



Behavioural Mentoring and Employee Productivity in the Civil Service of Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Behavioural mentoring is a structured developmental process through which experienced officers (mentors) guide less experienced employees (mentees) by modelling ethical standards, workplace discipline, emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and professional conduct. By shaping employees' attitudes, work ethics, and professional behaviours, behavioural mentoring enhances discipline, efficiency, teamwork, and citizen-centred service delivery within the public service.

Objective: This study examined the impact of behavioural mentoring on employees' work completion, job performance, and overall productivity in the Edo State Civil Service, Nigeria.

Method: The study adopted a descriptive design based on documentary research. Data were obtained from secondary sources, including scholarly journal articles, textbooks, government publications, conference papers, and other relevant literature. The collected data were subjected to qualitative desk analysis to draw conclusions on the relationship between behavioural mentoring and employee productivity in the public service.

Results: The study found that behavioural mentoring enhances employees' job performance, productivity, discipline, accountability, teamwork, commitment, and adherence to ethical standards within the civil service. Through guidance, coaching, counselling, supervision, and role modelling, experienced officers facilitate the transfer of professional knowledge, values, and workplace competencies to younger employees. Behavioural mentoring also promotes organizational continuity, succession planning, leadership development, and improved service delivery across ministries, departments, and agencies.

Unique Contribution: This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive conceptual synthesis of behavioural mentoring and demonstrating its significance as a strategic human resource development approach for improving employee productivity and organizational effectiveness in the Edo State Civil Service.

Key Recommendation: The Government of Edo State and the management of the State Civil Service should institutionalise structured behavioural mentoring programmes across ministries, departments, and agencies. Such programmes should include formal mentor–mentee frameworks, continuous monitoring, and periodic evaluation to strengthen professionalism, ethical conduct, workplace discipline, leadership development, and employee productivity.

Keywords: Behavioural Mentoring, Employee Productivity, Public Service, Workplace Behaviour, Human Resource Development, Edo State Civil Service.



INTRODUCTION

Manpower development is a strategic process through which employees acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, and behavioural dispositions required for effective job performance and organizational success. In the Edo State Civil Service, manpower development extends beyond formal training programmes and academic advancement to include informal workplace learning processes such as behavioural mentoring. Behavioural mentoring focuses on shaping employees' attitudes, ethical values, interpersonal skills, workplace discipline, and professional conduct, all of which are essential for building a disciplined, efficient, and citizen-centred public service (Oyakhire, 2026). It is a structured developmental process in which experienced officers (mentors) guide less experienced officers (mentees) by modelling ethical standards, emotional intelligence, professionalism, and acceptable workplace behaviours.

Unlike conventional training, which primarily develops technical competencies, behavioural mentoring concentrates on the human dimension of organizational performance by cultivating desirable values, attitudes, and professional conduct. It facilitates the transfer of organizational culture by transmitting the traditions, norms, institutional values, and unwritten rules that govern professional behaviour within the public service (Oyakhire, 2026). Consequently, behavioural mentoring serves as an important mechanism for preserving institutional memory while promoting continuity in administrative practices.

In Edo State, public service reforms implemented under successive administrations, particularly during the administration of Governor Godwin Obaseki, emphasized not only digital transformation and structural modernization but also the need for a positive workplace culture founded on professionalism, integrity, accountability, and service excellence. Within this reform agenda, behavioural mentoring occupies a strategic position by fostering ethical conduct, reducing workplace indiscipline, and discouraging corrupt practices such as absenteeism, lateness, bribery, and abuse of office, all of which undermine public sector productivity. Through continuous guidance and role modelling, senior officers are able to transmit professional values that strengthen organizational effectiveness and improve service delivery.

Manpower development, therefore, should not be viewed solely as the acquisition of technical knowledge and professional skills. Sustainable organizational performance also depends on behavioural transformation, which is best achieved through continuous mentoring relationships. Behavioural mentoring strengthens the moral and professional foundations of the workforce by bridging the generational gap between experienced and newly recruited officers, facilitating knowledge transfer, promoting ethical leadership, and preserving institutional values. Institutionalizing behavioural mentoring as an integral component of manpower development would significantly enhance employee productivity, organizational discipline, and the sustainability of public sector reforms in Edo State.

According to the National Mentoring Resource Centre (2025), behavioural mentoring assists employees in developing appropriate behavioural norms, workplace ethics, and professional conduct required for organizational effectiveness. It is applicable across diverse organizations,



including the public service, where experienced officers guide junior employees in adapting to acceptable workplace standards and expectations. Similarly, the National Academy of Sciences (2025) observed that mentoring motivates employees to acquire the experience, confidence, creativity, and professional judgement necessary for independent and effective job performance. Within the context of this study, behavioural mentoring encompasses the moulding of employees' attitudes, the shaping of workplace conduct, the development of ethical behaviour, and the modelling of professional character that collectively enhance employee productivity and organizational performance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The effectiveness of Nigeria's public service has continued to attract scholarly and policy attention due to persistent concerns regarding declining employee productivity and organizational efficiency. In many states, including Edo State, the civil service is confronted with numerous challenges, including poor work ethics, weak organizational commitment, absenteeism, corruption, inadequate leadership orientation, declining professionalism, and ineffective service delivery. These challenges have significantly weakened the capacity of government institutions to formulate and implement public policies efficiently while meeting citizens' expectations (Oyakhire, 2026).

Over the years, governments have introduced various public sector reforms, staff training programmes, leadership development initiatives, and capacity-building interventions aimed at improving employee performance and organizational productivity. Despite these efforts, inefficiency and poor workplace behaviour continue to persist within many public institutions. One plausible explanation for this persistent challenge is the limited institutional attention devoted to behavioural mentoring as a strategic component of manpower development.

Within the Edo State Civil Service, structured mentor–mentee relationships capable of promoting discipline, accountability, teamwork, leadership development, organizational commitment, and professional ethics appear to be inadequate (Oyakhire, 2026). Consequently, many experienced officers retire without effectively transferring their institutional knowledge, administrative experience, and professional values to younger employees. This has contributed to weak administrative continuity, diminished organizational learning, and declining workplace professionalism. Furthermore, the absence of formal behavioural mentoring frameworks has made it difficult for newly employed officers to internalize acceptable ethical standards and workplace norms, thereby contributing to poor service delivery and declining public confidence in government institutions.

Although previous studies have examined public sector reforms, human capital development, leadership practices, and employee performance, relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to behavioural mentoring as a determinant of employee productivity within the Nigerian public service, particularly in the Edo State Civil Service. This gap in the literature provides the justification for the present study.



Accordingly, this study examines the influence of behavioural mentoring on employee productivity in the Edo State Civil Service with a view to determining how behavioural mentoring enhances work completion, organizational discipline, employee commitment, ethical conduct, and overall public service effectiveness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of behavioural mentoring on employee productivity in the Edo State Civil Service.

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the influence of behavioural mentoring on staff work completion in the Edo State Civil Service; and
2. assess the impact of behavioural mentoring on employees' productivity in the Edo State Civil Service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Service

Public service basically involve all the employees of the government, its role is the implementation of policies and programme of government. It embraces the men and women employed in a civil capacity by the government primarily to render and effect government decisions and implementations (Oyakhire, 2026).

Productivity

Productivity is the propelling vigor of an organization's success and profitability. It is the connection that exists between output of goods/services and employees' input (Oyakhire, 2026). It is the measure of the input of human and non-human resource used in the production process. Simply put, productivity is the ratio of output to input.

Behavioural Mentoring and Staff Work Completion

In an organization such as the Edo State civil service, there abound different indicators of job performance. There is no pronounced discrepancy among what various ministries regard as the indicators of job performance. Even if not all-encompassing given that they are so numerous in magnitude, the most important ones are categorized as behavioral mentoring, rules sensitization, scholastic upgrading, computer up-skilling, and professional coaching.

National Mentoring Resource Centre (2025) characterized behavioral mentoring as being of assistance to employees in developing improved behavioral norms and conduct. This training and development technique is applicable to diverse establishments such as the civil service. The rationale behind behavioral mentoring at workplace is to help manage the conduct of personnel to align with the set standard. Mentoring entails a mentor imbuing on a mentee the acceptable behaviour in a social institution. Behavioral mentoring thus assists in motivating the mentee or employee to develop experience, creativity and knowledge crucial for autonomous discharge of everyday jobs at workplace (National Academy of Sciences, 2025). In this study, the



conspicuous attributes of behavioral mentoring encapsulate molding manners of employees; patterning actions of workers; forming demeanour of staff; shaping conduct of personnel; and modeling character of workforce. In the context of the Edo State Civil Service, behavioural mentoring involves the process by which experienced officers guide, supervise, and mode ethical and professional behaviour for subordinates, fostering a culture of discipline, accountability, and diligence. Oyakhire (2026), posited that behavioural mentoring has aided in quick work completion in Edo State Civil Service.

The Impact of Behavioural Mentoring on Employees' Productivity

Behavioural mentoring plays a significant role in promoting effective service delivery in the civil service by shaping the attitudes, values, and work behaviours of public servants. Through guidance, supervision, counselling, and role-modeling, experienced officers help junior employees develop professional ethics, discipline, accountability, and commitment to organizational goals. This process improves workers' understanding of public service rules, administrative procedures, and acceptable workplace conduct, thereby enhancing efficiency and productivity.

Effective service delivery depends largely on the quality of human behaviour within public institutions. Where behavioural mentoring exists, employees are more likely to demonstrate punctuality, honesty, teamwork, effective communication, and dedication to duty. Mentors also help workers to manage workplace challenges, adapt to organizational culture, and improve interpersonal relationships with colleagues and the public. As a result, government services are delivered more efficiently, transparently, and professionally.

Behavioural mentoring can contribute to reducing administrative inefficiency, poor work attitudes, corruption, and lack of accountability among employees. Senior officers who serve as mentors transfer valuable experience, institutional knowledge, and ethical standards to younger workers, thereby strengthening organizational continuity and performance. This encourages a culture of responsibility and professionalism that is necessary for improved public confidence in government institutions.

Behavioural mentoring enhances motivation and morale among civil servants because employees who receive guidance and support often feel valued and encouraged to perform better. Such positive behavioural orientation promotes commitment to organizational objectives and helps ministries and agencies achieve effective policy implementation and quality service delivery.

Therefore, behavioural mentoring remains an important managerial and administrative tool for improving employee conduct and enhancing effective service delivery in the civil service system.

Ariani (2013), who observed that mentoring and interpersonal guidance play crucial roles in enhancing employee engagement and reducing counterproductive work behaviour. The strong correlation (0.980) suggests that behavioural mentoring is one of the most effective forms of informal learning and capacity building within the organisation. Mentored employees tend to



internalize institutional values and procedural norms, leading to faster decision-making and timely task execution.

Beardwell and Holden's (2001) argument that mentorship provides social learning opportunities through which workers can observe, imitate, and internalize best practices. Within the Edo State Civil Service, where compliance with standard operating procedures is critical to effective border management and trade facilitation, behavioural mentoring helps staff to apply learned routines efficiently. The observed relationship implies that mentoring serves not only as a motivational tool but also as a mechanism for transmitting institutional knowledge across generations of officers.

The implications of this result are significant. Firstly, it highlights the need for the Edo State Civil Service to formalize mentoring structures and reward mentors who contribute to improved staff performance. Secondly, mentoring can be integrated into the broader staff development framework as a low-cost but high-impact strategy to ensure consistency in work ethics and operational excellence. Consistent with Goldstein and Ford (2002), behavioural mentoring should be seen as part of a continuous learning process that supports employees' long-term growth and enhances service delivery efficiency.

Several studies in developed contexts have established a positive link between mentoring and employee performance. For example, Allen, Eby, and Lentz (2006) found that mentored employees in U.S. corporations reported higher job satisfaction and performance, particularly in roles requiring teamwork and timely task completion. Similarly, Eby et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that mentoring has strong effects on career success, task performance, and organisational commitment.

Igbaekemen (2014) demonstrated that mentoring relationships among middle-level managers in Nigerian ministries improved coordination and responsiveness, leading to faster task turnaround. The study identified behavioural mentoring as the most cost-effective training mechanism in the public sector. Amoako and Baah (2017) found that mentoring improved job efficiency among revenue officers, particularly in administrative departments where task completion timelines were previously inconsistent. The authors concluded that behavioural mentoring mitigates the negative effects of low formal training budgets by leveraging experiential learning.

Measuring Public Sector Productivity

Oyakhire and Eghaghe (2024), opined that productivity measurement in the public sector occasionally can be difficult simply because that there are no market transactions for public services, most public services are complex, and there is often a time lag between investments in inputs and the realization of outputs and outcomes. APO (2019) posited that "the difficulty in measuring public sector productivity is given to the fact that the prices of goods and services produced are either not available or are not reliable", the indices for measuring public-sector productivity is as similar to that of the economist model of the ratio of output over input. The World Bank uses governance indicator as a measure of public sector productivity, with six dimensions of the public sector notably the voice of the citizens and accountability to same; political stability/instability and violence or lack of it; government effectiveness; regulatory



quality; rule of law and control of corruption (Mustapha and Omorede, 2017). The following parameters could be adopted to measure productivity Task accomplished, the outcome of activities, the quality of services rendered, the legitimacy of services delivered, expertise in delivery of services, the impact of services on the citizens and the feedback loop (Oyakhire, 2026).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura posited the Social Learning Theory in 1977. The theory claims that individuals acquire new behaviours, attitudes, abilities, and values through observation, imitation, and interaction with role models. According to Bandura, people learn not just via direct experience but also by seeing the acts and repercussions of others' conduct. The theory highlights how crucial mentoring relationships are in influencing employee behaviour, output, and career advancement. In corporate contexts, experienced employees serve as mentors who exhibit suitable workplace behaviours, ethical standards, problem-solving skills, and professional competencies. Through ongoing engagement, mentees observe and internalize these habits, leading to enhanced work performance and productivity. The Social Learning Theory is premised on the following assumptions: People get up knowledge by watching how others behave; Learning happens by modelling and imitation; Behavioural change is influenced by feedback and reinforcement. The theory is highly relevant to the study because: Experienced civil servants instruct junior officials on appropriate workplace conduct, moral behavior, and professional obligations through behavioral mentoring; Positive work habits like commitment, accountability, teamwork, and punctuality are learned by employees through mentorship and observation; The transmission of institutional knowledge and practical skills required for efficient service delivery is facilitated by mentoring.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the influence of behavioural mentoring on employee productivity in the Edo State Civil Service. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted with civil servants drawn from various ministries within the Edo State Civil Service. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of the different ministries. Four officers were selected from each ministry, resulting in a total sample of 100 respondents. The sampling technique provided every eligible officer with an equal opportunity of selection, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the credibility of the findings. Secondary data were obtained from relevant textbooks, scholarly journal articles, government publications, conference papers, policy documents, and other credible online sources relating to behavioural mentoring, manpower development, and employee productivity in the public service. The interview responses and documentary evidence were analysed using thematic analysis. The data were carefully reviewed, coded, categorized into recurring themes, and presented under relevant conceptual headings to facilitate meaningful interpretation. Findings from the primary and secondary sources were triangulated to strengthen



the validity of the study's conclusions regarding the contribution of behavioural mentoring to employee productivity in the Edo State Civil Service.

DISCUSSIONS

Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria consistently reveal that behavioural mentoring significantly enhances employee performance and the timely completion of assigned tasks across both public and private sectors. Omodia (2009) observed that mentorship relationships within the Nigerian public service positively influenced subordinates' adherence to work schedules and improved communication between senior and junior officers. The study explained that when managers consciously act as behavioural models, subordinates internalise desirable work ethics that translate into faster job completion.

Okeke (2011) found that behavioural mentoring improved junior staff's adherence to deadlines, especially in customer-related tasks. The study revealed that employees who received consistent feedback and behavioural guidance from supervisors demonstrated higher accuracy and faster task completion than those who relied solely on technical training. The findings of Oyitso and Olomukoro (2012) corroborate this evidence in the public sector, noting that mentoring not only accelerates skill transfer but also instil a sense of ownership and responsibility among employees. They observed that the presence of role models in the workplace encourages mentee to emulate discipline, efficiency, and problem-solving behaviour essential for timely task.

Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) examined the effect of mentoring on employee's performance in Nigeria. The data from three hundred and sixty-seven construction employees were collected and analyzed for the study. The result of the study concluded that mentorship had a significant relationship with the employee's performance.

CONCLUSION

The study hence reveals amongst others that, behavioural mentoring assist in forming demeanour of staff to commence daily tasks without delay. It was also observed that, workers consciousness of official rules enhances their loyalty. The study also noticed that the majority of the study respondents agreed that staff awareness of official guidelines enables them to be impartial. Furthermore, the study discovered that workers familiarity with official regulations boosts their confidentiality.

This study has established that behavioural mentoring occupies a significant place in enhancing public service performance in the Edo State Civil Service. The study revealed that the effectiveness of the civil service does not depend solely on administrative reforms, technical training, or policy implementation, but also on the behavioural orientation, ethical values, and professional conduct of employees. Behavioural mentoring therefore serves as an important mechanism for shaping positive workplace attitudes and strengthening institutional performance within the public sector.

The study further showed that behavioural mentoring contributes to improved job performance, productivity, discipline, accountability, teamwork, and commitment among civil servants. Through guidance, counselling, supervision, and role-modeling, experienced officers help



younger employees acquire the necessary behavioural traits and professional ethics required for effective service delivery. Mentoring also promotes knowledge transfer, organizational continuity, and leadership development within the civil service system.

Findings from the review equally indicate that the absence of structured behavioural mentoring programmes has contributed to persistent problems such as poor work attitudes, lateness, low morale, corruption, indiscipline, and administrative inefficiency in the public service. These challenges continue to undermine the capacity of the civil service to effectively deliver quality services to the public. Consequently, there is a need for institutionalized mentoring frameworks that will encourage positive employee behaviour and improve organizational effectiveness.

The study concludes that behavioural mentoring remains an essential strategy for strengthening public service performance in Edo State. If properly implemented, it can enhance professionalism, ethical conduct, employee motivation, and efficient service delivery across ministries and government agencies. Therefore, the integration of behavioural mentoring into public sector management practices is necessary for achieving a more productive, disciplined, and citizen-oriented civil service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study on the place of behavioural mentoring in enhancing public service performance in the Edo State Civil Service, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government and management of the Edo State Civil Service should establish structured behavioural mentoring programmes within ministries, departments, and agencies to promote professionalism, discipline, and ethical conduct among employees.
2. Senior and experienced officers should be encouraged to mentor junior staff through regular guidance, counselling, supervision, and knowledge-sharing in order to improve workers' competence and job performance.
3. Training and development programmes should incorporate behavioural mentoring components that focus on leadership skills, communication, teamwork, accountability, and public service ethics.

Ethical clearance

The qualitative method of data collection was adopted in this study. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources. A stratified random sampling procedure was utilized to arrive at the total number of respondents to elicit data through the interview method from the entire State civil service

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution.

Samuel Oyakhire conceived the idea for the study, determine the design and Joy Nwanne Ugbaja wrote part of the paper

Availability of data and materials.

The datasets upon which the conclusions for this study were made are available on reasonable request

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