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Influence of Mentorship Quality on Research Productivity of Lecturers in Public Universities, Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of mentorship quality on the research productivity of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a population of 3,868 lecturers from four public universities. Using Taro Yamene's formula, a sample of 363 lecturers was selected through proportional sampling, and 277 usable questionnaires were analyzed. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from Kram's Model of Mentorship Functions, measuring career support and psychosocial support on a 4-point scale. Descriptive statistics and simple linear regression were employed for analysis. Findings revealed a high level of mentorship quality (grand mean = 3.00) and a high level of research productivity (grand mean = 3.13). Mentorship quality had a significant positive influence on research productivity ($R = .614$, $R^2 = .378$, $\beta = .614$, $p < .001$), explaining 37.8% of the variance. The study concluded that effective mentorship is a critical driver of research productivity among lecturers. Recommendations include formalizing mentorship structures and integrating mentorship effectiveness into staff evaluation criteria.

Keywords: Mentorship Quality, Research Productivity, Career Support, Psychosocial Support, Lecturers, Public Universities, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Research productivity, often measured through metrics such as publication output, citation counts, and innovation impact, serves as a critical indicator of scientific advancement and economic development across global, continental, and national contexts. Research productivity, the generation of scholarly output such as journal articles, books, conference papers, and patents, remains a critical measure of academic excellence, institutional prestige, and national development (Abramo, D'Angelo, & Di Costa, 2011).

Globally, research productivity has seen significant growth, driven by increased investment in research and development (R&D), international collaborations, and advancements in digital infrastructure (Aksnes, Langfeldt, & Wouters, 2019). According to the National Science Foundation (NSF), global publication output grew by 5% over the past four years, with middle-income countries, particularly China and India, leading in volume (White, 2019). In 2022, six countries, namely, China, the United States, India, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Japan accounted for over 50% of global publication output, highlighting the concentration of research activity in a few dominant regions (Antonelli & Feder, 2022). However, this growth is uneven, with disparities in citation rates reflecting inequalities in the global scientific landscape (Aksnes et al., 2019).

The concept of "citational lensing" reveals that countries with high research activity, such as the United States and China, receive disproportionately more citations despite producing work similar to that of peripheral countries, suggesting biases in global knowledge production. Additionally, citation metrics, such as the h-index and journal impact factor, have become central to assessing research impact, though they vary significantly by discipline and database coverage, with limitations in fields like the humanities and social sciences (Aksnes et al., 2019).

At the continental level, research productivity reflects regional economic, cultural, and policy differences. In Europe, countries like Germany and the United Kingdom lead in publication output and citation impact, supported by robust funding systems and collaborative networks like the European Research Area. Studies highlight Europe's strength in leveraging knowledge properties for innovation, with significant productivity gains from 1990 to 2016 (Antonelli & Feder, 2022). In Latin America, national innovation surveys indicate growing research output but highlight barriers such as limited funding and infrastructure, which constrain productivity relative to North America or Europe. Africa, while increasing its research output, remains underrepresented in global citation databases, with challenges in database coverage and local publication practices limiting visibility (Nwagwu, 2018). Asia, led by China and India, has emerged as a powerhouse, with China surpassing the United States in publication volume by 2022, though citation disparities persist (Antonelli & Feder, 2022).

Research productivity in Africa has gained traction, especially through regional initiatives such as the African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy

for Africa (STISA), which aims to enhance research and innovation across member states (Kamba, 2024). Despite such initiatives, many African universities continue to lag behind global standards. Studies have revealed that African faculty members often face structural and institutional barriers such as inadequate access to research grants, limited collaboration opportunities, and insufficient institutional support (Sawyerr, 2004). Moreover, the uneven distribution of research capacity among African countries contributes to disparities in research productivity across the continent.

At the national level, research productivity is shaped by domestic policies, institutional frameworks, and economic conditions. In Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and a major hub of higher education, concerns over low research productivity among academics have been consistently reported. Although Nigeria has over one hundred and seventy universities and a growing number of academic staff, the country still struggles to produce high-impact research at a scale proportional to its population and academic capacity (Adetomiwa, 2020). Factors such as poor funding of universities, inadequate research infrastructure, lack of incentives, and limited international collaboration have all contributed to this issue (Olayiwola, 2010). Furthermore, a study by Ajake, Isangedighi, and Ekuri (2015) identified that Nigerian universities are plagued by unstable academic calendars, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and limited access to digital resources, which further constrain academic research efforts.

Among the prominent predictors of research productivity is mentorship quality. Mentorship serves as a strategic developmental relationship where experienced academics guide less experienced colleagues in navigating the academic environment, acquiring research skills, and achieving professional growth. High-quality mentorship characterized by career support, psychological support, and role modeling has been shown to significantly enhance researchers' output by providing access to intellectual resources, research networks, and publication opportunities (Sloan, Mikkelson, & Hinnenkamp, 2025).

Mentorship is a structured and supportive relationship where a more experienced individual (the mentor) provides guidance, knowledge, and encouragement to a less experienced individual (the mentee) for the purpose of career, personal, and professional development (Xie et al., 2021). Kram (1988) identifies two primary functions of mentorship: career development and psychosocial support. Career development functions refer to the ways in which a mentor actively supports the protégé's career progression through sponsorship, coaching, exposure, protection, and challenging assignments. Psychosocial functions address the interpersonal and emotional needs of the protégé through role modeling, counseling, acceptance, confirmation, and friendship (Kram, 1988).

Mentorship quality refers to the perceived effectiveness, depth, and developmental value of the mentoring relationship. High-quality mentorship goes beyond casual interaction to provide sustained, goal-oriented guidance that fosters the mentee's growth in career, emotional well-being, and professional identity (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014). In the African context, weak mentorship structures have often been cited as a limiting factor for early-career academics,

resulting in low research engagement and poor scholarly output (Nwagwu, 2018). In Nigeria, particularly in public universities in Lagos State, concerns about low research productivity among academic staff persist, despite policies encouraging scholarly engagement and innovation. Lagos State, being a hub of educational and technological development, provides a strategic context for examining how mentorship quality influences research productivity among lecturers.

Statement of the Problem

Research productivity remains a key performance indicator in higher education institutions, serving as a benchmark for academic excellence, institutional ranking, and national development. In Nigeria, however, research productivity among university lecturers, particularly in public universities, has been persistently low despite increased emphasis on academic output, scholarly engagement, and policy-driven research incentives (Adetomiwa, 2020). This underperformance raises critical concerns about the underlying factors influencing lecturers' research engagement and output.

Quality mentorship has the potential to equip lecturers with guidance, emotional support, and career development strategies that are often lacking in Nigerian public universities due to weak mentoring structures (Nwagwu, 2018). Despite the relevance of mentorship, there is a paucity of empirical studies that examine the influence of mentorship quality on research productivity, particularly within the Nigerian context. Existing literature tends to focus on mentorship in isolation or in relation to career satisfaction, leaving a critical gap in understanding how mentorship quality influences research performance. This gap is even more observed in Lagos State public universities, which are situated in Nigeria's most urbanized region yet still grapple with inconsistent research output among lecturers.

Lagos State public universities also present an institutionally distinct context relative to other Nigerian geopolitical zones. Unlike federally funded institutions, the sampled universities, LASU, LASUSTECH, and LASUED, rely heavily on state government subventions and internally generated revenue, a funding structure that shapes the resources available for research support and mentorship programmes differently from federal universities. Moreover, Lagos State's dense, highly urbanized environment generates distinct research demands, spanning urban planning, public health, technology, and commerce, that require sustained mentorship to translate into scholarly output. Examining mentorship efficacy within this state-funded, urban-intensive context therefore offers insights that may not be generalizable from studies conducted in federally funded universities located in less urbanized geopolitical zones. Lagos State is also home to one of the highest concentrations of universities of any state in Nigeria, drawing a correspondingly large share of the country's academic workforce into its public and private institutions. Because a sizeable proportion of Nigerian lecturers are therefore based within this single, densely populated state, understanding how mentorship quality shapes research productivity among lecturers there has implications that extend beyond Lagos State itself to inform mentorship policy and practice across the wider Nigerian public

university system. Focusing specifically on the state's public universities, rather than sampling more thinly across multiple geopolitical zones, further allowed the study to hold institutional funding structure (state government subvention) broadly constant across the sampled population, isolating the influence of mentorship quality from the confound of comparing state- and federally-funded institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

i. assess the level of mentorship quality of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria;
ii. assess the level of research productivity of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria;
iii. determine the influence of mentorship quality on research productivity of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of mentorship quality of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of research productivity of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis (tested at $\alpha = 0.05$)

H_o1: There is no significant influence of mentorship quality on research productivity of lecturers in public universities, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Mentorship is a structured and supportive relationship where a more experienced individual (the mentor) provides guidance, knowledge, and encouragement to a less experienced individual (the mentee) for the purpose of career, personal, and professional development (Xie et al., 2021). Mentorship is "a developmental relationship between a younger adult and a more senior, experienced adult that helps the younger individual learn the ropes of an organization, prepare for advancement, and achieve career goals" (Bojko & Kowalczyk, 2023). Kram (1988) identifies two primary functions of mentorship: career development and psychosocial support. Mentorship as "a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development" (Johnson, 2007). This definition emphasizes both the career and emotional components of mentoring. Mentorship as "a reciprocal and dynamic relationship that fosters personal and professional growth through role modeling, coaching, and feedback" highlights the mutual benefit and evolving nature of mentoring relationships (Lefebvre, 2021). Mentorship as "a personal relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable

person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person" encompasses both formal and informal mentorship contexts, including academic, professional, and clinical settings (Rios, 2024).

Quality on the other hand is a multidimensional concept that denotes the degree to which a product, service, or process meets established standards, expectations, or requirements. Quality is "fitness for use," meaning that a product or service must satisfy customer needs and be free from deficiencies (Juran, 1999). Crosby (1979) emphasized both product performance and freedom from defects as key elements of quality, defining quality as "conformance to requirements." Quality as a "relative concept that can be interpreted as excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose, transformation, or threshold" is widely used in academic quality assurance frameworks (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Mentorship quality refers to the overall effectiveness, depth, and value of the mentoring relationship as perceived by the mentee, particularly in terms of the mentor's ability to provide professional guidance, emotional support, and role modeling that contributes to the mentee's growth and success (Alonso et al., 2024). Mentorship quality is "the perceived effectiveness of the mentor–mentee relationship in fulfilling both career and psychosocial functions," including how well the mentor supports the mentee's career development and emotional well-being (Deng & Turner, 2024). Researchers describe high-quality mentorship as one in which mentors are accessible, responsive, knowledgeable, and genuinely invested in the mentee's success (Rios, 2024). Mentorship quality is shaped by mutual respect and the alignment of expectations.

Career support refers to the mentor's ability to help the mentee achieve career-related goals through coaching, exposure, sponsorship, and challenging assignments. Mentors offer instrumental assistance that advances the mentee's position and visibility within the profession or institution (Sloan et al., 2025). High-quality mentorship provides mentees with strategic guidance, access to networks, and advice on navigating organizational structures (Masha et al., 2022). Such support enhances mentees' job performance, job satisfaction, and promotion prospects (Allen et al., 2004).

Psychosocial support involves the emotional, relational, and affective dimensions of the mentorship experience. It includes listening, empathy, encouragement, and a genuine interest in the mentee's personal growth (Kram, 1988). A mentor who offers psychological support helps the mentee build confidence, cope with stress, and develop a sense of belonging and identity within the academic or professional community (Eller et al., 2014). Such support is especially vital during times of uncertainty, failure, or transition, as it provides a stable base for development.

Role modeling refers to the mentor serving as an exemplary figure whose attitudes, behaviors, and values the mentee observes and aspires to emulate (Sloan et al., 2025). A quality mentor displays professional integrity, competence, and ethical standards that shape the mentee's own approach to work and leadership (Kram, 1988). Role modeling fosters identity formation,

especially in professions where tacit knowledge and culture are learned through observation and imitation.

Owan, Ameh, and Anam (2024) estimated the direct and indirect contributions of mentorship and institutional support to academic staff's research productivity at a public university in Cross River State, Nigeria. Using a quantitative method following correlational research design with 303 respondents, mediation-based analysis was performed using structural equation modelling. Amongst others, findings revealed that mentorship had a non-significant negative contribution to the research productivity of academic staff; mentorship only promoted research productivity among academic staff when it was followed by positive institutional culture and collaboration. The study highlighted the importance of considering multiple factors that may influence research productivity and suggested that institutions should prioritize fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.

Tan and Main (2024) examined faculty mentorship using data from the Early Career Doctorates Survey (ECDS). Guided by a theoretical framework adapted from Higgins and Kram, multiple linear regression models were applied to investigate which factors are associated with faculty attainment of mentorship, and how mentorship is associated with faculty productivity, salary, and job satisfaction. In contrast to previous literature, results indicated that women and men have similar likelihood of reporting having a formal/informal mentor, and that Black/African American faculty are more likely to report having a formal/informal mentor compared to White faculty. Furthermore, receiving mentorship does not appear to be associated with increased productivity or job satisfaction but is associated with a 10% higher salary among faculty who reported having a mentor.

Li and Zhang (2022) studied Chinese university English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers to fill the research gap on mentorship and research productivity. Utilizing the snowball method to collect survey data from 546 Chinese EFL tertiary teachers, the results showed that mentorship is not correlated with research productivity while the working environment has a positive direct correlation with it. Both motivation and self-efficacy mediate the working environment and research productivity significantly. Specifically, only extrinsic motivation has a negative mediation influence on teachers' research productivity; teachers' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy play a positive mediation role.

Tuan et al. (2022) aimed to establish and test a model for evaluating management factors that affect the research productivity of Vietnamese university lecturers. Data were collected by surveying 398 lecturers and researchers, and structural equation modeling (SEM) methodology was applied. The research outcomes indicated that resources and policies to favor research activities are the two most influential factors affecting research productivity in lecturers. The decentralization factor, in contrast, did not show statistical significance.

Todoran (2023) examined how mentorship opportunities contribute to the productivity and career growth of public affairs faculty, stratified by gender and race. Using primary data from an original survey administered at two different points in time (2017 and 2021) to faculty who are part of NASPAA member schools, results indicated that women and faculty from racially

under-represented groups are more likely to receive formal mentoring whereas men and white faculty are more likely to benefit from informal mentoring. Additionally, results showed that the relationship between mentoring approaches and research effort differed by the faculty member's gender and race.

Joshi, Aikens, and Dolan (2019) collected data from a national sample of more than 1,000 undergraduate life science researchers and used structural equation modeling to identify relationships between mentoring structures and indicators of integration into the scientific community. Undergraduates in dyads and triads with direct faculty interactions reported similar levels of science self-efficacy, scientific identity, and scholarly productivity, and higher levels of these outcomes than students in triads lacking faculty interactions.

Sakarias, Neema, and Plessis (2024) conducted a scoping review using the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (Prisma) flow chart to examine mentorship practices at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. The study findings revealed that mentorship practices generally contribute significantly to academics' research productivity, enhancing their workload efficiency and giving them a crucial role in the development of graduate students and faculty members. The study recommended that serious consideration and implementation of a formal mentoring strategy is required when institutional mentorship strategies or frameworks are not formally recognized or implemented.

Williams et al. (2023) conducted a scoping review to assess literature that quantitatively measures outcomes of mentorship programs designed to support research-focused junior faculty and to identify mentoring strategies that promote diversity within academic medicine. Twenty-seven manuscripts met inclusion criteria. Traditional one-on-one mentorship, structured peer mentorship facilitated by a senior mentor, and peer mentorship in combination with one-on-one mentorship were found to be effective strategies to facilitate research productivity.

Okon, Owan, and Owan (2022) analyzed the contribution of three mentorship practices (cloning, apprenticeship, and nurturing) to the research productivity of early-career academics in educational psychology in universities in South-South Nigeria. The study's population covered 723 early-career researchers. Mentorship practices were generally revealed to significantly contribute to the research productivity of early-career researchers. Specifically, the adoption of cloning and apprenticeship approaches to mentorship contributed substantially to the researchers' research productivity. However, the study highlighted that nurturing contributed only negligibly to the researchers' research productivity.

In summary, several studies find that mentorship alone does not consistently lead to higher research productivity among lecturers. In some contexts, mentorship had no significant or even a negative direct effect on research output unless combined with a positive institutional culture and collaboration opportunities. For early-career academics, specific mentorship practices like cloning and apprenticeship were more effective than nurturing. Collaboration, institutional support, and a positive research environment are critical mediators. Mentorship only significantly boosts research productivity when paired with strong institutional culture and

collaborative networks. Motivation and self-efficacy also play important roles, with intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy positively mediating the relationship between the work environment and research productivity.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Kram's Model of Mentorship Functions (1985, 1988). Kram's model of mentorship is a foundational framework that identifies two major categories of mentorship functions that significantly influence the development of the protégé: career development functions and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1988). This dual-function model emphasizes that effective mentoring relationships go beyond technical or task-oriented guidance and extend into emotional and social support, both of which are essential for holistic professional growth.

The career development functions refer to the ways in which a mentor actively supports the protégé's career progression. These include sponsorship, which involves advocating for the mentee in key decision-making settings; coaching, which encompasses offering constructive feedback and advice on professional tasks; exposure and visibility, which provide the protégé with opportunities to engage in high-profile projects and networks; protection from institutional politics or professional setbacks; and assigning challenging tasks that stretch the mentee's skills and prepare them for future responsibilities (Kram, 1988). These functions are instrumental in helping the protégé achieve tangible professional milestones, such as promotions, awards, or recognition within their academic or professional field (Allen et al., 2004).

The psychosocial functions, on the other hand, address the interpersonal and emotional needs of the protégé. These functions include role modeling, where the mentor exemplifies professional values and behaviors that the mentee aspires to emulate; counseling, which involves providing a safe space for discussing personal or career-related challenges; acceptance and confirmation, where the mentor affirms the protégé's self-worth and capabilities; and friendship, which nurtures mutual trust, respect, and a sense of belonging (Kram, 1988). These functions are particularly important in fostering confidence, professional identity, and emotional resilience in the protégé (Eller et al., 2014).

When situated in the context of lecturers in higher education institutions, Kram's model offers meaningful insights into how mentorship relationships can enhance academic performance, job satisfaction, and research productivity. For junior lecturers, effective mentorship from senior academics can lead to substantial career benefits. For instance, senior mentors may guide junior colleagues on writing for publication, applying for research grants, balancing teaching and research responsibilities, and preparing for tenure or promotion (Okon, Owan, & Owan, 2022). These activities mirror the career functions in Kram's model and directly contribute to academic advancement.

Moreover, the psychosocial dimension is especially relevant in the demanding academic environment where lecturers often experience professional isolation, stress, or uncertainty about their career trajectory. A mentor who provides encouragement, shares personal

experiences, and models a positive work-life balance can boost a lecturer's morale and foster a stronger sense of professional identity. The feeling of being supported and validated can have a lasting impact on a lecturer's motivation, confidence, and long-term engagement with the academic profession (Li & Zhang, 2022).

In sum, Kram's model underscores the importance of mentorship as a developmental relationship that encompasses both career-related and psychosocial support. When applied to lecturers in higher education, the model illustrates how mentorship can be a powerful tool for nurturing academic talent, improving job performance, and promoting institutional excellence through the professional and personal development of faculty members. This study applies Kram's model to understand how mentorship quality (measured through career support and psychosocial support) influences research productivity among lecturers in public universities.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 3,868 lecturers from four public universities in Lagos State: University of Lagos (UNILAG, 1,200 lecturers), Lagos State University (LASU, 939), Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH, 1,200), and Lagos State University of Education (LASUED, 529). The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size (3,868), and e is the acceptable margin of error, set at 5% (e = 0.05) to correspond with a 95% confidence level. Substituting these values: $n = 3,868 / [1 + 3,868(0.05)^2] = 3,868 / [1 + 3,868(0.0025)] = 3,868 / [1 + 9.67] = 3,868 / 10.67 = 362.51$, which was rounded up to a sample size of 363. This sample was then proportionally allocated across the four universities according to each institution's share of the total population, as shown in Table 1. Applying this proportion to LASUED yielded a computed value of 49.65; because rounding this figure up to 50 would have produced a combined total of 364 rather than 363, it was rounded down to 49 so that the four proportional allocations summed to exactly the target sample size. A structured questionnaire was used, with Section A capturing socio-demographic data, Section B measuring research productivity (adapted from Bland's model, measuring individual, institutional, and leadership characteristics on a 4-point scale), and Section C measuring mentorship quality (adapted from Kram's model, measuring career support and psychosocial support on a 4-point scale). Respondents rated each item on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 4); sub-scale scores were computed as the mean of item ratings within each dimension, and these were in turn averaged to obtain the grand mean scores reported in Tables 2 and 3. The instrument was validated by experts and pilot-tested (Cronbach's alpha: 0.80 for mentorship quality, 0.82 for research productivity). Data were collected in person: trained research assistants physically administered the questionnaires to respondents across the four university campuses. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression at 0.05 significance level using IBM SPSS version 29.

Table 1: Population and Proportional Sample Allocation

University	Population	Proportional Sample
University of Lagos (UNILAG)	1,200	113
Lagos State University (LASU)	939	88
Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH)	1,200	113
Lagos State University of Education (LASUED)	529	49
Total	**3,868**	**363**

Sample sizes were allocated proportionally to each university's share of the total population, then rounded to the nearest whole number, yielding a total sample of 363.

Analysis and Results

The socio-demographic analysis of 277 respondents revealed that the majority held a PhD (42.2%), followed by those with a Master's degree (32.9%), MPhil (18.1%), and BSc (6.9%), indicating that most respondents were highly educated with strong academic backgrounds. Regarding age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents (52.7%) fell within the 30-39 years age bracket, followed by those aged 40-49 years (21.3%), 20-29 years (14.1%), and above 50 years (8.3%), suggesting that the workforce was dominated by professionals in their middle adulthood with professional stability and experience. The gender distribution showed that males (63.5%) outnumbered females (36.5%), reflecting a male-dominated profession within the study population. In terms of work experience, the highest proportion of respondents had 6-10 years of experience (29.2%), followed by 11-15 years (27.4%), 16-20 years (22.7%), and above 20 years (18.1%), indicating that most respondents were experienced professionals with a high degree of familiarity with institutional operations, thereby enhancing the reliability of the responses provided.

Table 2: Level of Mentorship Quality

Mentorship Dimension	Weighted Mean	Level
Career Support	3.0	High
Psychosocial Support	3.0	High
Grand Mean	**3.0**	**High**

Decision rule: 1.00-1.74=Very low, 1.75-2.49=Low, 2.50-3.24=High, 3.25-4.00=Very high

Table 3: Level of Research Productivity

Productivity Dimension	Weighted Mean	Level
Individual Influence	3.50	Very High
Institutional Influence	3.00	High
Leadership Factors	2.90	High
Grand Mean	**3.13**	**High**

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Mentorship Quality on Research Productivity

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
.614	.378	.375	.46374

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	35.871	1	35.871	166.795	.000
Residual	59.141	275	.215		
Total	95.011	276			

Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.818	.105		17.382	.000
Mentorship Quality	.439	.034	.614	12.915	.000

Decision: Since $p < 0.001$, H_{01} is rejected. Mentorship quality has a significant positive influence on research productivity, explaining 37.8% of the variance.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that lecturers experienced a high level of mentorship quality (Grand Mean = 3.00), suggesting that mentors provided both career and psychosocial support. This finding corroborates the work of Okafor and Agboola (2020), who reported that mentoring relationships positively affect the career progression and scholarly output of academic staff in Nigerian universities. Furthermore, Turban, Moake, and Wu (2016) noted that mentors help mentees navigate institutional challenges, connect with research opportunities, and improve job satisfaction, all of which indirectly improve productivity. The high level of mentorship quality is consistent with Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014), who found that effective mentorship provides sustained, goal-oriented guidance that fosters the mentee's growth in career, emotional well-being, and professional identity.

The career support dimension (weighted mean = 3.0) indicates that mentors frequently link their mentees with opportunities that foster professional exposure and academic networking. The statement "I am encouraged by my mentor to take on challenging assignments to build my skills" recorded the highest mean (3.04), reflecting a high level of mentorship engagement in building competence and confidence through task-based development. This finding aligns with Sloan, Mikkelson, and Hinnenkamp (2025), who found that career support functions are instrumental in helping protégés achieve tangible professional milestones.

The psychosocial support dimension (weighted mean = 3.0) captures the emotional, interpersonal, and confidence-building roles of mentorship. The statement "My mentor boosts my self-confidence in my professional abilities" recorded a mean of 3.01, indicating that mentors effectively build mentees' confidence, motivation, and professional self-belief. This finding supports Kram (1988), who emphasized that psychosocial functions help mentees

build confidence, cope with stress, and develop a sense of belonging and identity within the academic community. The finding also aligns with Eller et al. (2014), who found that mentors who provide psychological support help mentees build confidence and cope with professional challenges.

Regarding research productivity, the study found a high level (grand mean = 3.13), with individual influence scoring highest (3.50). This finding aligns with Lakati and Masibo (2023), who called for African universities to define their research priorities, and with Ladipo et al. (2022), who found that Nigerian academics show high involvement in research activities due to promotion requirements and academic competitiveness. The high individual influence score indicates that lecturers' personal drive, self-discipline, and confidence are strong determinants of their research productivity, suggesting that individual factors rather than institutional constraints play a dominant role in shaping research engagement. This supports Miller, Taylor, and Bedeian (2011), who emphasized that self-motivation and time management are key determinants of research output among university lecturers.

The institutional influence dimension (weighted mean = 3.00) indicates that institutional support for research is high but not optimal. The statement "My institution encourages and supports academic research" recorded a mean of 3.11, indicating positive institutional culture. However, the statement "My institution provides adequate funding for research projects" recorded a lower mean of 2.93, suggesting that funding remains a challenge. This finding is consistent with Olayiwola (2010), who noted that poor funding of universities is a major constraint on research productivity in Nigeria.

The leadership factors dimension (weighted mean = 2.90) was the lowest among the three dimensions, suggesting that leadership practices in the sampled institutions are moderately supportive but could be improved. The statement "The head of my department advocates for reduced teaching load to support research time" recorded the lowest mean (2.74), with a notable 33.9% of respondents disagreeing. This finding highlights that heavy teaching loads continue to pose a challenge to lecturers' research engagement, consistent with the observations of Ajake, Isangedighi, and Ekuri (2015) regarding unstable academic calendars and bureaucratic bottlenecks in Nigerian universities.

Regression analysis revealed that mentorship quality had a significant positive influence on research productivity ($R = .614$, $R^2 = .378$, $p < .001$). This finding aligns with Allen et al. (2004), who found that mentored academics tend to produce higher-quality research and experience faster career progression. It also supports Ghosh and Reio (2013), who argued that effective mentorship serves as a key driver for improving academic performance and research visibility. The finding is further corroborated by Sakarias, Neema, and Plessis (2024), who concluded that mentorship practices contribute significantly to academics' research productivity, enhancing workload efficiency and career development.

The finding that mentorship quality explains 37.8% of the variance in research productivity is substantial and indicates that mentorship is a critical determinant of research output. This is consistent with Okon, Owan, and Owan (2022), who found that mentorship practices

significantly contribute to research productivity, with cloning and apprenticeship approaches being particularly effective. However, the finding contrasts with Owan, Ameh, and Anam (2024), who found that mentorship had a non-significant negative contribution to research productivity unless combined with positive institutional culture and collaboration. This discrepancy may be due to differences in institutional contexts and the presence of supportive cultures in the Lagos State public universities studied.

The finding also differs from Li and Zhang (2022), who found that mentorship was not correlated with research productivity among Chinese EFL teachers, and from Tan and Main (2024), who found that receiving mentorship did not appear to be associated with increased productivity. These contrasting findings highlight the importance of contextual factors, including institutional culture, research environment, and the specific measures of mentorship quality used. The positive finding in this study may be attributed to the high level of mentorship quality reported by respondents, suggesting that when mentorship is effectively implemented, it significantly enhances research productivity.

Beyond confirming a statistical association, it is useful to consider the mechanisms through which mentorship quality translates into research productivity. Kram's (1988) dual-function model suggests that mentors influence productivity through two parallel pathways: an instrumental pathway, in which career support functions such as coaching, sponsorship, and exposure give mentees direct access to research networks, co-authorship opportunities, and knowledge of grant and publication processes; and an affective pathway, in which psychosocial support builds the confidence, resilience, and professional identity that sustain mentees through setbacks inherent in research work, such as manuscript rejections and delayed grant approvals. In the Lagos State public university context, these pathways appear to operate within, rather than independently of, the institutional environment: mentors who model persistence and networking behaviour cannot fully substitute for missing research funding or heavy teaching loads, and the comparatively lower scores recorded for institutional funding (mean = 2.93) and departmental advocacy for reduced teaching loads (mean = 2.74) suggest that mentorship's positive effect on productivity may be constrained where organisational support is weak. This is consistent with the view advanced by Owan, Ameh, and Anam (2024) that mentorship's contribution to research productivity is contingent on a supportive institutional culture and collaborative environment; where such conditions exist, as appears to be the case for most respondents in this study, mentorship is better able to convert career and psychosocial support into tangible research output. Leadership practices, particularly workload allocation and advocacy for protected research time, likely function as a further moderating factor, since even well-mentored lecturers require sufficient time to conduct and publish research. Academic collaboration, whether initiated through a mentor's professional network or through institutional partnerships, plausibly reinforces this relationship further by giving mentees access to co-authors, data, and dissemination platforms that individual effort alone cannot provide. Taken together, these considerations suggest that mentorship quality functions less as an isolated determinant of research productivity and more as a catalyst whose

effectiveness is shaped by the surrounding institutional culture, funding environment, leadership practices, and collaborative opportunities available to lecturers.

Summary of Findings

The study found that:

1. The level of mentorship quality among lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria, was high (grand mean = 3.00), with both career support and psychosocial support rated equally high.
2. The level of research productivity among lecturers was high (grand mean = 3.13), with individual influence being the strongest dimension (3.50), followed by institutional influence (3.00) and leadership factors (2.90).
3. Mentorship quality had a significant positive influence on research productivity ($p < .001$), explaining 37.8% of the variance in research productivity.

Conclusion of Findings

The study concluded that lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria, experience high-quality mentorship and demonstrate high research productivity. Mentorship quality significantly influences research productivity, with effective mentoring relationships providing guidance, motivation, and professional growth opportunities that foster scholarly excellence. Among the three dimensions of research productivity assessed, individual influence was the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of personal drive alongside institutional support. The high explanatory power of mentorship quality (37.8%) underscores its critical role as a determinant of research output. The finding that leadership factors scored lowest suggests that administrative support for research, particularly regarding teaching load reduction and grant facilitation, requires improvement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Since mentorship quality was found to be high, universities should formalize mentorship structures to ensure consistency and sustainability. Senior academics should be trained and incentivized to mentor early-career lecturers effectively, focusing on research design, publication strategies, and career progression.
2. Given the significant positive influence of mentorship quality on research productivity, universities should integrate mentorship effectiveness into staff evaluation and promotion criteria to motivate mentors and mentees alike.
3. Institutions should sustain and further strengthen research support structures such as grants, research incentives, and publication assistance to maintain and elevate productivity levels

Given that leadership factors scored lowest, university leadership should advocate for reduced teaching loads, facilitate access to research grants, and provide adequate encouragement for research activities to create a more supportive research environment.

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