Mentorship, Leadership Development and Strategic Agility: A Quantitative Study among Employees of a Commecial Bank in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The increasing volatility of the banking environment has intensified the need for organisations to develop employees who can lead effectively, respond to change and support organisational adaptation. This study examines the relationship between mentorship, leadership development and strategic agility among employees of a commercial Bank in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a positivist-pragmatic philosophical position, a deductive approach and a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire from 53 employees across four branchesof a commercial Bank in Owerri. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The findings indicate that mentorship is highly established within the participating branches, with respondents reporting strong levels of formal structure, trust, constructive feedback and developmental support. Pearson correlation analysis identified a strong positive relationship between mentorship practices and leadership development ($r = .731$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis further showed that leadership development was a significant positive predictor of strategic agility ($R^2 = .615$, $\beta = .785$, $p < .001$). Mentorship also demonstrated a significant positive predictive relationship with strategic agility ($R^2 = .472$, $\beta = .687$, $p < .001$). The findings suggest that mentorship is associated with the development of leadership capabilities and agility-related behaviours, including timely decision-making, adaptability, innovation, collaboration and responsiveness to changing customer needs. The study contributes context-specific quantitative evidence from the Nigerian banking sector and recommends strengthening formal mentoring systems, expanding peer, reverse and cross-functional mentoring, and integrating mentoring more closely with leadership-development and organisational-learning strategies.

Keywords: Mentorship; Leadership Development; Strategic Agility; Organisational Agility; Knowledge Sharing; Banking Sector; Nigeria

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organisations operating in contemporary business environments face increasing pressure to respond to technological disruption, changing customer expectations, competitive intensity and environmental uncertainty. These pressures are particularly significant within banking, where digital transformation is changing how financial services are delivered and how employees interact with customers and organisational systems. Recent research on Nigerian banking indicates that digital transformation has substantially altered banking practices and increased the importance of organisational responsiveness and technological adaptation (Lottu et al., 2023). Strategic agility has consequently become increasingly important because organisations need to interpret environmental changes, respond rapidly, reconfigure resources and capabilities when circumstances change.

Leadership capability is central to this process. Recent research conceptualises leadership agility as an important dimension of organisational agility, with agile leaders expected to demonstrate appropriate mindsets, competencies and behaviours that help organisations respond to changing environments (Tandon, Bhatnagar and Sharma, 2024). In this context, leadership development cannot be understood solely as a formal training activity. It also involves learning through relationships, experience, reflection, feedback and exposure to different perspectives.

Mentorship represents one mechanism through which such developmental processes can occur. Contemporary research shows that mentoring can create social learning spaces in which leadership development emerges through rapport-building, reflection, interaction and shared learning (Reynolds et al., 2023). Research on peer mentoring has similarly identified mentoring experiences as a mechanism through which leadership self-efficacy can be strengthened (Byrne et al., 2022). These findings suggest that mentoring can support the development of employees who are increasingly prepared to assume leadership responsibilities.

The connection between mentorship and strategic agility can also be understood through knowledge-sharing processes. Organisational agility depends partly on the ability of employees to exchange knowledge, collaborate and adapt to changing circumstances. Empirical evidence indicates that knowledge sharing is positively associated with organisational agility and that organisational culture can strengthen this relationship (Marjerison, Andrews and Kuan, 2022; Wicaksana and Isfania, 2022). Mentoring provides a relational setting in which experienced employees can transfer knowledge, provide feedback and expose mentees to alternative ways of understanding organisational problems.

The relationship between leadership and agility is also supported by contemporary strategic-agility research. Zahoor et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of dynamic capabilities, opportunity recognition and rapid adaptation in developing strategic agility, while Jooss et al. (2024) highlight the importance of talent-related capabilities in developing organisational responsiveness. Recent banking-sector evidence further indicates that strategic agility is relevant to competitive advantage within retail banking environments (Phaila, Boikanyo and Gomwe, 2024; Ahmed, 2026).

Despite this developing literature, there remains limited empirical evidence examining mentorship, leadership development and strategic agility together within Nigerian banking organisations. This study therefore investigates these relationships among employees of a commercial Bank in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The Nigerian banking sector operates within a rapidly changing environment characterised by technological transformation, competitive pressure, changing customer expectations and regulatory demands. Such conditions require employees and managers who can make timely decisions, collaborate effectively, respond to uncertainty and support organisational adaptation.

However, leadership development may be weakened when employee development relies predominantly on formal training without sufficient opportunities for continuous relational learning, feedback and knowledge exchange. Mentoring can provide such opportunities, but its effectiveness depends on the quality, structure and consistency of mentoring relationships.

Although contemporary studies increasingly connect mentoring with leadership development and organisational learning, limited empirical research has examined whether mentoring is associated with strategic-agility outcomes among employees within Nigerian banking organisations. The specific relationship between mentorship and leadership development, the relationship between leadership development and strategic agility, and the direct relationship between mentorship and strategic agility therefore require further empirical investigation.

This study addresses this gap by examining these relationships among employees of a commercial Bank branches in Owerri.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by four research questions:

1. What is the current mentorship culture among employees at a commercial Bank in Owerri?
2. What relationship exists between mentorship and leadership development in an Owerri commercial Bank?

3. How does leadership development relate to strategic agility among employees?

4. Does mentorship have a direct relationship with strategic agility among employees?

1.3 Research Objectives

The study sought to:

1. Investigate the nature and prevalence of mentorship practices among a commercial Bank staff in Owerri.

2. Determine the relationship between mentorship and leadership development.

3. Analyse the relationship between leadership development and strategic agility.

4. Investigate the relationship between mentorship and strategic agility among employees.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

H1: Mentorship practices are positively and significantly related to leadership development among an Owerri commercial Bank employees.

H2: Leadership development has a positive and significant predictive relationship with strategic agility.

H3: Mentorship practices have a positive and significant predictive relationship with strategic agility.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mentorship and Contemporary Organisational Development

Mentorship has increasingly been considered an organisational-development mechanism rather than simply a career-support activity. Contemporary mentoring research emphasises the relational and experiential dimensions through which individuals develop knowledge, confidence, reflective capacity and leadership behaviours.

Reynolds et al. (2023), for example, examined leadership development through mentoring and found that leadership learning emerged through relational processes including rapport-building, reflection and interaction. Their findings suggest that mentoring can create social learning environments in which participants reinterpret experiences and develop more flexible approaches to leadership.

Similarly, Byrne et al. (2022) found that participation in peer mentoring was associated with increased leadership self-efficacy. Although their study was conducted in an educational setting rather than a commercial organisation, the findings demonstrate the broader developmental potential of mentoring relationships in strengthening confidence to lead.

Mentoring can therefore be understood as a developmental relationship through which employees obtain access to knowledge, feedback, role modelling and opportunities for reflection. The effectiveness of mentoring is likely to depend not simply on whether a programme exists but on the quality of interaction between mentors and mentees.

2.2 Mentorship, Knowledge Sharing and Leadership Development

A central mechanism through which mentoring may influence leadership development is knowledge sharing. Mentors can provide access to tacit knowledge, organisational experience and contextual understanding that may be difficult to acquire through formal training alone.

Contemporary research links knowledge sharing with organisational agility. Marjerison, Andrews and Kuan (2022) found that knowledge sharing, adaptability and organisational agility are interconnected and argued that collaboration and knowledge exchange can contribute to sustainable organisational development. Wicaksana and Isfania (2022) similarly found a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and organisational agility, with organisational culture strengthening the relationship.

Mentorship can provide a structured interpersonal mechanism for such knowledge exchange. Through regular interaction, employees may gain access to practical knowledge concerning organisational processes, decision-making, stakeholder management and problem-solving. These experiences can support the development of leadership-related competencies.

The present study therefore proposes that stronger mentorship practices should be associated with stronger leadership-development outcomes.

2.3 Leadership Development and Strategic Agility

Strategic agility concerns the capacity of organisations to respond to changes in their environment while maintaining the ability to adapt strategies, resources and activities. Recent research increasingly connects strategic agility with dynamic capabilities and organisational adaptation.

Zahoor et al. (2022) found that dynamic capabilities supported agile adaptation and opportunity utilisation in uncertain environments. Their study highlights the importance of sensing and seizing capabilities in responding to disruption.

Tandon, Bhatnagar and Sharma (2024), in a systematic literature review of leadership agility, identified leadership agility as an important dimension of organisational agility. Their review highlights leadership mindsets, competencies, styles and organisational functions as important components of leadership agility.

Jooss et al. (2024) similarly demonstrate the importance of talent-related capabilities for developing strategic agility. Their analysis positions talent management and skills matching as mechanisms through which organisations can strengthen their capacity to respond to changing conditions.

These studies suggest that leadership development can provide an important human-capital foundation for strategic agility. Employees who develop stronger decision-making, communication, strategic awareness and adaptive capabilities may be better positioned to respond to environmental changes.

2.4 Strategic Agility in the Banking Environment

The relevance of strategic agility is particularly strong in banking because financial institutions operate within environments shaped by technological change, competition, customer expectations and regulatory developments.

Research on Nigerian banking's digital transformation demonstrates the extent to which digital technologies are changing banking processes and customer service (Lottu et al., 2023). Such changes require employees to develop new skills and respond to changing customer and operational requirements.

Research within the banking sector also suggests that strategic agility can support competitive advantage. Phaila, Boikanyo and Gomwe (2024) found a positive relationship between strategic agility and competitive advantage in the retail banking context. Ahmed (2026) similarly examines strategic agility within Egypt's banking sector and identifies agility as important for responding to market, regulatory and technological disruption.

Strategic agility is therefore not simply an abstract organisational concept. It has direct relevance to banking institutions that must respond to technological, market and regulatory changes.

2.5 Mentorship and Strategic Agility

The relationship between mentorship and strategic agility can be explained through knowledge transfer, experiential learning and the development of adaptive behaviours.

Mentoring may expose employees to alternative perspectives and help them understand how experienced colleagues interpret uncertainty and organisational problems. It may also support the development of confidence to experiment, communicate across organisational boundaries and respond to new situations.

Marjerison, Andrews and Kuan (2022) demonstrate the importance of knowledge sharing and adaptability for organisational agility, while Reynolds et al. (2023) show that mentoring can support leadership development through relational learning and reflection. Together, these findings provide a basis for proposing that mentoring can contribute to agility-related employee capabilities.

Recent strategic-agility research also highlights knowledge management, dynamic talent management, open innovation and digitalisation as important components of organisational agility (Christofi, 2024). Mentoring can potentially contribute to several of these areas by strengthening employee learning and knowledge exchange.

The present study therefore proposes a direct relationship between mentorship practices and strategic agility.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The original dissertation considered five theoretical perspectives. For the journal article, three theories are retained as the principal explanatory lenses because they most directly support the empirical relationships tested.

2.6.1 Social Learning Perspective

The contemporary mentoring literature continues to recognise social learning as an important mechanism through which mentoring relationships facilitate development. Reynolds et al. (2023) demonstrate how mentoring can create social learning spaces in which participants develop leadership through interaction, reflection and shared experience.

This perspective helps explain why mentorship may be associated with leadership development: employees can observe experienced colleagues, receive feedback and reflect on their own behaviour.

2.6.2 Relational Leadership Perspective

The relational perspective views leadership development as influenced by the quality of interpersonal relationships, communication and interaction. This is particularly relevant to mentoring because trust, openness and constructive feedback were central dimensions measured in the present study.

The high levels of trust and constructive feedback reported by respondents therefore provide empirical evidence consistent with the relational explanation of leadership development.

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2.6.3 Dynamic Capabilities Perspective

Dynamic capabilities provide a useful theoretical lens for understanding strategic agility. Recent research continues to connect dynamic capabilities with strategic agility, particularly in environments characterised by uncertainty and technological disruption (Zahoor et al., 2022; Feng and Rani, 2024).

From this perspective, leadership development contributes to the human capabilities required to recognise change, respond to emerging opportunities and support organisational adaptation.

2.7 Research Gap

Three principal gaps are addressed by this study.

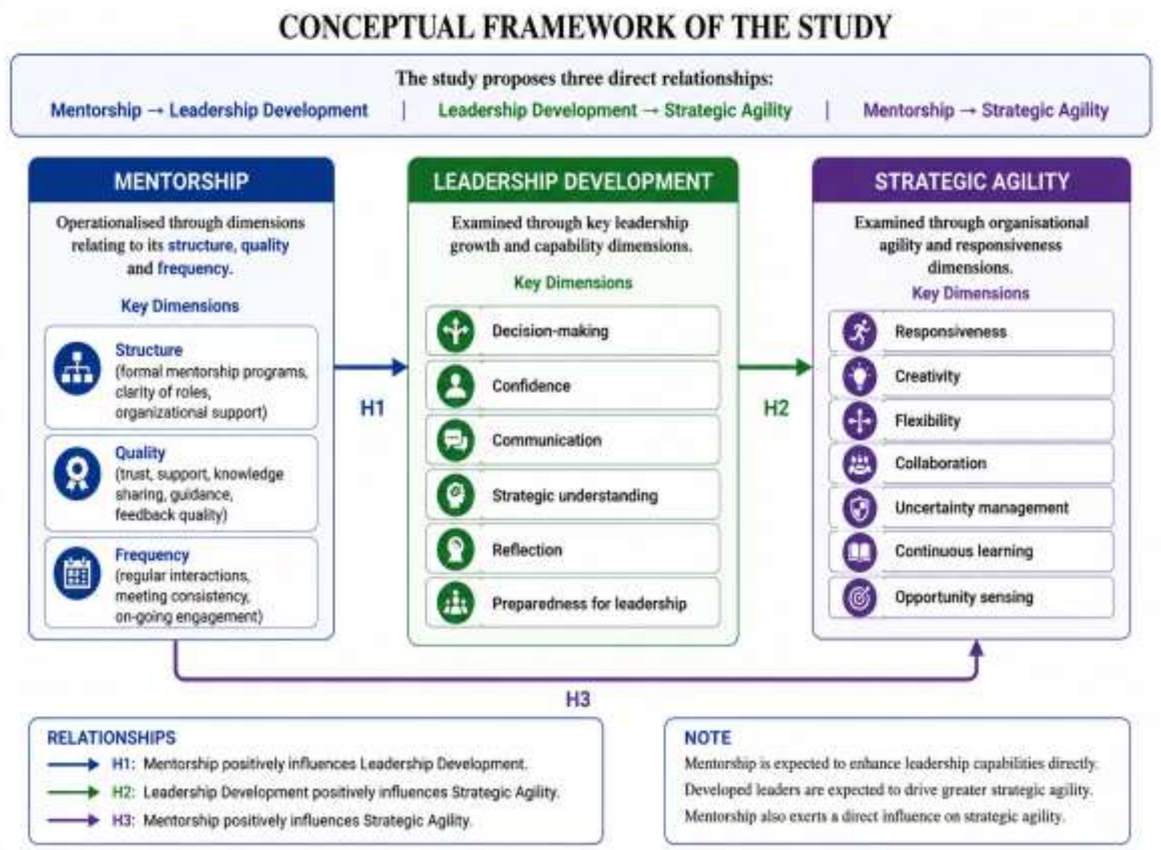
First, although contemporary research increasingly examines mentoring and leadership development, there remains limited evidence connecting mentoring directly with strategic agility.

Second, much of the contemporary evidence on strategic agility comes from contexts outside Nigeria. There is therefore a need for context-specific evidence from Nigerian organisations, particularly banking institutions.

Third, mentorship, leadership development and strategic agility are frequently investigated as separate constructs. The present study brings the three constructs together within one quantitative framework.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The study proposes three direct relationships:



Source: Author's conceptualisation based on the literature reviewed.

Mentorship was operationalised through dimensions relating to its structure, quality and frequency. Leadership development was examined through decision-making, confidence, communication, strategic understanding, reflection and preparedness for leadership. Strategic agility was examined through responsiveness, creativity, flexibility, collaboration, uncertainty management, continuous learning and opportunity sensing.

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3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

The study adopted a positivist-pragmatic philosophical position and a deductive approach. The quantitative orientation was selected because the study sought to measure the principal constructs and statistically examine the hypothesised relationships among them.

3.2 Research Design

A cross-sectional quantitative survey design was adopted. Data were collected at one point in time from employees working in four branches of a commercial bank in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

The design was appropriate for examining associations between mentorship, leadership development and strategic agility, although the cross-sectional nature of the study means that causal conclusions cannot be established.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The population consisted of employees working in four operational branches of a commercial bank in Owerri. Both managerial and non-managerial employees were included.

A two-stage sampling procedure was used. Participants first had to meet eligibility criteria, including a minimum of six months' organisational tenure and previous exposure to mentoring. Eligible employees were then stratified by branch and job role.

The initial target was 60 respondents. Fifty-three complete and valid responses were ultimately obtained, representing an 88.3% response achievement.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire developed in Google Forms. The questionnaire contained five sections covering:

1. demographic characteristics;
2. mentorship practices;
3. leadership development;
4. strategic agility; and
5. ethical consent.

A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used.

A pilot study involving 16 eligible employees was undertaken to assess clarity, reliability and questionnaire layout.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's alpha values reported in the dissertation were:

Construct	Cronbach's α
Mentorship Practices	.815

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Leadership Development	.913
Strategic Agility	.818
Organisational Support	.731

All reported coefficients exceeded .70.

Content validity was supported through expert review by academics and the commercial Bank HR personnel. Construct validity was considered through alignment with the theoretical and conceptual framework.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Version 28.

The analytical process included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Normality and linearity were also examined before inferential analysis.

Normality Test

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
MentorshipPractices	53	3.13	5.00	4.5613	.46939	-1.272	.327	1.234	.644
LeadershipDevelopment	53	3.75	5.00	4.6604	.37610	-.750	.327	-.694	.644
StrategicAgility	53	3.25	5.00	4.5825	.45530	-.840	.327	-.166	.644
Valid N (listwise)	53								

Linearity Test

Linearity Test							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Leadership Development * Mentorship Practices	Between Groups	(Combined)	4.828	12	.402	6.369	<.001
		Linearity	3.934	1	3.934	62.259	<.001
	Within Groups		2.527	40	.063		
	Total		7.356	52			
Strategic Agility * Mentorship Practices	Between Groups	(Combined)	7.156	12	.596	6.582	<.001
		Linearity	5.092	1	5.092	56.208	<.001
	Within Groups		3.624	40	.091		
	Total		10.779	52			
StrategicAgility * Leadership Development	Between Groups	(Combined)	8.606	10	.861	16.628	<.001
		Linearity	6.635	1	6.635	128.199	<.001
	Within Groups		2.174	42	.052		
	Total		10.779	52			

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Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between mentorship practices and leadership development. Simple regression models were used to examine the predictive relationships between leadership development and strategic agility and between mentorship practices and strategic agility.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Informed consent was obtained electronically before participants accessed the questionnaire. Data were anonymised, securely stored and reported only in aggregated form. The dissertation reports institutional ethical approval under the University of Greater Manchester's Ethical Framework for Innovation and Transformation.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

A total of 53 valid responses were obtained.

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	30	56.6
	Female	23	43.4
Age	20–29	12	22.6
	30–39	20	37.7
	40–49	21	39.6
Education	OND	4	7.5
	HND	16	30.2
	BSc/BBA	18	34.0
	MSc/MBA	14	26.4
Role	Officer/Staff	22	41.5
	Supervisor	19	35.8
	Middle Manager	7	13.2
	Senior Manager	5	9.4

All 53 respondents (100%) reported previous participation in a mentoring relationship. Of these, 39 respondents (73.6%) reported formal bank-structured mentoring, 3 (5.7%) reported informal mentoring and 11 (20.8%) reported experiencing both formal and informal mentoring.

4.2 Mentorship Practices

The findings indicate strong endorsement of mentorship practices.

For example, 86.8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that a formal mentoring structure existed in their branch. Similarly, 96.2% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring relationships focused on both career and personal development.

Trust and openness were particularly strongly endorsed, with 98.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing that mutual trust and openness existed in their mentoring relationships. Constructive feedback received the highest level of positive endorsement, with 100% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that mentors provided feedback that helped improve performance.

The results therefore indicate that mentorship within the participating branches was perceived as structured, relational and developmental.

4.3 Leadership Development

The leadership-development findings were strongly positive.

All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that mentorship had enhanced their ability to make informed and timely decisions. Similarly, 98.1% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring had increased their confidence in leading others.

Communication and interpersonal development were also strongly endorsed, with 94.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing that mentoring improved these skills.

Strategic understanding was similarly high, with 98.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing that mentorship improved their understanding of the bank’s strategic goals.

The findings suggest that respondents associated their mentoring experiences with important leadership-related capabilities.

4.4 Strategic Agility

Respondents also reported strong levels of agility-related behaviours.

A total of 94.4% agreed or strongly agreed that mentorship improved their ability to respond quickly to changing customer needs. Similarly, 98.1% agreed or strongly agreed that mentors encouraged creative thinking and new ideas.

Adaptability was also strongly endorsed, with 96.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing that mentoring increased their flexibility in handling new challenges.

Other high-level findings included:

- 84.9% agreed or strongly agreed that mentorship promoted cross-departmental teamwork;
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that mentors helped them understand how to manage uncertainty and risk;
- 98.1% agreed or strongly agreed that mentorship supported continuous learning and improvement; and
- 90.6% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring helped align personal goals with the bank’s agility goals.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Mentorship Practices	53	4.56	.469	-1.272	1.234
Leadership Development	53	4.66	.376	-.750	-.694
Strategic Agility	53	4.58	.455	-.840	-.166

The mean scores indicate strong overall endorsement of mentorship, leadership development and strategic-agility items.

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4.5 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Mentorship and Leadership Development

Pearson correlation analysis identified a strong positive relationship between mentorship practices and leadership development:

$r = .731$, $p < .001$, $n = 53$.

H1 was therefore supported.

Relationship	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision
Mentorship → Leadership Development	.731	< .001	Supported

H2: Leadership Development and Strategic Agility

Regression analysis demonstrated a strong predictive relationship between leadership development and strategic agility.

Statistic	Result
R	.785
R^2	.615
Adjusted R^2	.608
F(1,51)	81.639
p	< .001
β	.785
B	.950
t	9.035

Leadership development explained 61.5% of the variance in strategic agility. H2 was therefore supported.

H3: Mentorship and Strategic Agility

Regression analysis also identified a significant predictive relationship between mentorship practices and strategic agility.

Statistic	Result
R	.687
R^2	.472
Adjusted R^2	.462
F(1,51)	45.660
p	< .001
β	.687
B	.667
t	6.757

Mentorship practices explained 47.2% of the variance in strategic agility. H3 was therefore supported.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Nature and Prevalence of Mentorship

The first objective examined the nature and prevalence of mentorship among employees. The findings indicate a strong mentoring culture within the participating branches of the Bank. All respondents had experienced a mentoring relationship, while nearly three-quarters reported formal bank-structured mentoring.

The high levels of trust, openness and constructive feedback are important because contemporary mentoring research emphasises the relational quality of mentoring rather than simply the existence of a formal programme. Reynolds et al. (2023) found that leadership development through mentoring emerged through relational processes involving rapport-building, reflection and interaction. The present findings are consistent with this perspective because respondents reported strong relational characteristics within their mentoring experiences.

The findings also indicate substantial exposure to peer and reverse mentoring. This is relevant to contemporary organisations because knowledge does not necessarily flow only from senior to junior employees. Digital transformation and changing work practices can create situations in which junior employees possess knowledge that is valuable to more experienced colleagues.

5.2 Mentorship and Leadership Development

H1 was supported, with a strong positive correlation between mentorship practices and leadership development ($r = .731$, $p < .001$).

The finding is consistent with contemporary empirical research showing that mentoring can support leadership development and leadership self-efficacy. Reynolds et al. (2023) identified mentoring as a social learning process through which participants developed leadership capabilities, while Byrne et al. (2022) found increased leadership self-efficacy among peer mentors.

The present findings extend these observations into a commercial banking context. Respondents reported improvements in timely decision-making, confidence, communication, strategic understanding, reflection and preparedness for leadership responsibilities.

The finding should nevertheless be interpreted as an association rather than definitive proof that mentorship caused leadership development. Because the study used a cross-sectional design and self-reported measures, longitudinal or experimental research would be needed to establish causal effects.

5.3 Leadership Development and Strategic Agility

H2 was supported by a strong regression relationship between leadership development and strategic agility ($R^2 = .615$, $\beta = .785$, $p < .001$).

This finding is consistent with recent research positioning leadership agility as an important component of organisational agility. Tandon, Bhatnagar and Sharma (2024) identify leadership agility as a key dimension through which organisations develop agility, while Jooss et al. (2024) demonstrate the importance of talent capabilities in developing strategic agility.

The result is also consistent with dynamic-capability research. Zahoor et al. (2022) show that sensing, seizing and opportunity-recognition capabilities support agile adaptation in uncertain environments. The present study suggests that employees who perceive stronger leadership development also report stronger agility-related behaviours.

The banking context makes this finding particularly relevant. Nigerian banks are undergoing continuing digital transformation, and recent research identifies digitalisation as a major influence on banking practices (Lottu et al., 2023). Leadership capabilities that support decision-making, innovation and adaptation are therefore increasingly important.

5.4 Mentorship and Strategic Agility

H3 was supported, with mentorship practices explaining 47.2% of the variance in strategic agility ($R^2 = .472$, $\beta = .687$, $p < .001$).

This finding suggests that mentorship is associated not only with leadership development but also directly with agility-related employee behaviours.

The result is consistent with research connecting knowledge sharing and organisational agility. Marjerison, Andrews and Kuan (2022) found that knowledge sharing and organisational agility are positively connected, while Wicaksana and Isfania (2022) similarly found that knowledge sharing contributes significantly to organisational agility.

Mentoring provides an interpersonal mechanism for knowledge exchange. Through mentoring, employees may acquire practical knowledge concerning organisational processes, customer requirements, problem-solving and decision-making. This can help explain why respondents reported improvements in customer responsiveness, creativity, flexibility, teamwork, risk management and opportunity sensing.

The findings also align with contemporary strategic-agility literature. Christofi (2024) identifies knowledge management, dynamic talent management, open innovation and digitalisation as important strategic-agility themes. Mentorship potentially contributes to several of these dimensions through continuous employee development and knowledge exchange.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among mentorship, leadership development and strategic agility among employees of a commercial bank in Owerri, Nigeria.

The findings indicate that mentorship is highly established within the participating branches and is characterised by formal structures, regular interaction, trust, constructive feedback and developmental support.

All three hypotheses were supported. Mentorship practices were strongly and positively related to leadership development ($r = .731$, $p < .001$). Leadership development demonstrated a strong positive predictive relationship with strategic agility ($R^2 = .615$, $\beta = .785$, $p < .001$). Mentorship also demonstrated a significant positive predictive relationship with strategic agility ($R^2 = .472$, $\beta = .687$, $p < .001$).

The findings suggest that mentoring is associated with the development of leadership-related capabilities and agility-oriented behaviours, including decision-making, communication, adaptability, innovation, collaboration and responsiveness.

The study therefore concludes that mentorship can be strategically relevant to organisational development in banking, particularly where organisations seek to strengthen leadership pipelines, knowledge sharing and employee adaptability.

However, because the study is cross-sectional and based on self-reported data from one organisation, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of statistical relationships rather than definitive causal effects.

6.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The study makes three principal contributions.

First, it provides quantitative evidence connecting mentorship with leadership development within a Nigerian banking context.

Second, it demonstrates a strong statistical relationship between leadership development and strategic agility.

Third, it provides empirical evidence of a direct relationship between mentorship and strategic agility, a relationship that remains less developed in the literature than the individual relationships between mentoring, leadership and agility.

The study therefore positions mentorship as a potential organisational-development mechanism that operates across both individual capability development and agility-related behaviour.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. **Formal mentoring structures should be strengthened.** Banks should maintain clearly defined mentoring frameworks with explicit developmental objectives, mentor responsibilities and measurable outcomes.
2. **Mentor preparation should be enhanced.** Mentors should receive guidance on constructive feedback, active listening, developmental conversations and supporting employee reflection.
3. **Peer and reverse mentoring should be expanded.** These approaches can facilitate knowledge exchange across organisational levels and support the transfer of digital and emerging knowledge.
4. **Cross-functional mentoring should be encouraged.** Connecting employees across departments can strengthen collaboration, organisational understanding and knowledge sharing.
5. **Mentorship should be integrated with leadership-development systems.** Mentoring should complement formal leadership-development programmes rather than operate as an isolated HR activity.
6. **Mentoring outcomes should be evaluated regularly.** Banks should monitor indicators such as leadership readiness, employee learning, knowledge transfer, innovation and adaptability.
7. **Mentorship should support strategic-agility objectives.** Mentoring programmes should incorporate organisational priorities relating to digital transformation, customer responsiveness, innovation and change management.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study has several limitations.

First, the cross-sectional design prevents strong causal conclusions. Future longitudinal studies could examine whether changes in mentoring quality over time lead to measurable improvements in leadership development and strategic agility.

Second, the study was conducted within one bank and four branches in Owerri. Consequently, the findings should not automatically be generalised to all Nigerian banks or other sectors.

Third, the sample size of 53 limits more detailed subgroup analysis. Future research could use larger samples across several Nigerian banks and geographical regions.

Fourth, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data. Future research could combine employee questionnaires with supervisor assessments, organisational performance indicators and qualitative interviews.

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Finally, future research could investigate whether factors such as psychological safety, organisational culture, digital competence and job autonomy influence the relationship between mentorship and strategic agility.

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