

Maintaining the African Culture of Honouring Elders and the Mentoring of Youths: the Case of Igbo Society *Obianika E. Chinwe*, Ebonyi State University, P.M.B. 053, Abakaliki, Nigeria. +234 8036756912 obianikac@gmail.com

Abstract

It is a part of the African and indeed Igbo culture to respect the elders to a point that might amount to worship. He actually does this out rightly at the death of the elder (ancestor worship). This paper sets out to examine the influence of this aspect of culture on the mentor /mentee relationship between the young African academic and his senior academic mentor using the Igbo society as a focal point. The paper first x-rays this aspect of the Igbo culture highlighting its manifestation in greetings, eating habits, work situation, play, worship and social occasions. The problems are discussed descriptively and inferentially. The result shows that though this aspect of the culture is impressive, it creates problems for a young academic in that the mentee is placed at a distance from the mentor denying him the enabling environment that would foster a healthy and effective mentor/mentee relationship. The paper therefore suggests that every available opportunity be harnessed to make senior academics in particular and people in leadership position in general aware of the need to bridge the gap created by this culture between them and their students or younger colleagues and consciously make themselves available and approachable by removing the protocol aspect occasioned by the culture.