

**MENTORSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A MODERATING ROLE OF LEADERSHIP  
STYLE IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN PORT HARCOURT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The aim of the study was on hoe leadership style determine the relationship between mentorship and employee performance of commercial banks in Port Harcourt. The study reviewed mentorship and employee performance and anchored the work on Herzberg two factor theory of motivation and the Goal-Setting theory. The study concludes that the use of mentorship program is characterized by the presence of and use of understudy, coaching and roleplay in order for the employees to work effectively around commercial banks are viable ways to achieve work accuracy, quality service delivery and work quality. Trending mentorship program in commercial banks is characterized by the adoption of understudy, coaching and roleplay to promote the performance of employees. It becomes necessary on commercial banks to make adequate provisions of leadership style such as transformational leadership style and visionary leadership style etc. to create an enabling environment for mentorship to be effective, thereby enhancing the performance of their employees.*

***Keywords: Mentorship, Employee Performance, Leadership Style***

**INTRODUCTION**

Employee performance refers to how an organization's workforce behaves in the workplace and how well they perform the job duties obligated to them (Donohoe, 2019). It may also refer to work effectiveness, quality, and efficiency at the task level. The rate and level of employee involvement in training programs will definitely stimulate and trigger positive reinforcement, zeal, ability, and creativity on the task he is assigned to perform, and thereby become committed to his job and the organization at large. A performing employee is he who has the ability and willingness to work in accordance with the rules, objectives and vision of the organization. Chijioke and Chinedu, (2015) posit that, the committed employee is a performing employee, who has the sense of stake, ownership, and citizenship in the organization. He can add extra time and effort to ensure that task, goals and objectives set are accomplished with minimal or zero supervision.

Allen 2007, says that mentorship is a system of semi-structured guidance where one person or a group of people share their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their own lives and careers. Over time, the definition of mentorship has evolved, with some theorists suggesting that mentorship must be voluntary relationship of equality, openness, and trust between the mentor and mentee (Coppola et al, 2010). Mentorship further involves motivating and empowering the other person to identify their own issues and goals, and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them. It is not by doing it for them, or expecting them to 'do it the way I did it', but by understanding and respecting different ways of working (Bozionelos, 2006).

Employees are integral component of any organization, all across organizations, especially in the banking industry, employees are one of the indispensable resources that determine their success and competitiveness, it takes the committed efforts of employees for policies, operations, and service plans to be implemented. This implies that the success of any organization to a large extent depends on how productive the workers are. This is further tied down to high moral guidelines established by the organization as they aid employees in the achievement of the firms' goals in general (Abbas & Awan, 2017). The fundamental value for future need of the organization as it relates to manpower does not only end at recruitment, but in ensuring that the employees are adequately equipped with the relevant day to day skill to stir on the changes that unveils itself from the general environment which the organization operates. One of the means through which this

can be achieved is through mentorship program, and how it is executed with the aim of influencing employee performance, readiness to take up work responsibilities and availability of requisite and competency skill for immediate and future positions in the studied organization. The goals and objectives of the organization are to meet the needs and satisfaction of her customers by maintaining high standard and quality personnel, and to sustain a high safety index; however, the successes of these objectives are hinged on employee commitment to work. Conceptually, Mentorship is a semi-structured approach where a person or groups of people share their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their own lives and careers. This practice motivates employees and empowers others so as to identify their own strength and achieve organizational targets and goals. Mentorship enables the mentee to tap into the best of a mentor as a source of energy to foster intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding.

Schooley (2010) states that mentorship involves a formal or informal training partnership where employees receive information, advice, and guidance from an experienced professional, usually within the organization, who has expertise and a motivation to help others grow in their jobs. In a traditional sense, mentorship involves a process that brings together the inexperienced and the experienced in an attempt where the former will gain knowledge, self-confidence, skills and competencies from the later as they transit through the process (Colky & Young, 2006). Murrell et al (2012) has differentiated these two relationships – informal and formal mentorship - along three dimensions: initiation, structure, and process. Where formal mentorship relationship is externally provided, informal one is initiated when two people are drawn towards one another because of needs, interest or perceived similarity. Formal mentorship relationships are generally provided for a specific amount of time and pre-designed with predetermined frequency and locations for meeting between the mentor and the mentee. Understanding the mentorship approaches requires significant upfront planning before you decide the type of mentorship that best matches your organization. For mentorship program to succeed, executive-level support must be secured, the program planned well, communicate to all employee on mentorship; provide upfront training for mentor and mentee and designed in a way such that employees are simply encouraged to participate, but no one is forced.

This clearly indicates that, there are some inherent problems which need to be solved in the organization, such as: absence of understudying scheme, inability of management to inculcate coaching method, and the neglect of role-playing. Whereas, Mentorship is an activity aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required to efficiently carryout his task, which is the purpose he was hired. Also, training exercise is very essential in the organization at regular intervals and not just only as the need for it arises, despite the fact that it requires budgeting function which in most cases discourages its effectiveness and regularity for implementation as captured in Chinomnso, (2014). Mentorship objectives need to be clearly and accurately identified in order to ensure that the goal which it is meant for is in accordance with the expected result. There are different approaches and forms by which mentorship exercises are to be conducted in the organization, depending on the need and objective for which is to correct or achieve. For the purpose of the study, the mentorship approaches adopted are: understudying, coaching, and role-playing; these approaches also form as decomposed independent variable of the study.

Researcher's observation and experience have shown that workers in the banking sector in Rivers State seem to have low commitment to duties. Supporting this point, Ledum (2016) had decried the incessant cases of absenteeism, idle-talks, low morale and increased intention to quit amongst transportation workers in Nigeria which indicates diminished commitment amongst the workers. Though the study suggests that adopting understudy, coaching and role play is capable of promoting employee performance, but it is yet uncertain since it has not been empirically proven. It is based on this that this study is focused on empirically determining the relationship between mentorship and employee performance of commercial banks in Port Harcourt. The empirical exercise that will be later performed in this study will therefore prove whether mentorship relates with employee performance or otherwise.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between mentorship and employee performance of commercial banks in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objective to achieve is:

1. To determine how Leadership Style influences the relationship between Mentorship and Employee Performance of Commercial Banks in Port Harcourt.

### **Concept of Mentorship**

Mentorship and Training are meaningless if the trainee (employee) lack commitment, lack the ability, or there is no motivation to benefit from it. In terms of commitment, the trainee should be able to determine why he should be trained and his relevance to the organization, either for the immediate or future purposes. The trainee needs ability, the readiness, willingness, the required educational level, intelligence, and knowledge base. Effective employee selection is crucial here, but it can be overcome by using simple task from the training program to help decide or eliminate who will and will not proceed on to training. Employers should adopt positive strategies to increase employees' motivation to learn. By providing opportunities for active practice, accommodating errors and exploring alternative solutions improves motivation and learning.

Schall (2017) posited that the discovery of artifacts and human fossil necessitated the need to teach others on how to use them. So, teaching on the basic tool to carry out a specific task became the first goal of training and the need for training obviously emerged as the most vital and potent weapon in the train of civilization. However, other forms of training have been in existence at a miniature level, but the popularization of the concept of training was alluded to the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor around 1915 during the industrial revolution (Pynes, 2014). Among the foremost forms of training that existed are class room or training room, apprenticeship and on-the-job training. Classroom or training room was always situated as close to the department which the work takes place. Classroom then changed to apprenticeship and on-the-job training, vestibule training also known as near-the-job training within the 1900 and other systematic training methods (Singer, et al 2014). Mentorship methods or approaches have been revolutionized as a result of the changes in the environment into a more work site approaches depending on the work dynamics of the organization and the financial ability to effectively execute or carry-on training programs.

Onuoha (2013), argued that employee needs are to be clearly identified and understood before involving them in training program. Employee quest to satisfy their psychological attachment and their behavior to work demonstrates their willingness and commitment to the organization they have found their selves. Tendencies abound that worker may feel that they are not worthwhile in the organization and may choose to slow down or withdraw their input, or probably even leave the organization in consideration and compares with what others of the same status earn in their organization. Thus, Oyewole (2018) emphasized that, it behooves on the organization to be more sensitive to the work attitude and feelings of employee in the realization of their goals as well as that of the organization. Hence, commitment is reinforceable through specific training approaches that would stimulate, improve, and increase employee commitment in the organization.

### **Employee Performance**

The focus on commitment to work includes the exploration of factors thought to serve as determinants such as: punctuality and regularity, timely completion of task, and goal attainment, social affiliation, performance. Leggett, (2017) codified that these variables tend to build workers (employees) perceptions or attitudes towards various aspects of their work experience. Employee commitment is relatively expressed with the term affective commitment (Masterson, 2011). Affective commitment is a process through which people (employee) express their emotional attachment to the job they are involved in to the extent that they can stretch beyond limits in order to give only that which is best. Affective commitment is fundamental for the effectiveness of any organization. Affective commitment as referred to by Onuoha, (2013), is an employee's emotional attachment to, and identification with the organization. He sees affective commitment as referring to an actor's

attachment to, identification with, and involvement within the respective entity based on positive feelings of emotions toward the organization. It is a feeling of belonging and sense of psychological attachment to the target of commitment; they believed that it is a behavior that is primarily self-regulated rather than controlled by sanctions and pressures external to the individual.

Rollinson, (2017) posited that affective commitment is negatively related to absenteeism, lateness to work, turnover, and reduced output level and social loafing. Kartz, (2016) in her study demonstrated that affective commitment is positively related to employee outcomes such as punctuality, regularity, self-regulated behavior, increased performance, minimal supervision, timely completion of task, goal attainment, high level of effort and an intention to stay with the company (retention). Affective commitment of an employee exhibit a sense of belonging and identification with the organization which increases his involvement with the organization's activities as a result, he finds it difficult to walk out on his employer in search of "better alternatives" because he is devoted to the organization and it appeals to him. In addition, Dauda, (2013) contributed that affectively committed employees care about the future and are willing to invest discretionary efforts. They feel a strong emotional bond to the organization that employs them, this is associated with people demonstrating willingness to recommend the organization to others and commit time and effort to help the organization succeed. Also, they serve as brand ambassador of the organization. He further expressed that people perform better and are motivated by intrinsic factors (e.g personal growth, working to a common purpose, being a part of a larger process) rather than simply focusing on extrinsic factors (e.g pay/reward) which results in higher retention levels and productivity levels, and these could be stimulated in the worker through a carefully executed and regular training programs or activities in an organization.

### **Concept of Leadership Style**

Leadership and leadership style are pivotal in shaping the culture, performance, and success of commercial banks in Port Harcourt. These concepts are multifaceted and can be defined and understood from various perspectives. Leadership is the capacity of an organization's management to set and achieve challenging goals, take fast and decisive action when needed, outperform the competition, and inspire others to perform at the highest level they can. In commercial banks, effective leadership involves steering employees towards excellence in service delivery and operational efficiency (Adamu, 2020). Leaders use their influence to inspire trust and commitment, fostering a productive work environment. Leadership provides direction for an organization and its workers. Leadership involves showing employees how to effectively perform their responsibilities and regularly supervising the completion of their tasks. Visionary leaders in banks articulate clear, strategic goals that align with the institution's mission, encouraging employees to contribute meaningfully to these long-term objectives (Nwachukwu, 2019). Leadership involves making critical decisions that affect the direction and functioning of the organization. In the banking sector, leaders must make informed choices about financial strategies, risk management, and customer relations, balancing short-term needs with long-term growth (Eze, 2021). Leadership style refers to the specific behaviors and methods leaders use to manage and interact with their teams. This includes how they communicate, motivate, and handle conflicts. For instance, a laissez-faire leadership style in banks allows employees autonomy, fostering innovation but requiring self-motivation and discipline (Okafor, 2020). Leadership styles refer to the behavioral approach employed by leaders to influence, motivate, and direct their followers. A leadership style determines how leaders implement plans and strategies to accomplish given objectives while accounting for stakeholder expectations and the wellbeing and soundness of their team.

In the changing environment of commercial banks in Port Harcourt, these varied definitions of leadership and leadership styles underscore the importance of adaptability and contextual awareness. Effective leaders must be able to switch between styles as needed, ensuring that they meet both the immediate operational needs and the long-term strategic goals of the bank. For instance, during periods of stability, a democratic or laissez-faire style may be beneficial for fostering

innovation and employee satisfaction. Conversely, in times of crisis or significant change, transformational or autocratic leadership might be necessary to provide clear direction and maintain stability. In essence, leadership and leadership style are complex, multifaceted concepts that play a crucial role in the success of deposit money banks in Rivers State. By understanding and effectively applying different leadership styles, bank leaders can enhance organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and overall success.

### **Leadership Style, Mentorship and Employee Performance**

The moderating role of leadership style, particularly Transformational and visionary leadership, in the relationship between Mentorship and employee Performance is crucial in understanding employee retention in commercial banks in Port Harcourt. Mentorship involves motivating and empowering the employees to identify their own issues and goals, and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them which in turn boost their performance while working for the organization. The leadership style adopted can either make or mar the positive effects of mentorship and employee performance. **Transformational leadership is all about inspiring team members to keep increasing their bar and achieve what they never thought they were capable of. Leaders who inspire their team members expect the best out of the team and push them consistently until their work go through transformation or considerable improvement.** Eze (2021) highlights that in commercial banks where employees are highly skilled and motivated, transformational leadership can complement mentorship efforts by fostering a sense of ownership and innovation. However, without adequate guidance and support, some employees may feel neglected or unsupported, potentially diminishing the positive effects of mentorship. Adamu (2020) notes that the lack of structure and oversight in transformational leadership can lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of direction among employees, which can undermine their performance in the organization.

**Visionary leadership**, on the other hand, involves leaders who articulate a clear and inspiring vision for the future, motivating employees to work towards long-term goals. Visionary leaders are adept at seeing the bigger picture and communicating it in a way that aligns and energizes their teams. In the context of mentorship, visionary leadership can significantly enhance the positive impacts on employee performance. Visionary leaders in commercial banks can create a compelling vision that incorporates humanization principles, thereby fostering a work environment that values employee well-being and growth. Nwachukwu (2019) asserts that visionary leaders are capable of inspiring and aligning their employees with the organization's goals, creating a sense of purpose and belonging that strengthens employees' intentions to stay. Furthermore, visionary leaders often focus on employee development, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth, which are key components of mentorship. Okafor (2020) emphasizes that by providing a clear direction and supporting employees in their career aspirations, visionary leaders can significantly enhance job satisfaction and commitment.

In commercial banks in Port Harcourt, the effectiveness of leadership styles in moderating the relationship between mentorship and employee performance depends on the specific organizational context and employee needs. While transformational leadership can inspire and push self-driven employees by providing autonomy and flexibility, it requires a balance of support to ensure that all employees feel valued and guided. Visionary leadership, with its emphasis on a shared vision and employee development, can amplify the benefits of mentorship by creating a cohesive and supportive work environment that aligns with employees' personal values and goals. In essence, both transformational and visionary leadership styles play significant moderating roles in the relationship between mentorship and employee performance in commercial banks in Port Harcourt. transformational leadership can enhance the positive effects of mentorship by promoting autonomy and innovation, but it requires adequate support to avoid feelings of neglect. Visionary leadership, with its focus on a clear, inspiring vision and employee development, can strongly reinforce the

benefits of mentorship, leading to higher employee retention. Leaders in commercial banks must carefully consider their leadership approach to maximize the positive impacts mentorship and ensure high employee retention rates.

### **Impact of Mentorship on Employee Performance**

It has been noted that workers respond best and most creatively when they are affectively committed. They work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company; they are those who are least likely to leave, serving as brand ambassadors of their organization. Miller, (2013) posited that affectively committed employees are those who care about the future and are willing to invest discretionary effort. In essence, workers' commitment has to do with an employee's emotional bond to an organization which spurs him to go the "extra mile", (Singer, et al., 2014). However, hiring the best talent from the industry may not necessarily pose a challenge on organizations today but retaining them and most, importantly transitioning them according to the culture of the organization and getting the best out of them is much bigger concern (Redmond, 2016). Talent management is a continuous process that plans the talent needs, builds an image to attract the very best, helps to retain the very best and facilitate the continuous movement of talent to where it can have the most impact within the organization. Talent management is beneficial to the organization in terms of having a work force that is inherently capable of doing a good job. This in itself is a valuable outcome. The fact that many of the employees will be capable of taking on wider responsibilities and be able to perform them well is a second benefit. In essence, talent management seeks to recruit, develop, and nurture internal talent that is capable of reaching the highest levels in the organization.

They are those who are least likely to leave the organization voluntarily. Also, they have a strong belief in the mission, objectives, goals and values of the organization and have a willingness to expend considerable effort in order for the organization to realize its objectives captured in Rothwell, (2010). Moreover, they go the 'extra mile to achieve individual and company success, they are innovative at work place, they infuse energy and positivism at work, and become evangelists of the company, its products and processes.

Consequently, employees form perceptions about the intentions and attitudes of the organization towards them. It is likely to suppose that employees who perceive more talent management practices tend to be more committed. Talent management can ensure the right environment for individuals to remain committed (Sparrow, 2012). Thus, Talent management practices have a positive impact on employee commitment.

### **Theoretical Review**

The study will anchor on Herzberg two factor theory of motivation and the Goal-Setting theory. The Herzberg two factor theory was propounded by Fredrick Herzberg in 1959, while the Goal-setting theory was propounded by Edwin A. Locke in 1968.

Herzberg two factor theory of motivation is an important theory in the human and behavior school of thought that stimulates workers commitment in the work place or the environment. This theory was propounded by Frederick Herzberg in 1959, which was developed out of research with the sole purposes of ascertaining the factors that influences workers commitment (satisfaction) on the job. He conducted that in reality to two distinct categories of motivational factors exist:

- i. Hygiene factors which consist of dissatisfaction to no dissatisfaction. The variables in the factor includes: pay, job security, company policies, working conditions, fringe benefits, and interpersonal relations which are all external to the job.
- ii. This category is what he called motivators. The variables for ranges from no satisfaction to job satisfaction also known as content factors. The variables consist of: challenging job, recognition for accomplishment, opportunities for growth and advancement, feelings of achievement, increase responsibility, and the job itself. Sheppard, (2014) in his opinion, he

asserted that both categories serve to motivate workers to greater higher and increase (commitment) performance on the job. However, he alluded to the fact that, in both hygiene and motivator, manager actions should be focused on job content for effective motivation of employees.

In relation to this study, Herzberg two factor theory was chosen with particular or special interest on his assumptions for motivators or content factors, because it gives a clear understanding and insight to managerial responsibilities for increased and improved workers commitment in the organization. Hence, training is a managerial responsibility aimed at stimulating the internal variables of the content factors of the Herzberg theory which tend to motivate and influences employee commitment on the job (Zepeda, et al 2012). The practicality in applying the theory on problems observed in the study organization are suggestive of the objectives stated for in the study.

Also, Skinner's Reinforcement theory of motivation is one of the theories that focus on human motivation. Reinforcement theory was theorized by American social philosopher, psychologist and a behaviorist called Burohus Frederic Shinner in 1957.

Korn (2017) the theory was based on the principles of causality and knowledge that a worker's behavior is regulated by the type of reward (intrinsic and extrinsic) that he receives. The theory does not place much emphasis on personality traits, but focuses on behavior under three basic assumptions:

- i. Reward for positive behavior reinforces positive behavior.
- ii. Punishment for negative behavior weakens negative behavior.
- iii. If there is no reward or punishment, behavior is fading.

The result of this theory revealed that incentives, both intrinsic and extrinsic are major factors for worker's reinforcement or commitment to organizations' goal and vision. In accordance to Khumalo, and Harris, (2014) in his view, the result revealed that, if an organization wants to weaken any behavior, punishment will serve as an effective tool to apply. The theory also posits that, time interval for gathering rewards should be meaningful as possible.

In relation to this study, the theory brought to bear both positive and negative dimension for motivating employee. Mentorship is an intrinsic form of reinforcing employee commitment to the job he is hired to perform in the organization; hence, the theory satisfied the objectives for which the study achieved.

### **Goal-setting Theory**

Goal-setting theory was developed by [Edwin A. Locke](#) in (1968). The American psychologist was a pioneer in goal-setting research. The theory states that specific, challenging, and attainable goals lead to higher levels of motivation and performance.

With the following assumptions:

- Employees have the skills and resources needed to achieve the goals, and the organization provides support and resources as need.
- Clear goals lead to higher performance and better results, since they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART).
- Challenging goals leads to higher performance, since they are motivating and give a sense of accomplishment.
- The employee is committed to the goal, meaning they accept and are invested in achieving the goal.

### **Implications of Edwin A. Locke Goal Setting Theory of 1968 to this Study**

#### **Mentorship:**

Clear Goals: Mentors help set specific, challenging and attainable goals with mentees.

Goal alignment: Mentors ensure mentees' goals align with organizational objectives.

Regular feedback: Mentors provide constructive feedback on progress toward goals.

Accountability: Mentors hold mentees accountable for achieving their goals.

Support and Guidance: Mentors offer support and guidance to help mentees overcome obstacles.

### **Employee Performance**

Improved motivation; setting specific, challenging goals enhances employee motivation.

Increased focus: clear goals help employees prioritize tasks and focus efforts.

Increased productivity: Employees are more productive when focused on achieving specific goals.

Reduced turnover: Employees are more likely to stay with an organization when working towards challenging goals.

Enhanced commitment: Employees are more committed to achieving their goals.

Improved job satisfaction: employees are more satisfied with their job when working towards meaningful goals.

The theory is importance to this study because by setting specific, challenging and attainable goals, individuals can achieve higher levels of performance and motivation, leading to greater success and accomplishment.

### **CONCLUSION**

From reviewed literature, it was observed that mentorship serves as a strength and reliable internal conduit for the acquisition and development of skill both for the immediate and future placement of experienced, skillful, and organizational oriented work force. Hence, performance is spurred as they perceived a strong feeling of having a stake and citizenship in the organization. Were opportunity for growth and exhibition of creative might are made ready and planned for in the organization. The significant relationship of the studied variables would be better correlated by conducting an empirical study that would satisfy the objectives for extensive generalization.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Organizations have choices regarding how to recruit, identify, and develop their workers for increase commitment to work. Hence, based on the reviewed literature and findings of the study, the paper further recommended the following:

1. Organizations should be specific and adhere to the right skills they want to attract during recruitment.
2. A detailed and well-planned mentorship program should be emphasized in organizations that hope to care for the future their organization.
3. Equity and fairness should be the index for enlisting workers for training, and rewarding outstanding performance
4. Employees of commercial banks should rigorously adopt the culture of using crises management among themselves, so as to ensure that this translates into work quality, work accuracy and service delivery.
5. Management of commercial banks and other organization should adopt goal-oriented coaching in mentoring employees, so as to ensure that everybody work towards the actualization of the organizational goals and objectives.

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