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IMPACT OF MENTORSHIP ON ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the impact of mentorship on entrepreneurial success in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three objectives and three corresponding research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey of research design. The area of the study is Ogidi building material market Onitsha in Anambra State, while the population of study comprised of 450 respondents. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study, hence 75 entrepreneurs' business owners and 75 apprentices. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Impact of Mentorship on Entrepreneurial Success (IMOES). The respondents used 4 rating scales such as 4= very High Extent (VHE), 3= High Extent (HE), 2= Low Extent (LE) and 1= Very Low Extent (VLE) to respond to the questionnaire, the instrument was validated by three experts, two from Business Education Department while one from entrepreneurship center. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through its administration to twenty entrepreneurs in Enugu State and the test was repeated on the same group after two weeks interval, The Cronbach Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.81, 0.77 and 0.75 for the three research questions in the clusters, respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected, any mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as high extent and any one below 2.50 was interpreted as low extent. The findings of the study among others revealed that mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra State to a high extent. The study concluded that mentorship plays a critical and transformative role in fostering entrepreneurial development among individuals and recommended that Ministry of youth and development and other agencies should establish structured mentorship programs.

Keywords: Mentorship, Entrepreneurial Success

Introduction

This traditional model of mentorship has evolved in contemporary times, encompassing structured business coaching, advisory relationships, and knowledge-sharing networks, ultimately shaping entrepreneurial aspirations. mentorship enhances leadership capabilities and provides mentors with a sense of fulfillment, professional growth, expanded business networks and entrepreneurial growth. Mentorship can also be understood as a structured relationship that facilitates the sharing of professional, personal skills, and experiences, fostering growth, development for both the mentor and the mentee. Mentorship according to Stewart, Egbunefu & Onyegbule (2024) originates from the term "mentor," which according to the authors has its roots in Greek mythology. Mentor signifying in Homer's epic poem, the odyssey a trusted advisor and role model according to (Verma et al 2024).

Mentorship can be categorized into two primary types: formal and informal. Formal mentorship is structured, often facilitated by organizations, with defined goals, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms. Companies, universities, and entrepreneurship programs frequently implement formal mentorship to ensure systematic guidance. For example, many business incubators pair startup founders with seasoned entrepreneurs to enhance their chances of success (Higgins & Kram: 2023). These programs typically include scheduled meetings, progress assessments, and predefined learning objectives. Formal mentorship is particularly useful in institutional settings where accountability and measurable outcomes are prioritized.

Informal mentorship, on the other hand, develops organically through personal or professional networks. It lacks rigid structures and is driven by mutual interest and rapport. Informal mentorships often emerge when a junior employee seeks advice from a senior colleague or when an entrepreneur

receives guidance from an industry peer. These relationships tend to be more flexible and long-lasting, as they are built on trust and shared interests rather than formal obligations. While informal mentorship may lack systematic tracking, its organic nature often leads to deeper, more personalized support.

Mentorship has been widely acknowledged as a crucial enabler of entrepreneurial success, as it provides aspiring business owners with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of the business environment. Mentorship has been a crucial practice in the context of trade apprenticeships, where young individuals, after acquiring technical skills and knowledge, benefited from the guidance of more experienced and established entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial growth is globally recognized as a key driver of economic growth and societal development. It fosters innovation, creates employment opportunities, and contributes significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP) of nations. In emerging economies like Nigeria, entrepreneurship plays a vital role in addressing challenges such as unemployment and poverty (Asogwa & Dim, 2016).

Prominent business leaders, such as Richard Branson and Mark Zuckerberg, have credited their mentors for playing pivotal roles in their achievements (wakeup NETWORKS, 2020). In developed economies, structured mentorship programs have significantly improved business outcomes by fostering innovation, enhancing decision-making skills, and facilitating access to networks and resources (Shah, Othman, Bin & Mansor, 2016). Entrepreneurs are at the core of economic growth, job creation, and innovation. However, many entrepreneurial ventures in Anambra State struggle with sustainability due to factors such as poor strategic planning, limited financial management skills, and a lack of market foresight. Entrepreneurs who engage in mentorship programs such as the Igbo apprenticeship system, known as igba-Boi tend to have higher success rates, improved business acumen, and better access to opportunities (Obananya, 2022). Entrepreneurial traditions in Anambra state are deeply rooted in mentorship, particularly the Igbo apprenticeship system known as ‘Igba-Boi’. Nwankwo & Lindridge (2021). This system has contributed significantly to business success in the region. Under this system, young individuals serve under established business owners/mentors for a defined period, learning trade secrets, customer relations, financial management, and survival strategies in the business world. At the end of the apprenticeship, the mentor often provides financial support or business startup capital to the mentee, enabling them to launch their own business. This system has been instrumental in the growth of small and medium sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) in the region. Historically, apprenticeship has been an age-old method of training young individuals in trades, crafts and businesses across Nigeria. Through guidance from experienced mentors, apprentices acquire technical skills, business acumen, and industry knowledge, equipping them to establish and manage successful enterprises. Although this form of mentorship has evolved, its fundamental principles remain relevant, ensuring continued entrepreneurial success.

Entrepreneurial success depends on structured mentorship programs, given the state's high concentration of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the dynamic nature of its markets, mentorship can bridge knowledge gaps, build capacity, and foster innovation among entrepreneurs (Obananya, 2020). For instance, a young entrepreneur (often referred to as Nwa-Boi in the local Igbo language) in Onitsha's competitive market may benefit from the guidance of an experienced trader who understands market dynamics and customer behavior (Obunike, 2016). Similarly, a Tech startup in Awka could gain insights into scaling operations and attract investors from a seasoned Tech entrepreneur. Furthermore, mentorship is not only about transferring technical knowledge but also about building confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset among entrepreneurs. It provides a platform for mentees to learn from the successes and failures of their mentors, thereby avoiding common pitfalls and adopting best practices (Nnabugwu & Ibekwe, 2023).

Success in business according to Ezenwaji, Okeke & Ezeugwu (2020) is often tied to the quality of mentorship an entrepreneur receives. In the Nigerian context, particularly in Anambra State, mentorship has played a pivotal role in business development. Many successful entrepreneurs in Anambra State have attributed their business acumen and resilience to the influence of their mentors, who provided invaluable insights into business operations, market dynamics, financial management, and leadership (Nwosu, 2019). Despite this robust entrepreneurial culture, many entrepreneur startups in Anambra State face significant hurdles, including inadequate funding, lack of access to modern technology, and limited business management skills (Nnabugwu & Ibekwe 2023). Additionally,

entrepreneurs encounter challenges such as regulatory bottlenecks, competition from foreign products, and underdeveloped infrastructure. These obstacles have contributed to high business mortality rates, with mentorship emerging as a critical tool in mitigating these challenges. (Ajah, 2023). Gómez et al (2023), emphasizes that fostering further entrepreneurial opportunities success is further enhanced by mentorship through new career opportunities, promotions, and increased earning potential. The impact of mentorship in Anambra State appears to hold great potential as it improves employee performance (Uchenna & Chidozie, 2023). While informal mentorship relationships exist within communities and professional associations, there is limited empirical evidence on their effectiveness and scalability (Nnabugwu & Ibekwe, 2023).

Absence of structured mentorship frameworks according to Wasim et al (2024) has led to inconsistencies in the quality and accessibility of mentorship opportunities. For many entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural areas, finding mentors who can provide relevant guidance remains a significant challenge. Another dimension of mentorship worth exploring is the role of peer-to-peer mentorship and networks (Chatterji et al 2019). Mentorship, as a mechanism for transferring knowledge and skills, can significantly impact entrepreneurial performance by fostering innovation, improving strategic planning, and enhancing leadership capabilities. However, there is little or no empirical evidence on how mentorship influences entrepreneurial success in Anambra State. Key question remains unanswered: How do mentorship relationships influence critical business outcomes like profitability, sustainability, and growth? Addressing these gaps is essential to understanding how mentorship can be leveraged as a tool to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Anambra State, hence the study on impact of mentorship on entrepreneurial success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of mentorship on entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the impact of coaching on entrepreneurial success in Anambra state.
2. Find out the impact of guidance on entrepreneurial success in Anambra state.
3. Ascertain the impact of role modeling on entrepreneurial success in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent does mentorship motivate mentees for entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state?
2. To what extent does mentorship instill confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra State?
3. To what extent does mentorship encourage the personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth in Anambra State?

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey, according to Mill (2021), is a primary method of data collection which consists of a set of structured questions where each question is designed to obtain a specific piece of information because it captures the experiences and perceptions of entrepreneurs regarding mentorship's impact in entrepreneurial success. The study was carried out at Ogidi Building materials in Onitsha because it is commercial hub in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised of 450 entrepreneurs both male and female across different businesses and their apprentices in Ogidi building materials market in Anambra State, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used for this study. The population is divided into distinct subgroups (strata), and random hence 75 entrepreneur's owners and 75 apprentices both male and female were selected for the study, making the total of 150 respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Business Education and Entrepreneurship center. Based on the expert's criticism and suggestions, some items were removed, and new ones were added. Face and construct validity was established. The instrument was subjected to trial testing using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. The Cronbach Alpha

yielded 0.81, 0.77 and 0.75 for the three clusters respectively. Questionnaire titled "The Impact of Mentorship on Entrepreneurship Success" was used for data collection through Google online form. The instrument was designed to elicit the ratings of respondents on a 4-point rating scale as follows: Very high extent (VHE) 4 points, High extent (HE) 3 points, Low extent (LE) 2 points and very low extent (VLE), 1 –point.

The data collected in this study were analyzed using the mean scores to give answers to the research questions. Any item with mean values of 2.50 and above was interpreted as high extent while items with mean values below 2.50 were interpreted as low extent.

Result

Research Question 1: To what extent does mentorship motivate mentees for entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state.

Table 1*: Mean response on the extent does mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state*

SN	mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	My mentor regularly encourages me to pursue my entrepreneurial goals.	3.50	0.57	High Extent
2	Mentorship sessions increase my motivation to start a business	3.32	0.54	High Extent
3	I feel more determined to succeed as an entrepreneur due to mentorship.	3.42	0.58	High Extent
4	I am more committed to my business plans because of my mentor's support	3.42	0.61	High Extent
5	I feel energized to take business risks after mentorship interactions.	3.37	0.59	High Extent
6	Mentorship has helped me maintain consistency in my business efforts	3.36	0.54	High Extent
7	I am inspired by my mentor's entrepreneurial achievements	3.46	0.56	High Extent
8	Mentorship boosts my drive to overcome business challenges	3.37	0.53	High Extent
9	I actively seek opportunities for growth due to my mentor's guidance.	3.38	0.56	High Extent
10	I feel motivated to explore innovative ideas through mentorship	3.37	0.59	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.05**	**0.56**	High Extent

The data presented in Table 1 show the extent mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success. The table reveals that ten items have a mean value of 3.32 to 3.50, indicating the respondents agreed. The grand mean of 3.05 suggests that mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state to a high extent. The standard deviation, ranging from 0.51 to 0.61, shows homogeneity in the respondents' ratings of the extent mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success in Anambra state.

Research Question 2: To what extent does mentorship instill confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra State.

Table 2: *Mean response to the extent mentorship instills confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra State*

SN	Mentorships instill confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
11	I feel more confident in my business decisions due to mentorship	3.49	0.57	High Extent

12	Mentorship has helped me overcome fear of business failure	3.38	0.57	High Extent
13	My mentor has strengthened my belief in my entrepreneurial abilities.	3.40	0.53	High Extent
14	I can now present my business ideas more confidently	3.39	0.51	High Extent
15	Mentorship has increased my confidence in managing risks	3.36	0.57	High Extent
16	My self-esteem as an entrepreneur has improved through mentorship	3.36	0.57	High Extent
17	. I believe I can lead a successful business due to mentorship	3.44	0.61	High Extent
18	. Mentorship has taught me how to handle criticism constructively	3.35	0.60	High Extent
19	I no longer feel intimidated by competitors in my field	3.36	0.54	High Extent
20	My ability to make strategic decisions has improved through mentorship.	3.41	0.52	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.06**	**0.53**	High Extent

The data presented in table 2 show the extent mentorship instills confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success. The table reveals that ten items have a mean value of 3.35 to 3.49, indicating the respondents agreed to a high extent. The grand mean of 3.05 suggests that mentorship instills confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success to a high extent. The standard deviation, ranging from 0.51 to 0.61, shows homogeneity in the respondents' ratings of the extent mentorship instilling confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra state.

Research Question 3: To what extent does mentorship encourage personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth in Anambra State

Table 3: *Mean response on the extent mentorship encourages personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth in Anambra State*

SN	mentorship encourage personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth	**x̄**	**SD**	**Remarks**
21	Mentorship has helped me develop better time management skills	3.58	0.52	High Extent
22	I have improved my communication skills through mentorship	3.35	0.56	High Extent
23	Mentorship has enhanced my decision-making abilities	3.30	0.55	High Extent
24	I have learned how to set and achieve personal development goals	3.34	0.55	High Extent
25	My leadership qualities have improved due to mentorship	3.42	0.52	High Extent
26	Mentorship has made me more self-disciplined.	3.38	0.51	High Extent
27	Mentorship has helped me build a professional network.	3.43	0.56	High Extent
28	I have become more adaptable in dealing with business changes.	3.53	0.52	High Extent

29	My entrepreneurial mindset has been refined through mentorship	3.42	0.57	High Extent
30	Mentorship has helped me balance my personal and business responsibilities	3.41	0.52	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.08**	**0.53**	High Extent

The data presented in Table 3 show the extent mentorship encourages personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth. The table reveals that ten items have a mean value of 3.38 to 3.58, indicating that the respondents agreed that mentorship encourages personal and professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth to a high extent. The standard deviation, ranging from 0.51 to 0.57, shows homogeneity in the respondents' ratings of the extent mentorship encourages personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth in Anambra state.

Discussion

Extent mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial Success

The findings of the study in research question 1 revealed that mentorship motivates mentees for entrepreneurial success in Anambra State to a high extent. This finding agrees with the study of Oviawe (2022), who emphasized that mentorship plays a crucial role in equipping Nigerian youths with the confidence, business knowledge, and support network required for entrepreneurial achievement. Onyia (2025) found that effective mentoring relationships significantly enhances entrepreneurial intentions and business sustainability among young entrepreneurs. Akinyemi and Akinyemi (2023) reported that mentored youths in Nigeria demonstrate higher motivation, competence, and business survival rates compared to their non-mentored counterparts. Nwankwo e al (2017), in a study conducted in Southeastern Nigeria, including Anambra State, concluded that mentorship enhances self-efficacy and entrepreneurial performance, validating the high influence of mentorship on entrepreneurial success reported in this study.

Extent mentorships instill confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success

The finding of the study in research question 2 revealed that mentorship instills confidence in mentees for entrepreneurial success to a high extent. This finding is supported by Osabohien et al (2024)**,** who demonstrated that mentorship significantly enhances entrepreneurial performance in Nigeria as such attributes in primarily strengthen self-efficacy and decision-making confidence. Anekwe (2019) **e**xamined mentorship's influence on small-scale business operators in Calabar and found that mentored entrepreneurs reported higher confidence in managing and growing their ventures compared to non-mentored peers. Ibanga and Ogidi (2023) opines that entrepreneurial passion significantly boosts self-efficacy among SME owners, and this elevated confidence drives enterprise growth. Taken together, these studies reinforce the idea that mentorship builds self-belief and confidence in entrepreneurs consistent with your finding in Anambra State.

Extent mentorships encourage personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth

The findings of the study in the research question 3 reveal that mentorship encourages personal and professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial advancement to a high extent. This aligns with findings by Orga et al (2020) who observed that psycho-social support and career guidance from mentors significantly relate to mentees' professional growth and productivity in Southeast Nigeria. In a study conducted by Oke (2022) it shows that mentorship through support for career path-setting and enhancement of subject knowledge positively correlates with entrepreneurial development, indicating mentees' growth in both capacity and ambition. According to study carried by Silicon Valley Innovation Center (2024) the findings emphasis that mentorship enhances students' entrepreneurial skills development, through guidance, workshops, and structured learning experiences. Komninos et al (2024) carried out in South Africa highlighted that mentorship fosters development of cognitive, leadership, management, and resilience skills all critical for scaling women-owned ventures, pointing to broader applicability across Sub-Saharan entrepreneurial contexts.

Conclusion

The study concluded that mentorship plays a critical and transformative role in fostering entrepreneurial development among individuals. The high extent to which mentorship influences motivation, builds confidence, and promotes both personal and professional growth affirms that it is not merely a support mechanism but a strategic tool for entrepreneurial empowerment. Therefore, the study strongly advocates for the institutionalization and integration of structured mentorship programs into entrepreneurship development initiatives, educational curricula, and government youth empowerment policies**.** Doing so will significantly enhance the capacity of aspiring entrepreneurs to navigate challenges, build sustainable businesses, and contribute meaningfully to regional economic growth.

Recommendations

1. The **Ministry of Youth and Development, educational institutions, and entrepreneurship development agencies** should establish coaching structure on entrepreneurial by linking aspiring entrepreneurs with successful business owners among others.
2. Business incubation centres, vocational institutions, and entrepreneurship training programs should instill confidence in mentees thereby-building mentorship sessions among entrepreneurs.
3. **Policymakers and educational planners** should encourage mentorship encourage the personal/professional growth of mentees for entrepreneurial growth.

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