

THE YOUNG SHALL GROW: EFFECTS OF SENIOR ACADEMICS' MENTORING ON JUNIOR ACADEMICS' CAREER GROWTH IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Young academics entering universities require professional stamina, through mentoring, that will enable them to face their occupational exercises and challenges. It constitutes a problematic gap when mentoring in any form and shape is non-existent or deficient. Junior academics are often worried with the feeling of isolation and uncertainty about what is expected of them. The literature is replete with the positive impact of mentoring on career growth of employees in commercial organisations and lower educational institutions, but very few studies abound on the level of impact the mentoring could have on the career of junior academics in tertiary institutions, using, the University of Benin. Therefore, it is the objective of this paper to assess the effect(s) of senior academics' mentoring on the career growth of junior academics. The exploratory design, within the framework of the survey design, regulated the methodology of the study. The collection of quantitative data involved the participation of 411 respondents to whom questionnaires were administered using the stratified random sampling technique. Qualitative data were obtained from 10 in-depth interviewees, who were senior academics, and were purposively selected. The study found that a cumulative majority (79%) and (68.1%) of junior academics affirmed that their mentors had had a high impact on their lecture delivery, and publications respectively. There was a statistical significant relationship (p -value < 0.05) between mentoring by senior academics and the career growth of junior academics. It is concluded from the results of this study that mentoring can boost the career growth and development of junior academics. Virtually all junior academics are in dire need

for mentoring. Formal mentoring, in the form of deliberately assigning new and junior academics to experienced and willing senior academics should be institutionalized in all tertiary institutions.

Key words: Mentoring, Junior academics, Senior academics, Career growth. University

Mentoring in academic spheres as a medium of providing relevant guidance and support towards the achievement of career and professional development is increasingly gaining attention as a key strategy in professional training and development programmes (Clarke, 2004; Barkham, 2005; Jones et al, 2005). The academia system naturally exposes junior academics to occupational upheavals and the struggle to balance several conflicting issues such as teaching, research, work -life balance, promotion and .career. development (Winfield and Jarret, 2001; Ajayi et al, 2011). In the bid to cushion these feelings of shock, isolation, and disillusionment, mentoring programmes were introduced in the United States of America and in other parts of the world during the 1980s (Clark and Byrnes, 2012). Mentoring programmes are now commonly provided, and sometimes made mandatory, to greenhorn teachers and academics alike worldwide (Hobson et al, 2009). Nevertheless, outcomes of general observation over the years have indicated that there are no formal structured programmes to ease the absorption and settling down of new academic staff into the university system (Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong, 2012). What exists in this regard is the mentoring of new academic staff in variously established patterns that are often informal and haphazard (Blunt and Conolly, 2006).

Industrial sociology is a specialized field of study in sociology that covers mainly organizational norms, behaviour, and leadership, and analysis in industrial and technological process and change (Obi, 201 Ob). Organizational norms and standards formed consciously or/and unconsciously require maintenance and continuation for as long as possible to ensure the survival of an organization. These tasks fall within the scope of human resources management (HRM) which is an aspect of industrial sociology and labour relations. Among other channels and tools, industrial sociologists have identified mentoring as a tool with which organizational norms and standards can be maintained. However, the impact of mentoring on the career development of employees as elements of organisations is certainly of importance to industrial sociologists with a special interest in HRM. Some of the managements of the tertiary institutions seem to be under heightening pressure to create opportunities for the career guidance and development of their academic staff to forestall a drop in academic performance and standards; and one major method that has been keyed into to maintain and promote academic standards and performance is mentoring (Okurame, 2008).

Obviously, a shift of emphasis from the personal to the professional within the context of professional training and development subsists (Jones et al, 2005). Given the greater need for accountability and improvement, it has become -a major issue and

requirement in higher education in recent years, hence, regulatory bodies and universities have instituted policies to measure and reward academic staff performance in areas of teaching, supervision, research and publication. Academics entering universities require professional stamina, through mentoring, that will enable them to face their occupational exercises and challenges (Wadesango and Machingambi, 2011). Mentoring ensures the transfer of skills and knowledge from mentors to proteges which enables the latter to achieve career success, career growth, with the attendant corollaries (Okurame, 2002; Okurame and Balogun, 2005; Olasupo, 2011; Olowookere, 2012). It constitutes a problematic gap when mentoring in any form and shape is non-existent or deficient. Junior academics are often worried with the feeling of isolation and uncertainty about what is expected of them. The literature is replete with the positive impact of mentoring on career growth of employees in commercial organisations and lower educational institutions, but very few studies exist on the level of impact the mentoring could have on the career of junior academics in tertiary institutions. Using, the University of Benin, it was pertinent to assess effect(s) of mentoring on the career growth of junior academics.

Mentoring and Career Growth

Moskowitz and Stephens (1997) conducted case studies in Japan, New Zealand, and Australia and found that when mentor teachers assisted new teachers in making the adjustment to full-time teaching, it was easier for beginning teachers to feel comfortable in their role. With this finding, it could be deduced that mentoring has a veritable link with job satisfaction, self-esteem/confidence, and job performance of employees and academics in particular. These elements that mentoring could aid can be tied to the indicators of career growth of employees and academics alike. The career growth of academics is an important aspect often of managing this human resource in the university system especially as it determines the status of the university locally and internationally. This is true in the sense that a university that has an overwhelming majority or all its academic staff experiencing career growth and development in the terms of outstanding teaching, and researching, will have its name recognised and high ranking in the comity of universities.

According to Salmi (2009), 'world-class university' or 'global ranking' has become a phrase for not simply improving the quality of learning and research in tertiary education but more importantly for developing the capacity to compete in the global tertiary education marketplace through the acquisition and creation of advanced knowledge. In reality, the preoccupation to be a world-class university or to the global ranking has attracted large attention from higher education institutions and governments (Tajul et al, 2012). Salmi (2009:5) summarized three important complementary sets of dynamics that could be found at play among top universities, namely: '(i) a high concentration of talent (faculty and students), (ii) abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and conduct advanced research, and (iii) favourable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation and flexibility, and enable

institutions to make decisions and manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy'. Whereas the second and third dynamics are quite related to government formulated policies, the first dynamics is mainly dependent on the institution's long-term strategies in attracting and developing human resource. In essence, Tajul et al (2012) observed that the above mentioned factors could be considered as things that should be presented and regarded as capable to fast-track a university to be adjudged a world class university.

The University of Benin situated in Benin City, Edo-State, Nigeria is apt for this present study as it was a public owned university, and thus a public university. In recent times, staff performance measurement has become an issue of concern in universities, because of the dire quest for responsibility in the public sector..Chen, Yang and Shiau (2006) mentioned that appropriate measures are required to reform the operations of the tertiary institutions in order for them to handle the challenge of rising competition. Consequently, a deliberate human resources management apparatus is needed to make happen the sought after changes and standards. Furthermore, pressure on public universities to evaluate their performance is mounting, since the competition for funding from government together with attracting good local and international students has heightened due to the growing number of private universities (Tajul et al, 2012). Koslowski (2006) and Tajul et al (2012) suitably note that evaluating the quality of university education has become a major public concern due to an increasing competitive pressure, finite individual and institutional resources, and increased demand for universal access. This has made the utmost necessity for responsibility, accountability and development of academics or academic staff a foremost concern in universities in recent times.

Responding to the need for university academic staff improvement in particular, 'governments and universities have attempted to institute policies and practices designed to measure, encourage and reward academic staff performance, such as teaching, supervision, research and publication' (Tajul et al, 2012). In modern times, universities are immensely concerned about being ranked highly internationally and they yearn to attract talents and resources and entrench good governance. On the other hand, with the massive and prolonged period of sustained poverty across the globe, we are very curious as to the direction that academicians are heading' (Tajul et al, 2012).

Accordingly, vital questions that Tajul et al (2012) had asked were: are universities and academics alike really doing something for the betterment of society as a whole, particularly those groups of marginalized people who numbered in billions for their own advancement, are they conducting lectures, research and development (R&D) activities and services to produce quality outcomes that are equitable, accessible, available and affordable to all, particularly the bottom billion of humanity. These fundamental questions need to be addressed by both universities and academicians, and mentoring is a very vital input in this quest.

To ensure a healthy culture, universities have to ascertain that internal performance measures are linked to the corporate (or institution) goals that attempt to improve their operations and not simply those that compete with peer institutions (Yu, Suraya and Ijab, 2009). The importance of managing organizational intangible assets has been stressed by Seemann and Smallwood (2004), who argued that intangibles are "the most significant" growth driver in an economy. In this wise, the recruitment and retaining of talented academic staff are key to achieving the expected international standard university performance that virtually all universities the world over have sought for. Nonetheless, how these talented staffers are retained and reproduced their kind is dependent on certain important human resources management tools which include mentoring. Hence the role of mentoring in university academic staff career growth which has not been given ample research attention needed evaluation.

Research Methodology

The target population of this study comprised all male and female junior academics in the University of Benin, Benin City, who had been employees of the institution for at least six months prior to their participation in this study. For the purpose of this study, junior academics were operationalized and conceptualized as academic staff of the University of Benin who occupied the ranks of Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, and Lecturer I. Reasons for adopting the academic staff who fell within the aforementioned ranks as the study's population, was hinged on the fact that the academic staff who occupied these ranks were regarded as junior academics in the university system. Hence, they needed to be mentored due to their relative inexperience in academics. This was buttressed by the fact that next rank above these four academic ranks was the position of Senior Lecturer followed by Associate Professor, and Professor. Since it is not procedural for a Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, or Lecturer I to provide mentoring for whoever might be junior to them as the case may be, they suitably fit into the junior academics category of academic staff of the institution which constitutes this study's locale. According to the University of Benin Records and Statistics Office, as at January 2016 there were 1884 academic staff; however, of this population, the junior academics were 1112 in total. However, only 411 of the sampled junior academics participated in the study; and using the stratified random sampling technique questionnaires were administered to them. Also, with aid of an in-depth interview guide, qualitative data were obtained from 10 interviewees who were senior academics and who were purposively selected.

The analysis of the different categories of the quantitative data was done with frequencies, percentages, tables, charts, and cross tabulations. Furthermore, the analyses and testing of formulated hypotheses were done with the suitable inferential statistical techniques. Qualitative data got from the various in-depth interview sessions that were initially recorded were replayed and subsequently transcribed. The transcribed responses were then subjected to manual content analysis which involved the

identification of recurring themes that were then interpreted to support inferences. To lend an empirical credence to the findings of the study, a null hypothesis was formulated.

With the aid of the chi-square inferential statistical technique the hypothesis tested, and decision was made using the 0.05 p-value to establish significant or no significant relationship between the two concerned variables.

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between mentoring of senior academics' and the career growth of junior academics.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a relationship between mentoring of senior academics' and the career growth of junior academics.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Possession of Mentor

Variables	Frequencies (n = 411)	Percentages
Assignment of a senior academic as mentor on assumption of duty		
Yes	218	53.0
No	193	47.0
Had a mentor since the inception of academic career		
Yes	305	74.2
No	106	25.8
Currently have a mentor		
Yes	317	77.1
No	94	22.9

Source; Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

In organisations and institutions where formal mentoring arrangements are in place, when a junior member of staff assumes duty, he or she is assigned to an experienced and relevant mentor whose wealth of knowledge and expertise is beneficial to the expected career trajectory of the junior member of staff. Conversely, where there is no formal mentoring arrangement, serious-minded new junior staff personally seeks for senior and experienced staff who they regard as their mentors. A remarkable feature of the informal mentoring arrangement is that the mentor(s) may not be aware that he is operating in the capacity of a mentor to his subordinate, since the subordinate staff, for some rational reasons, would not make known his intentions, but deems it suitable to be

mentored from a distance by noting the way and manner the presumed mentor deals with issues and challenges in the work place.

In the University of Benin, on the surface, a majority (53%) of the junior academics claimed that on assumption of duty, they were assigned senior academics to mentor them; and 47 percent affirmed that they were not assigned mentors on assumption of duty (Table 1). However, an in-depth probing of this response from the respondents revealed that majority of the junior academics in the institution were not, actually on assumption of duty, assigned senior academics as their mentors. It thus appeared that what they regarded as assignment of mentors was mere pairing of a junior academic with a senior academic to handle a course. As empirical observation would disclose, a junior academic teaching a course with a senior academics does not always translate to mentoring, since the particular course taught by both of them may not be in the area of research interest of the junior academic. This finding therefore implies that technically, majority of the junior academic staff in the University of Benin were not assigned senior academics to mentor them; confirming the existence of both formal and informal mentoring practices in the institution.

Be it formal or informal mentoring practice in the University of Benin indicates that 74.2 percent of the respondents, representing an overwhelming number of the entire respondents, affirmed that they had had a mentor since the inception of their academic career. This left 25.8 percent of the respondents who had not had a mentor since the inception of their academic career. Though, a considerable proportion of junior academics in the University of Benin had had a mentor since the beginning of their career, the proportion of junior academics who had not had a mentor since the inception of their academic profession was not insignificant. Furthermore, of the 411 respondents who participated in this study, 317 of them representing 77.1 percent affirmed that they had, at least, a mentor as at the time this study was conducted (Table 1). Accordingly, 22.9 percent of the respondents had a contrary claim. These immediate findings were a further confirmation of the overriding position of this study that formal and comprehensive mentoring was non-existent in the University of Benin, and by extension, most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Situations of this nature would not have been obtainable in institutions and organisations alike operating formal mentoring. A summary of the quantitative data in Table 1 has it that a majority of the respondents were assigned senior academics to mentor them on assumption of duty, had had a mentor since the inception of their academic career, and had mentors as at the time they participated in this study.

Table 2: Rating of Mentoring on Career

Variables	Frequencies (n = 411)	Percentages
Rating of mentor(s)'s impact on job confidence		
Very High	127	30.9
High	198	48.2
Low	33	8.0
Very low	15	3.6
None	38	9.2
Rating of mentor(s)'s impact on job satisfaction		
Very High	105	25.5
High	204	49.6
Low	42	10.2
Very low	11	2.7
None	49	11.9
Rating of Mentor(s)'s Impact on Publications		
Very High	110	26.8
High	171	41.6
Low	58	14.1
Very low	21	5.1
None	51	12.4
Rating of Mentor(s)'s Impact on Conference Attendance		
Very High	112	27.3
High	162	39.4
Low	59	14.4
Very low	22	5.4
None	56	13.6
Rating of Mentor(s)'s Impact on Lecture Delivery		
Very High	144	35.0
High	182	44.3
Low	37	9.0
Very low	10	2.4
None	38	9.2

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2016.

Mentees are in a better position to provide the required data necessary to assess the effects of mentoring on the career growth aspect of the career development of junior academics. Accordingly, in obtaining this data, respondents were made to rate the influence that the guidance and assistance of senior academics had had on their career growth. Career growth, as operationalized in this study, comprised job confidence, job satisfaction, and rate of publishing. Other components of career growth were conference attendance, and lecture delivery.

In terms of job confidence, a cumulative majority (79.1%) of the respondents submitted that the guidance and assistance mentors provided had had great productive impact on job confidence. Various sets of a smaller proportion of the respondents affirmed that mentors' guidance and assistance had had low (8%) bearing on junior academics' job confidence; others (3.6%) affirmed that the impact was very low (Table 2). However, 9.2 percent of the respondents submitted that guidance and assistance from mentors did not have an impact on their job confidence. Confidence is a hallmark of academics; and the foregoing finding suggests that mentors can build job confidence in junior academics through effective mentoring.

What produces and sustains job satisfaction in staff of organisations and institutions could be hinged on passion for the job, interest, or psycho-social as well as financial incentives. The impact of mentoring on job satisfaction has not been given adequate consideration. Among junior academics in the University of Benin, it was found that they significantly rated mentoring as a major contributor to their job satisfaction. A majority of the respondents, who were 75.1 percent cumulatively, affirmed this fact. However, 11.9 percent of the respondents claimed that mentoring had no impact, whatsoever, on their job satisfaction. If mentoring accounted for the job satisfaction of a significant majority of the respondents, and not for the job satisfaction of a few of the respondents, then it implies that these few respondents either did not originally have the passion for teaching and researching which are the main tasks of academics, or they had mentors who had not provided them with a comprehensive, and in-depth mentoring.

Publications serve as one of the prerequisites for the career development of every academic in tertiary institutions. Either in the form of articles, treatise, or books, publications require enormous skills and technical know-how, that junior academics cannot just acquire without proper guidance and assistance from a knowledgeable mentor. In this regard, the respondents' rating of their mentors' impact on the quality and volume of their publications revealed that a cumulative majority (68.1%) of them admitted that mentoring had considerably advanced their publication activities. Reasons behind this immediate finding were that mentors initiated publishable ideas, and procedurally guided mentees for a collective production of the publication items. However, while a cumulative percentage (19.2%) of the respondents claimed that mentoring had not significantly improved on their publications, 12.4 percent of the respondents admitted that mentoring had no impact on their publication. A major reason,

these set of respondents adduced for the low impact of mentoring on their publications was their mentors' perception that bagging the perquisite postgraduate degrees should be the focus of junior academics, and not several publications.

An implication that can be inferred from these findings is that the pattern of mentoring and the perception of mentors determines the quality and volume of publications that junior academics have in their names.

Just like publications, attendance of conferences is one of the hallmarks of academics, and a huge impetus for the career development of junior academics. Delivering papers and lectures, pleasantly and professionally, in both reputable local and international conferences, involves awareness, immense abilities, and direct or indirect provisions of logistical resources. All these, virtually all junior academics, more often than not, cannot easily access and possess by dint of personal efforts. A majority of the respondents representing a cumulative percentage of 66.7 percent affirmed that their respective mentors -had immensely assisted them to attend conferences. Their mentors did this by informing them of upcoming conferences they were eligible to attend and also by informing them of how they could apply and seek for financial assistance from existing provisions such as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) among others. A minority of the respondents (5.4%) asserted that their respective mentors had very low impact on their conference attendance; while 13.6 percent of the respondents stated that their mentors made no impact on their conference attendance. Reasons offered for these statements, were that their mentors did not see them as eligible enough to attend certain conferences, and their mentors were yet to inform them about a forthcoming conference. These claims and statements suggest that most mentors inform their mentees of upcoming conferences, and give them coaching and assistance to qualify for such conferences; whereas very few mentors do nothing about coaching and assisting their mentees to qualify for conferences.

Teaching and researching are the major tasks of academics in tertiary institutions. With teaching in focus, it is through it that academics relay and pass on knowledge in an understandable manner to students. Since most junior academics lack adequate pedagogical abilities, mentors who have been teaching for decades are essential to fill this gap. A majority of the respondents, comprising 35 percent and 44.3 percent of the respondents affirmed that their mentors had had "very high" impact and "high" impact respectively on their lecture delivery. A cumulative percentage (11.4%) of the respondents submitted that their mentor had small impact on their lecture delivery; and 9.2 of the respondents submitted that their mentors had not made any form of impression on their lecture delivery. This is a signpost that mentoring is very beneficial for the lecture delivery aspect of an academics' career. However, an implication of the main finding in this regard is that the quality and pattern of lecture delivery of a mentor can rub off their mentees.

To complement the quantitative data on the respondents' rating of the impact of mentoring on the aspects on their career growth, qualitative data were collected from

the study's in-depth interviewees. They were asked if mentoring had aided their career growth as junior academics coming up. Their responses were:

Mentoring has aided my career growth a lot, because every nonsense, I used the word nonsense in quote, I put into writing then, they were there to correct me. They were there to advise me, to admonish me, challenge me. and to always console me. Without them I am nothing. So mentoring is very vital just as in every other profession. People need mentors more than anything else for them to succeed. I thank God I have them today. In fact the story of my life will not be complete without those who mentored me (**Male IDI/50 years/Associate Professor/ 24th January, 2017**).

Of course it aided me, and it was an eye opener. It was kind of a tutelage. When I don't know what to do, I go to them and they explain to me, and I know better; you gain knowledge from mentoring. Even at a time, I had an HOD, we were co-teaching a course, I used to follow him to class since he asked me to. I sat among his students and watched and listened to him as he taught. It helped me a lot as when I was assigned to teach I adopted his pattern and mode of teaching. He was very particular about carrying students along in the class; he had a way of asking students, questions, and a way of creating room for students' active participation in class. I learnt a lot from all these (**Female IDI/53 years/Professor/ 25th January, 2017**).

I have people I will describe as mentors in my department, three of them: one female and two males. They played different roles in my academic development in terms of my attendance to conferences and participation in workshops and seminars. The female among them, a professor, has inspired me a great deal. She gives me opportunity, and information. She asks me to write, and she looks into it. Sometimes, she writes and gives me to edit her own work, telling me what to do and what not to do; so that has inspired me. Then of course, the other two males who are also professors, also give me responsibilities, they give me classes to prepare for, and to teach on their behalf in terms of tutorials, and then prepare the students for exams. Sometimes they give me assignments and I do them, they look at it make some recommendations and I accept the corrections. So, to a very large extent I think that they have improved my life and helped me academically (**Male IDI/45 years/Associate Professor/ 23th January, 2017**).

Mentoring has helped me in several ways. I remember when I started as a graduate assistant, I had little knowledge about the job. I had to depend on my mentors for guidance and ideas to see me through. I can say that the level I am today is because of the support I got from my mentors (**Female IDI/57 years/Associate Professor/ 25th January, 2017**).

However, one of the in-depth interviewees submitted that mentoring did not contribute to his career growth as he did not have any mentor. Hence-he asserted that he singularly and

personally helped himself to rise through the ranks of academics. His specific response was:

I cannot say that my career growth so far is attributed to mentoring. None of what you call the mentors ever mentored me. I am the one mentoring others. I suffered without a mentor; if I had had a mentor, as a mentee indeed I wouldn't have been where I am now (Male IDI/49 years/Professor/ 15th January, 2017).

In a nutshell, among the submissions on how mentoring had aided the career growth of the interviewees, the preponderant themes were as follows: mentors gave correction on mistakes made; they were there to tender valuable advice; admonish where necessary; challenged and charged them to set and achieve goals; and they were always on ground to offer consolation when it was needed. Other submissions were that mentors helped resolve difficult job tasks; mentors instilled in them appropriate patterns and modes of teaching; they were given information which ensured their attendance to conferences and their participation in workshops and seminars; and mentors gave them direction and focus in their career.

Since it was the assumption that a majority of the interviewees had recorded some growth in their career, they were asked if their career growth so far was attributed to the mentoring they had had from some of their senior colleagues. Their responses were:

Of course all my articles were always given to my mentor. He would read them and tell me this one needs minor corrections or major restructuring, and when I am done with the corrections, I always wait for his endorsement statement which is what he always used - he would say "go. ahead". So they have played a lot in the advancement of my career (Male IDI/60 years/Associate Professor/ 24th January, 2017).

My career growth is partly attributed to mentoring. In the aspect of writing ability and attending seminars, yes; in this regard it has been as a result of the impact of mentors in my life. The three people I mentioned have been quite impressive, they have provided the pathway for me, they have given me links, they have given me email addresses and phone numbers to contact. Sometimes they even recommend me for conferences, for workshop which are sometimes fully funded, and then I go for such workshops and it improves me. Of course we also co-author articles together. Sometimes they just say look there is a publication outlet there, write and submit, and I do; and sometimes they don't bother to edit they tell me the work is good enough and I proceed. So that has also improved my confidence in the work (Male IDI/45 years/Associate Professor/ 23th January, 2017).

It can be inferred from the responses above that mentoring is indispensable in the academics, as

it has an enormous impact on the career development of the junior academics.

Hypothesis Testing

The purpose driving the testing the hypothesis formulated for the study, already stated above, is to statistically determine the existence or not of a relationship between mentoring of senior academics' and the career growth of junior academics.

Table 3: Contingency Table of Having A Mentor and Rating of Mentor(s)'s Impact on Publications

Variables	Currently have a mentor		Total
	Yes	No	
Rating of mentor(s)'s Very High impact on publications	103 32.5%	7 7.4%	110 26.8%
High	146 46.1%	25 26.6%	171 41.6%
Low	45 14.2%	13 13.8%	58 14.1%
Very low	9 2.8%	12 12.8%	21 5.1%
None	14 4.4%	37 39.4%	51 12.4%
Total	317 100.0%	94 100.0%	411 100.0%
Chi-square = 108.931 df - 4 p-value = 0.00			

Source: Researcher's fieldwork and SPSS computation, 2017

Table 3 is a cross tabulation of two variables: 'currently have mentors', and 'rating of mentor(s)'s impact on publications'. The "currently have a mentor" variable is the operationalized version of the mentoring of senior academics which is the independent variable. The rating of mentor(s)'s impact on publications is one of the operationalized versions of career growth. The publication aspect of career growth was selected because it among job confidence, job satisfaction, publications, attendance of conferences, and lecture delivery, it is the number of publications that academics has that determines his or her promotion from one lower rank to a higher rank. The data in Table 3 show that a cumulative percentage (78.6%) of the respondents who had a mentor as at the time they participated in this study rated the impact of the mentors on their publication of journal articles and books high and very high. Hence, with a chi-square value of 108.931, and p-value of 0.00 which is less than the benchmark of 0.05, it is inferred that there is a statistical significant relationship between mentoring by senior

academics and the career growth of junior academics. This implies that mentoring is a sure way to boost the career growth of junior academics in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Mentoring conduces to the career growth of junior academics; and it is a sure way to boost the career growth of junior academics in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Aspects of junior academics' career growth are job confidence, satisfaction, publishing of journal articles, attendance of conferences, and effective lecture delivery. Confidence is a hallmark of academics; and mentors can build job confidence in junior academics through effective mentoring. Mentoring accounted for the job satisfaction. If mentoring does not account for the job satisfaction of a junior academics then it is either the junior academics do not originally have the passion for teaching and researching which are the main tasks of academics, or they have mentors who have not provided them a comprehensive and an in-depth mentoring. The pattern of mentoring and the perception of mentors determine the quality and volume of publications that junior academics have in their names. Most mentors inform their mentees of upcoming conferences, and give them coaching and assistance to qualify for such conferences; and the quality and pattern of lecture delivery of a mentor can rub off their mentees. Moreover, mentors boost the career growth of the junior academics by way of correcting mistakes made; admonishing where necessary; challenging and charging their mentees to set and achieve goals; instilling in mentees appropriate patterns and modes of teaching; and giving mentees direction and focus in their respective careers. Hence, formal mentoring, in the form of deliberately assigning new and junior academics to experienced and willing senior academics should be institutionalized in all tertiary institutions, as the undeniable positive effect that mentoring has on the career growth and development of junior academics is expedient.

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