MENTORING AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, EDE, OSUN STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of mentoring on the job performance of Academic Staff in The Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State. Mentoring is a strategy for developing an individual's professional knowledge and skills; this is because it provide psychosocial assistance in the work space, which assists mentees to deal more effectively with role ambiguity, role conflict and a perceived uncertain environment. The population for this study comprised four hundred and thirty (430) academic staff members in the institution. Simple random sampling Technique was used to select the sample size of 100. Three Research question were raised on the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data on the study. The questionnaire was structures on a 4-point likert rating scale. One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all were collected. Data collected were analyzed and all were collected. It was concluded that mentoring has significant impact on the job performance of academic Staff in the institution. It was recommended that experienced academic Staff should see mentoring as part of their responsibilities.

Keywords: *Academic Staff, Career Guidance, Job Performance, Knowledge Transfer, Mentoring*.

Introduction

The changing landscape in Tertiary Institution has made it more difficult for less experienced academics to find persons willing and able to invest in, and support their professional development. Mentoring is a strategy for developing an individual's professional knowledge and skills; this is because it provide psychosocial assistance in the work space, which assists mentees to deal more effectively with role ambiguity, role conflict and a perceived uncertain environment. Mentoring is a developmental oriented initiatives. Through continued involvement, the adult usually older and always more experienced offers support, guidance and assistance as the younger person goes through a difficult period, faces new challenges or works to correct earlier problems. Mentoring is an important developmental activity that can have a positive influence on the growth and professional development of those involved in a mentoring relationship, but more so the person being mentored (Daloz, 1986)

Mentoring is important in the educational system because this is the industry that produces manpower for socio-economic, cultural and political improvement of any given society (Nwabueze, 2011). Every educational system in any human society requires highly skilled and competent teaching personnel to sustain and enhance the academic programmes. Tertiary educational institutions are labor intensive and are largely dependent on their employees for efficient service delivery in order to achieve their goals. Consistent employees' effectiveness relies heavily on their environment and assistance they obtain in form of supervisory or managerial support, mentoring, consistent learning from seniors, training and developmental programme and peer support.

Academic Staff in tertiary institutions are those who transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners with the sole aim of knowledge building and production. They are extensively involved in teaching, research and community service. They are also known as educators who are responsible for shaping the destinies of individuals and nations (Nwabueze, Nwokedi & Edikpa 2018). The relationship between a younger lecturer and an academic supervisor or mentor is critical to the success of the learning experience, to the development of research skills and to the shaping of successful career pathways of both parties. This is because employees who are fulfilled and productive can be instrumental assets in steering institutions towards success.

Job performance of an academic Staff in the tertiary institution is a consistent demonstration of the type of work behavior and result that are deemed necessary to support the institution's strategic objectives and desires. It is about the organization realizing its purpose, meeting its goals and objectives efficiently and effectively (Shield, 2015). Every institution of learning wants to be the best and some of the criteria being used to grade the institutions include staff strength, performance of staff, research being carried out by such institutions and academic achievement globally. Therefore, in order for tertiary institution to achieve its objectives, it is important there is a mentor-mentee system so that the good legacy and knowledge acquired by the mentor can be passed down to the younger lecturer so as to carry on the good works. In their view, Wilson and Berne (1999) argue that mentee's learning and development, for example, could be enhanced with a collaborative culture of ideas sharing and experimentation. Invariably, based on the developmental nature of the mentoring relationship the mentor will need to coach the mentee based on specific skills to be developed.

Mentoring is an avenue to assist staff in understanding their academic obligations like curriculum delivery, setting questions, Marking test and examination Scripts, Invigilating examinations, recording results, project supervisions, Course/level advisers, SIWES Coordination etc In carrying out these tasks, staff will need to develop their skills because this is needed to be effective academics which has been linked to career advancement, increased self-confidence, and personal satisfaction and growth (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Higgins, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2004; De Vries, 2005). Tertiary institutions shouldrecognize that mentoring has an important role to play in developing staff, and with a view to making mentoring more available to lecturers, it must set up formal mentoring programmes (Gardiner, 2005). Formal approaches would typically involve two academics at different stages of their career, working together on a formal plan of action to be agreed upon by, usually, a mentor (an academic with more experience of doing a particular thing or working in a particular area/topic) and a mentee (an academic with less experience of doing a particular thing or working in a particular area/topic).

When mentees received the requisite training/guidance, it will help them to understand their roles better, expand and strengthen their skill sets and this will improve their job performance. **Mentoring** also helps to rekindle the enthusiasm of disillusioned employees, and to revitalize plateau staff and senior staff. In order words, mentoring provides psychosocial support, career guidance and knowledge transfer and this has helped to alleviate work-related stress (Craig et al 2013). Thus introducing mentoring that provide these functions for employees may produce positive social change for the work culture and the institution

Statement of the Problem

Tertiary institution is an increasingly competitive environment, where collaboration is often talked about but is far more difficult to achieve in reality. It is an environment where academics are more inclined to guarding their time rather than committing it to the professional development of others. The changing landscape in tertiary institution has made it more difficult for less experienced colleagues to find persons willing and able to invest in, and support their professional development which has made it difficult to interpret their role as lecturers effectively. Some senior faculty members who ought to be mentor junior faculty members complained of not having the time and being pressured to publish and carry out research are major factors contributing to them not being able to get involved in the mentoring process (Ehrich et al., 2004; Pololi & Knight, 2005). In institutions where no formal mentoring programme exists, the issue of mentoring will be particularly problematic because only a limited number of persons will interpret their role in academia as having a duty to mentor others. Also, mentoring support is sometimes difficult to access, based upon a number of reasons that it was not freely available to lecturers in higher education and this may make lecturers therefore be more unwilling to mentor others.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate how mentoring can be used to improve the Job performance of Academic Staff in The Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State. The specific objectives are:

i. To examine the strategies that can be used to mentor Academic Staff in the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State

ii. To identify the roles of mentor in mentoring Academic Staff in The Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State

iii. To determine the impact of mentoring on the job performance of Academic Staff in The Federal Polytechnic, Ede. Osun State

Research Questions

1. What are the strategies that can be used to mentor Academic Staff in the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State?
2. What are the roles of mentor in mentoring of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State?
3. What are the impacts of mentoring on the Job Performance of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey method was employed in carrying out the study. The population for this study consisted four hundred and thirty (430) academic staff in The Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State. One Hundred (100) academic Staff were selected using simple random sampling technique. This technique was adopted because it gives all respondents equal chance of being selected. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contains forty-four (44) items with four options on a likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 to each question itemized. One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaires were administered and were duly filled and returned. The result of the data collected was analyzed using mean method. In order to determine the acceptability or otherwise of the items in the questionnaire, a minimum score of 2.5 was set as standard.

Result

Table 1 showing Mean Rating of Respondents response on "the strategies that can be used to mentor Academic Staff in the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State"

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Coaching	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
2.	Training	85	10	5	-	3.80	Accepted
3.	Counseling	80	20	-	-	3.72	Accepted
4.	Career Guidance	82	10	8	-	3.74	Accepted
5.	Psychosocial support	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
6.	Genuine Interest	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
7	Find common ground with your mentee	80	20	-	-	3.72	Accepted
8	Tell Stories	95	5	-	-	3.95	Accepted
9	Motivation	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted
10.	Build honesty and Trust	85	15	-	-	3.85	Accepted
11.	Creating Collegiality	85	10	5	-	3.80	Accepted
12.	Establishing Feedback	70	25	3	2	3.63	Accepted
13	Creating Supporting environment	67	29	3	1	3.64	Accepted
14.	Feedback	80	20	-	-	3.72	Accepted
15	Collegiality	95	5	-	-	3.95	Accepted
16	Seminar and Workshop	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted

Source Field Survey, 2022

The data presented in table one above showed that respondents agreed to all the items on the strategies that can be used to mentor Academic Staff in the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State?" It showed a high mean score of 3.95 therefore the research question was upheld.

Table 2 showing Mean Rating of Respondents response on "the roles of mentor in mentoring of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State?"

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
	Roles of Mentor						
17.	Knowledge transfer	87	10	3	-	3.84	Accepted
18.	Prevent knowledge loss	98	2	-	-	3.98	Accepted
19.	Set clear lines of Communication	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted
20.	Set Example with imitation	95	5	-	-	3.95	Accepted
21.	help mentees to carry out a task or duties the way the mentor usually carry it out	87	10	3	-	3.84	Accepted
22	Enhance effective curriculum delivery	98	2	-	-	3.98	Accepted
23.	Increase productivity	96	4	-	-	3.96	Accepted
24	Provide Psychosocial support to mentee	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted
25	Reduces risk of similar mistakes reoccurring	87	10	3	-	3.84	Accepted
	Roles of Mentee						
26	Follow the set down rules and example	84	14	2	-	3.82	Accepted
27	Mentee should be ready to learn	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
28	Set clear expectation and goals to achieve	88	12	-	-	3.84	Accepted
29	Be ready to mentor another person	82	10	8	-	3.80	Accepted
30	Build self confidence	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted
31.	Be willing to go extra in achieving assigned task	87	10	3	-	3.84	Accepted
32.	Cooperate with the mentor	88	12	-	-	3.84	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2022

The result from table 2 shows the roles of mentor in mentoring of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State. It shows that respondents agreed that some of the roles are Knowledge transfer which prevent knowledge loss which enhance effective curriculum delivery with a high mean of 3.98 and that leads to increase productivity with a mean of 3.96. hence the research question is upheld

Table 3 showing Mean Rating of Respondents response on "The impacts of mentoring on the Job Performance of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State".

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
33.	Helps in effective curriculum delivery	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
34	Builds self confidence in mentee	90	10	-	-	3.90	Accepted
35.	Helps in skill development	85	10	5	-	3.80	Accepted
36.	Exposes mentee to important contacts and resources which aid mentees career development	82	10	8	-	3.74	Accepted
37.	Time taking to solve a problem is reduced	80	20	-	-	3.72	Accepted
38.	More time is spent on productive work	85	15	-	-	3.85	Accepted
39.	Ability to meet target and deadlines	85	15	-	-	3.85	Accepted
40	There is Improvement on job performance	95	5	-	-	3.95	Accepted
41	Helps to feel more positive about what to do	75	20	2	3	3.70	Accepted
39	Makes mentees feel valued and more satisfied by the tasks and duties they carried out	82	10	8	-	3.80	Accepted
40.	Helps mentee to develop interest in what they are doing	95	5	-	-	3.95	Accepted
41.	Reduces stress since mentees knows that he/ she has support and the right resources to carry out task	72	20	5	3	3.61	Accepted
42.	Mentees are more productive and focused on their work	85	15	-	-	3.85	Accepted
43.	Improve state of mental health of the mentee	94	6	-	-	3.94	Accepted
44.	Mentee feel safe at work because their emotional well being is met	91	8	1	-	3.90	Accepted

Source Field Survey, 2022

The data presented in table three above showed that respondents agreed to all the items on the the impacts of mentoring on the Job Performance of Academic Staff in Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State. It has a mean score above 2. 5 therefore the research question was upheld

Discussion of Findings

The result from table one revealed that all the Respondents agreed to the strategies that can be used to mentor Academic Staff which include, Training, Coaching, Creating Collegiality, Providing Psychosocial Support motivation, Clear lines of Communication, establishing feedback etc. With multifaceted academic responsibilities, mentee may easily feel pulled in many directions and become discouraged but when they are being motivated and provide with moral and Psychosocial support, it will help them to be more focus. This result corroborated with Aagaard and Hauer (2003), that identified motivation and providing moral support as one of the top strategies that helped mentees identify career advancement opportunities. Another Strategy that can be use is Creating or establishing Collegial relationship. Collegial and reciprocal relationships are the basis for effective mentoring which ultimately fosters the mentee's academic success. Wilson et al 2010 stated that Collegiality in academia is seen most broadly when academic Staff demonstrate "cooperation and collaboration in a spirit of teamwork"; also improvingthe workplace environment primarily through establishingcollegial relationships has been one of the most effectivestrategies in academic Staff retention. Fischer, (2009), called institutions to establish "codes of conduct" so this cooperation and collaborative teamwork can be everyone's responsibility to implement. Establishing mutual respect and trust can be use as a prime strategy for cultivating a meaningful collegial mentor-mentee relationship

The result on Table two showed the roles of mentor in mentoring of Academic Staff which include Advising Career Progression, effective curriculum delivery, knowledge transfer. Advising career progression help mentee achieve

balance between personal and professional responsibilities. Mentors often promote progress by helping mentee set professional goals, mapping a career plan, and establishing clear career milestones. Mentors can also help identify career advancement opportunities the mentee may not be aware of or know how to find (McDonald, 2010). This helps the academic Staff (mentee) to build self confidence and has the ability to solve any problems and meeting deadline for any given task. This findings was in agreement with Hooley & Dodd (2005), who indicated that Career guidance can help with improved skills and knowledge thus allowing the mentee to performance duties effectively. This findings is also in tandem with Hobson (2003), who asserted that mentoring in academia is crucial for career advancement, heightened self-confidence of staff, and also gives an increased sense of belonging.

The main findings in Research question three indicated impacts of mentoring on the Job Performance of Academic Staff. The result showed that responded agreed that when there is psychosocial support for staff, it makes them to feel more valued, develop more interest in what they are doing, improve curriculum delivery and as also positively impacted opportunities related to career advancement, expanded thinking, scholarly confidence, facilitation of a collaborative culture, and the importance of goal setting in academia and as well it leads to increased job performance. This result corroborated Feldman et al. (2013), findings, He noted that research has indicated that robust mentoring helps people with their career advancement and satisfaction, supports faculty retention and contributes to academic productivity. Based on these positive impacts, the mentor and mentee theorize that mentoring is an important activity that should be facilitated in higher education through structures peculiar to achieving its goals. Mentoring is critical to the professional success of mentees in tertiary institutions. It represents an important professional development tool for career advancement and intellectual development (Johnson, 2007; Mladenovic, 2012).

Career advancement and expanded levels of thinking are reasons academics engage in research. One of the impacts of the mentoring relationship was the exposure to new fields of enquiry and motivation to advance in career. This was achieved through being supplied with a comprehensive list of indexed international journals which was to be targeted for future publications. As postulated by Penner (2001), mentoring provides an opportunity for increased exposure to ideas and an introduction to people who can be helpful to the mentee. Exposure to a network of people who can be helpful to the mentee provides a learning opportunity through which the mentee can be helped in navigating complex social career dilemmas. The mentoring relationship therefore must be led by an experienced professional and should be grounded in trust, respect and agreed upon goals as the mentee seeks to advance his/her career. The mentoring process reflected upon in this paper was characterized by trust, respect and mutually agreed upon goals that propelled career advancement for the mentee. Furthermore, the data suggest that the reflexive and reflective nature of this mentoring relationship allowed the mentee to seek after opportunities that lead to career advancement.

Conclusion

Mentoring in academia is crucial for career advancement, heightened self-confidence of staff, and for providing an increased sense of belonging. It allows the individual to understand the tertiary institution's unwritten rules and reduces feelings of isolation. Mentoring helps people with their career advancement and satisfaction, supports faculty retention and contributes to academic productivity. Tertiary Institutions should use strategies like training, motivation, trust, setting clear lines of communication to help mentor and mentees achieve their goals and this will in turn lead to increase service delivery

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

- Experienced academician need to see mentoring as part of their professional responsibility so as to prevent knowledge loss.
- Higher Institution Management should give support to mentees and provide the right resources to carry out task.
- Policy on mentoring should be formulated by management, and it should ensure the implementation of such policy by both mentor and mentees
- Management should ensure that there is a feedback system in place. This will serve as the driver to any successful mentoring relationship, and must be given keen attention. Feedback provides a means of nurturing the mentoring relationship.

- Mentor should expose mentee to important contacts and resources which will aid mentees career development.
- Mentor needs to provide Psychosocial support to mentee
- .Mentee should show genuine interest and should be read to carry out any task given to him/her by the mentor

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