relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This implies that increased engagement in electronic mentorship platforms is associated with a significant and consistent improvement in the career development outcomes among business educators. This suggests that educators who actively participate in online mentoring environments experience enhanced professional growth, improved competencies, and greater access to career opportunities. This strong relationship could be attributed to the flexibility, accessibility, and scalability of electronic mentorship. The finding also revealed that electronic mentorship supports real-time communication and resource sharing, sustainable professional growth, career engagement autonomy, continuous and flexible support, and self-directed learning. The finding is in line with the finding of Hu and Wang (2022) who reported that e-mentorship in higher education has emerged as a modern approach to academic and career development, particularly in response to globalization, technological advancement, and the increasing digitization of teaching and learning. In the same vein, the finding corroborates the findings of Single and Single (2021) who explained that e-mentorship combines the traditional principles of mentorship, such as guidance, support, and career development, with the flexibility and accessibility of Information and

Communication Technologies (ICTs). Unlike conventional face-to-face mentorship, e-mentorship transcends geographical, temporal, and institutional boundaries, enabling mentors and mentees to interact synchronously or asynchronously through electronic means.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a high and positive relationship between e-mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicated that e-mentorship promotes flexibility and accessibility, allowing participants to engage from different locations and time zones. It facilitates proper documentation and continuity, which can be useful for tracking progress, assessments, and research purposes. This findings are in line with the findings of Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022) who emphasized that through e-mentorship, Nigerian business educators can connect with mentors and peers across universities and international institutions to access updated pedagogical methods, participate in joint research projects, and engage in continuous learning communities. The findings are also supported by the findings of Omeje, Ezeani, and Eze (2021) who explained that given the challenges of inadequate mentorship structures, limited funding, and academic isolation, e-mentorship offers a viable alternative for knowledge sharing and career progression.

The result of research question four revealed that there is a very high significant relationship between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States, which may be due to the unique characteristics of peer mentorship, particularly its informal, reciprocal, and collaborative nature. This indicated that peer mentorship is not just beneficial, but a highly influential and dominant factor in shaping the career growth of business educators. In practical terms, as engagement in peer mentorship increases, there is a correspondingly strong and consistent improvement in career development outcomes. The finding also suggests that peer mentorship promotes mutual learning and shared

experiences, enhances professional competence and productivity, promotes collaboration in research and publications, and helps build professional network and social capital. This finding corroborates the findings of Hu and Ma (2022) who reported that peer mentors assist one another in navigating institutional structures, improving teaching effectiveness, and developing scholarly productivity. Also, peer mentorship contributes to building collegiality and professional identity among educators, which is crucial in fostering a supportive academic culture. In the same vein, the finding also agreed with the findings of Ezeani (2021) who opined that, for business educators in Nigerian universities, peer mentorship provides a cost-effective, accessible, and sustainable approach to professional and career development, especially in the formal mentorship structures.

The corresponding hypothesis showed that there is a very high and positive relationship between peer mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This finding corroborates the findings of Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022) who reported that peer mentorship encourages a collegial environment where educators support one another in navigating institutional challenges, publishing in reputable journals, and enhancing professional competence. The findings is also in agreement with the findings of Omeje, Ezeani and Eze (2021) who observed that through peer mentorship, business educators can engage in joint research, co-teaching, academic discussions, and workshops aimed at improving instructional quality and scholarly visibility.

The findings of research question five revealed that there is a significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicated that situational mentorship is a highly potent and reliable predictor of career development among business educators, and that the observed

relationship is not due to chance, but reflects a true and meaningful association within the population studied. The finding implied that as engagement in situational mentorship increases, there is a strong and consistent rise in career development outcomes such as professional competence, research productivity, instructional effectiveness, and career advancement. The result also revealed that situational mentorship plays a critical and dependable role in shaping the career trajectory of business educators. This finding aligns with the findings of Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022) who reported that situational mentorship in higher education contexts support professional agility among lecturers and foster a culture of continuous learning and problem-solving. The findings also agrees with the findings of Ezeani (2021) who explained that given the scarcity of formal mentorship structures, situational mentorship provides a pragmatic and context-sensitive approach to professional growth.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a positive and very high significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicated that a business educator struggling with academic publication may receive short-term mentorship from a colleague experienced in research writing. Similarly, those adapting to e-learning technologies or preparing for accreditation visits may seek situational guidance from mentors proficient in those areas. This finding is supported by the findings of Haggard (2020) who opined that situational mentorship is designed to address specific developmental needs or challenges that arise in particular situations or stages of career growth. The finding also corroborates the findings of Allen and Eby (2019) who emphasized that situational mentorship relationship is focused on achieving a specific outcome, such as completing a research paper, preparing for promotion, or mastering digital teaching tools.

Research question six findings depicted that there is a very high significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicated that spontaneous mentorship is a highly influential factor in enhancing the career growth of business educators, with increased engagement leading to substantial and consistent improvement in career development outcomes such as professional competence, research productivity, teaching effectiveness, networking, and career advancement. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Akinyemi and Abiddin (2022) who opined that in higher education, spontaneous mentorship plays a crucial role in supporting early-career academics, as many as lack access to structured mentorship programmes, thereby helping to improve academic productivity, teaching quality, and staff retention. The finding also aligns with the findings of Crisp and Crisp (2019) who maintain that informal mentorship, such as spontaneous mentorship, strongly correlates with increased research engagement and productivity.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that spontaneous mentorship has a positive and very high significant relationship with the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This finding corroborates the findings of Bierema and Merriam (2020) who revealed that spontaneous mentorship is an unplanned, informal, and naturally occurring developmental relationship that emerges organically between individuals, where one person provides guidance, advice, or support to another without any formal structure or institutional arrangement. In the same vein, the finding is also supported by the the findings of Allen and Eby (2019) who asserted that spontaneous mentorship develops when a potential mentors identifies a mentee's need for support or when a mentee seeks advice from a more experienced colleague in a casual, unstructured setting.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter covers summary of the study, conclusion drawn and recommendations that were made.

Summary

The study determined mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. Six (6) research questions were raised to guide the study and Six (6) hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised fifty-eight (58) business educators in public universities located in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. In Edo State, these institutions include Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and the University of Benin, Benin City. While in Delta State, the institutions include Delta State University, Abraka and the University of Delta, Agbor. The sample size of the study comprised fifty-eight (58) business educators across the four (4) public universities under study in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. As a result of the manageable size of the population, the entire population was used in the study, hence census. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: “Mentorship Practices and Career Development Questionnaire (MPCDQ)”, designed by the researcher. The instrument was segmented into three sections A, B and C. To establish the validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument, purpose of the study, and research questions were given to two experts of business education and a psychometrician from Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology (EECP). To establish the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot-tested on twenty respondents who were not part of the study. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were administered twice to Business Educators in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, using a test re-test method. Thereafter, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics was used to determine the relationship between

the first and second test in order to ensure that the instrument was reliable. After computation, a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings generally showed that mentorship practices significantly correlate with the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. Further findings of the study were as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
2. There is a significant relationship between group mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
3. There is a significant relationship between electronic mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
4. There is a significant relationship between peer mentorship and the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
5. There is a significant relationship between situational mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.
6. There is a significant relationship between spontaneous mentorship and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that mentorship practices significantly correlate with the career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This implies that mentorship, in its various forms, is a critical driver of professional growth and advancement in the academic environment. The significance of these relationships suggests that mentorship is not merely supportive but fundamental to career development outcomes such as improved teaching effectiveness, enhanced research productivity, increased professional competence, and greater access to career opportunities. In essence, the study establishes that effective mentorship practices serve as a cornerstone for sustainable career development among business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta states.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since one-on-one mentorship is a valuable tool for career development among business educators, there is a need for standardized and well-structured mentorship programmes in public universities. Institutions should ensure equitable access to effective mentorship for all educators, especially at the point of employment; and training should be provided for mentors to improve the quality and consistency of mentoring relationships.
2. Universities should institutionalize structured group mentorship practices to maximize career outcomes. Collaborative learning environments should be encouraged to strengthen professional networks and shared growth. Also, policies should support team-based mentoring approaches alongside individual mentoring.

3. Universities should invest in digital mentoring platforms and infrastructure, since electronic mentorship is a highly effective strategy for enhancing career development among business educators. There is a need to promote ICT integration in mentoring practices and training should be provided to both mentors and mentees on how to effectively engage in e-mentorship.
4. In view of the fact that peer mentorship is a highly powerful and effective driver of career development, universities should encourage the formation of peer mentoring groups and communities of practice. Institutional policies should support collaborative learning and peer engagement. Also, peer mentorship should be integrated into staff development programmes as a core strategy.
5. Universities should encourage need-based and context-driven mentoring practices, since the finding showed that situational mentorship is a highly effective and impactful strategy for career development. Academic leaders should create environments that support real-time guidance and feedback. More so, mentors should be trained to provide flexible and responsive mentorship tailored to specific situations.
6. Since spontaneous mentorship is a powerful driver of career development among business educators, as suggested by the study, universities should promote a collaborative and open academic culture that encourages informal interactions. Institutional environments should support networking, teamwork, and knowledge sharing. Also, efforts should be made to complement spontaneous mentorship with structured mentoring systems to ensure inclusivity.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study determined mentorship practices and career development of business educators in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The following suggestions for further research were outlined:

1. Mentorship Practices, Knowledge Management Practices and Career development of Business Educators in Public universities in Edo and Delta States.
2. Impact of Institutional Policies on Mentorship Effectiveness and the Career development of Business Educators in Public universities in Edo and Delta States.
3. Influence of Mentorship Practices on Career Progression, Promotion, and Professional achievement of Business Educators in Public universities in Edo and Delta States.
4. Mentorship Quality and Career Development Outcomes of Business Educators in Public universities in Edo and Delta States.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO RESPONDENTS

Department of Business Education,
Faculty of Vocational and Technical
Education,
University of Benin,
Benin City.
16th April, 2026.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST TO COMPLETE A QUESTIONNAIRE.

I am a postgraduate student in the above named Department and Institution. I am conducting a research on Mentorship Practices and Career Development of Business Educators in Public Universities in Edo and Delta States. The attached questionnaire is designed to elicit the necessary information for the study. Therefore, your contribution in this research is valuable and will be of immense importance to the outcome of this research project.

In view of the above, I will be very grateful if you kindly complete the questionnaire, as your response will assist in arriving at a valid conclusion on the research work.

I promise to treat every of your response with utmost confidentiality and anonymity and use it basically for the purpose of this study.

Thanks for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours Faithfully,

Prosper Omoro Ugbine

Student Researcher

APPENDIX B

MENTORSHIP PRACTICES AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE.

Section A: Demographic Data

Gender: Male () Female ()

Institution Type: Federal University () State University ()

Section B:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by ticking (✓) the in the column that most best describe your reaction using the key below:

Key:	Rating Scale
SA - Strongly Agree	4
A - Agree	3
D - Disagree	2
SD - Strongly Disagree	1

S/N	ONE-ON-ONE MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I receive individualized attention during my one-on-one mentorship sessions.				
2.	I actively engage in discussions during my one-on-one mentorship meetings.				
3.	I find one-on-one mentorship sessions to be supportive and helpful.				
4.	I am satisfied with the quality of interaction I have with my mentor in one-on-one mentorship.				
5.	I meet regularly with my mentor in a one-on-one mentorship setting.				

S/N	GROUP MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I feel comfortable sharing my ideas during group mentorship meetings.				
7.	I actively participate in group mentorship activities.				
8.	I find group mentorship sessions engaging and interactive.				
9.	I learn from the experiences shared by others in group mentorship.				
10.	I benefit from the interactions I have with others during group mentorship.				
S/N	ELECTRONIC MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
11.	I actively participate in electronic mentorship sessions.				
12.	I feel comfortable communicating with my mentor through electronic platforms.				
13.	I receive timely feedback from my mentor through electronic mentorship.				
14.	I am able to ask questions freely during electronic mentorship.				
15.	I am able to access mentorship support easily through electronic means.				
S/N	PEER MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
16.	I actively participate in peer mentorship activities.				
17.	I feel comfortable interacting with my peer during mentorship sessions.				
18.	I freely share knowledge and experiences with my peers during mentorship.				
19.	I find peer mentorship interactions engaging and meaningful.				
20.	I support my peers during mentorship activities.				
S/N	SITUATIONAL MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
21.	I seek mentorship when I encounter specific challenges.				
22.	I receive timely support when I need situational mentorship.				
23.	I feel comfortable asking for help in specific situations that require mentorship.				
24.	I benefit from mentorship that addresses particular situations I face.				
25.	I am satisfied with the support I receive during situational mentorship.				
S/N	SPONTANEOUS MENTORSHIP	SA	A	D	SD
26.	I engage in mentorship interactions that occur spontaneously.				
27.	I benefit from mentorship that occurs without prior arrangement.				

28.	I receive useful insights during spontaneous mentorship encounters.				
29.	I respond positively to guidance offered during spontaneous mentorship.				
30.	I make use of opportunities for mentorship that arise unexpectedly.				

SECTION C

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SCALE

S/N		SA	A	D	SD
1.	I am satisfied with my opportunity for professional development.				
2.	I am satisfied with the available career advancement opportunities.				
3.	The organization is dedicated to my professional development.				
4.	I am satisfied with the job-related training the organization has to offer.				
5.	I am satisfied with the opportunities to apply my expertise and talents.				
6.	I am satisfied with the investment the organization makes in education and training.				
7.	I receive adequate support from my institution for career growth.				
8.	I am satisfied with the opportunities available for promotion in my institution.				
9.	I have access to relevant training that supports my career progression.				
10.	I actively seek opportunities to improve my skills and career.				
11.	I am open to learning new ideas and approaches for my career progression.				
12.	I am satisfied with my ability to grow and improve in my career.				
13.	I am confident in my ability to achieve my career goals.				

14.	I am motivated to achieve higher levels of competence in my career.				
15.	I am proactive in identifying areas for improvement in my career.				

APPENDIX C

DATA OUTPUT OF THE RELIABILITY

Correlations

		Mentorship Practices	Career Development
Mentorship Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	20	20
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	20	20

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX D

DATA OUTPUT OF THE HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS ONE

```
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Correlations

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	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.

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Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
one-on-one	2.98	.700	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		one-on-one	Career Development
one-on-one	Pearson Correlation	1	.463**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.463**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

```

CORRELATIONS
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/MISSING=PAIRWISE.

```

Correlations

Notes		
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Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group mentorship	3.10	.610	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		Group mentorship	Career Development
Group mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.660**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

```

CORRELATIONS
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Correlations

Notes

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	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.

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Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Electronic mentorship	3.13	.709	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		Electronic mentorship	Career Development
Electronic mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

```

CORRELATIONS
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/MISSING=PAIRWISE.

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Correlations

Notes

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Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Peer mentorship	3.19	.686	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		Peer mentorship	Career Development
Peer mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.806**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.806**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

```

CORRELATIONS
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/STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES
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```

Correlations

Notes

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	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.

Syntax		CORRELATIONS /VARIABLES=SituationalMen CareerDev /PRINT=TWOTAIL NOSIG FULL /STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES /MISSING=PAIRWISE.
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	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.03

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Situational mentorship	3.18	.674	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		Situational mentorship	Career Development
Situational mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

```

CORRELATIONS
/VARIABLES=SpontaneousMen CareerDev
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/STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES
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Correlations

Notes

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Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.
Syntax		CORRELATIONS /VARIABLES=SpontaneousMen CareerDev /PRINT=TWOTAIL NOSIG FULL /STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES /MISSING=PAIRWISE.
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Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Spontaneous mentorship	3.16	.697	58
Career Development	3.14	.641	58

Correlations

		Spontaneous mentorship	Career Development
Spontaneous mentorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58
Career Development	Pearson Correlation	.948**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	58	58

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).