

Mentoring Relationships, Lifelong Learning Strategies and Research Competence of Office Technology and Management Teaching Staff in Public Polytechnics in Southwest, Nigeria

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**Being a PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of Office and Information Management,
Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo
State, Nigeria**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree
(PhD) in Office and Information Management**

2025

Certification

This is to certify that, **Oluwakemi Esther IBIRONKE** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/001351** carried out this research work titled “**Mentoring Relationships, Lifelong Learning Strategies and Research Competence of Office Technology and Management Teaching Staff in Public Polytechnics in Southwest, Nigeria**” in the Department of Information Management, Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, For the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in Office and Information Management and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to the Glory of God Almighty who empowered me to complete this work successfully.

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Acknowledgement

My appreciation goes to the management and staff of Lead City University Ibadan for providing the needed support and conducive environment for learning during my study and in conducting this research. I am also grateful to staff and management of public polytechnics in southwest, Nigeria that provided data for this study as well as the services provided by staff of the Library in Lead City University Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

I use this privilege to acknowledge the immeasurable support and intellectual contribution of my able supervisor, Dr. T. E. Adenekan, the Head of Department, Office and Information Management; Dr. O. A. Ologbosere for her guidance, understanding and constructive criticism which have contributed to the quality and success of this work. To Prof. L. A. Abioye, the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Information Science, Lead City University, and all lecturers in the Faculty, I appreciate the opportunity given to me to acquire knowledge in my chosen field. To the Provost, School of Postgraduate Studies, Prof. Afolakemi Oredein and other members of staff of the Postgraduate College Lead City University, I say thank you for providing a very conducive environment for learning and support during my programme at the University. I am grateful to the university librarian, Dr. Lanre Osaniyi and to all lecturers in Office and Information Management Department, Professor E. A. Erwat, Assoc. Prof. T. E. Adenekan, Dr. K. O. Popoola, (PG Coordinator), Mr. P. B. Olusola, Mrs. R. O. Adegbite-Akinpelu, Mrs. V. O. Ahamze, Mr. A. Adeyemi and the Departmental Administrator, Mrs. T. F. Akinyoola I say thank you.

A million and heartfelt thanks to my loving husband Mr. Agboola Sunday Ibronke and our supportive children Oluwadamilare, Oluwadamilola, Oluwadamifayo, Dorcas Ogundele, my lovely mother Pastor Mrs. Dorcas Akinjo, all my wonderful siblings and their families Mr & Mrs

Idowu, Mr & Mrs Joshua Akinjo and Mr & Mrs Michael Akinjo for being patient with me at periods when I could not play my role, as necessary. My profound appreciation goes to my wonderful friend, Mrs Omoyele Olajumoke, and her family for their encouragement and love on this journey. I cannot but appreciate the support and role played by Exodustrip International Education for believing in me as their brand ambassador and supporting me all the way towards achieving this great height. To Dr. F. B. Lawal, whose mentorship has been so helpful in this journal, I thank you for being a positive influence on my career. I appreciate my best friend and editor Mrs. Olayinka-Phillips Cynthia and her family for the unwavering support from the beginning to the end of this programme.

Even though the above-mentioned institutions and persons have assisted in the process of this project work, I alone stand responsible for the error (s) if any, found in this work.

Abstract

Research at higher education institutions is crucial for genesis, discovery, invention, and creation of new knowledge. However, research competence among Office Technology & Management (OTM) teaching staff in public polytechnics in southwest Nigeria is declining, affecting educational quality and institutional reputation. This decline may hinder academic mobility, credential recognition, and resource allocation, thus affecting Nigeria's socioeconomic development. This study therefore examined the influence of mentoring relationships (MR) and lifelong learning strategies (LLS) on research competence (RC) of OTM teaching staff in public polytechnics in Southwest Nigeria. Convergent parallel mixed-method design was employed using adapted questionnaire and focus group interviews for data collection. A cross-sectional survey approach was adapted for the quantitative phase of the study, involving 106 OTM teaching staff selected using total enumeration sampling from all 12 polytechnics in the southwestern region where OTM programme is being offered. In addition, the qualitative phase utilised semi-structured focus group interviews with 11 Heads of OTM departments, who were purposively selected to obtain a deeper understanding of the variables in the study. To achieve this, two sections of group interviews were conducted where participants were interviewed online through Microsoft Teams and each section lasted for 50 to 60 minutes. A validated survey instrument used to gather data. The reliability coefficients for the three variables are 0.807, 0.826 and 0.891 respectively. Survey data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, employing multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level to test three null hypotheses, while the interview data was conducted through thematic analysis with emerging themes to better explain each variable. The descriptive results show that there was a moderate level of research competence among the OTM teaching staff in the selected polytechnics. The initiation stage emerged the most dominant mentoring relationship phases practised while active experimentation appeared as the most prevalent strategy for lifelong learning among the OTM teaching staff. The linear regression result indicated that mentoring relationships (Adj. $R^2 = 0.196$; $F(1,103) = 26.401$; $p = 0.000$) and lifelong learning strategies (Adj. $R^2 = 0.369$; $F(1,103) = 61,617$; $p = 0.000$) significantly influence research competence. However, the multiple regression analysis found that LLS plays the dominant role while MR may not sufficiently influence RC of the OTM teaching staff (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.363$; $F(2, 102) = 30.636$; $p < 0.001$). Qualitative results revealed emerging themes such as professional development and networking, self-directed learning and personal growth, digital and technological engagement, and time management and work-life balance appeared as strategies to enhance research competence. The thematic analysis also highlighted several challenges such as lack of structured mentoring system, low, lack of funds for research and lack institutional supports. The study therefore recommended that polytechnics management should prioritize the coordination of lifelong learning initiatives and enhance effective mentoring programmes to augment OTM teaching staff research competence.

Keywords: Research Competence, Mentoring Relationships, Lifelong Learning Strategies, Office and Technology Management, Southwest Polytechnics,

Word Count: 466

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
OTM	Office Technology and Management
LLS	Lifelong Learning Strategies
MR	Mentoring Relationships
RC	Research Competence
ERCM	European Research Competency Model
DMRM	Developmental Mentoring Relationship Model
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
CPD	Continuing Professional Development