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Full Length Research Paper

The Impact of Academic Mentoring on Students' Performance in Lagos State University, Nigeria: An Educational Planner's Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The study was a descriptive case study It was quantitative in its approach. The study population of twelve thousand gave a sample size of four hundred (400) respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents. The calculated value of Chi-square at 20.0 was greater than the table value of 5.09 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between academic mentoring and students' academic performance in Lagos State University. It was recommended that students should also be given a broad orientation on what academic mentoring is, right from their elementary education up to their tertiary education and finally, enough funds and adequate facilities should be provided for prospective mentors in higher institutions of learning for them to be effective and efficient.

Keywords: Mentoring, academic performance mentor, mentee

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has received considerable coverage in recent decades and this is evident by the proliferation of research and popular literature available to the reader. It has been hailed as an important human resource management strategy, a career tool, and a workplace learning activity for men, women and minority groups in a variety of organizational settings such as hospitals, large corporations, schools, universities and government departments (Ehrich and Hansford, 1999). Mentors are caring individuals who, along with parents or guardians, provide young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and a constructive example. Academic leaders need to demonstrate collegiality personally, and encourage the process in others. Mrackham Graduate School (2015) Mentoring is important to you as a graduate student not only because of the knowledge and skills that are shared, but also because of the many other aspects of professional socialization and personal support that are needed to facilitate success in graduate school and beyond. Mentoring benefits you because: It supports your advancement in research activity, conference presentations, publication, pedagogical skill, and grant-writing.. You are less likely to feel ambushed by potential bumps in the road, having been alerted to them, and provided resources for dealing with stressful or difficult periods in your graduate career. The experiences and networks of professional contacts your mentors help you to accrue may improve your prospects of securing professional placement. The knowledge that someone is committed to your progress, someone who can give you solid advice and be your advocate, can help to lower stress and build confidence. • Constructive interaction with a mentor and participation in collective activities he or she arranges promote your engagement in the field.

Mrackham Graduate School (2015) also considers mentors as people who: Take an interest in developing another person's carrier and well-being. Have an interpersonal as well as a professional relationship with

those whom they mentor; Advance the person's academic and professional goals in directions most desired by the individual; and tailor mentoring styles and content to the individual.

Mohammed et al. (2017) quoting Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent (2001) observed that the generic meaning of a mentor is a 'father' figure that guides and instructs a younger person. The meaning comes from Homer's epic, The Odyssey, written around 700 BC. In his story, Mentor was the friend and servant of Odysseus who became responsible for teaching, guiding and instructing Odysseus' son. Since 700 BC, and particularly during the last thirty years or so of the last century, much has been written about mentoring and its potential for enhancing workplace learning and developing an organization's human resources.

Ashtiani and Feliciano, (2012) noted that traditionally, certain types of institutions (e.g., families, churches, neighborhoods, schools) have provided opportunities for youth to connect with "natural" mentors. With the increase of single-parent households, racial and class segregation, and higher teacher/student ratios in schools, opportunities for these types of relationships have decreased (Jucovy and Garringer, 2007). Researchers are learning more about what constitutes an effective school-based mentoring programme and by analyzing successful programme structures and outcomes, they are clarifying the best practices and promising approaches that other mentoring programmes can adopt. According to University of Wolverhampton Business School (2010) there are usually four different types of people involved in a mentoring programme and together they make up a mentoring quadrangle; the protégé/mentee, the mentor, the Line Manager and the programme coordinator who often is located within the Training or Personnel department. Each has their own differing roles and responsibilities within the mentoring relationship (Figure 1). Ilevbare (n.d) stated that Mentoring is a developmental relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced partner (the mentee) for purposes of sharing technical information, institutional knowledge and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavor. The type of mentoring programmes differs based on different objectives and purposes. These goes a long ways in shaping mentorship programme's structure and operation including the goals you want your mentoring programme to achieve; the length and frequency of mentor commitment you require; and the kinds of activities that take place. In the words of Ashtiani and Feliciano, (2012) Mentors, who can serve as role models or spark a sense of possibility for the future, offer one important avenue for low-income youth to gain access to important information and tools necessary for academic success. This brief explores the significance of mentorship in the college entry and completion of low-income youth.

Astin et al. (2000) observed that leadership educators and scholars believe leadership is a learned process, incorporating the possibility for all students to develop skills and competencies for future leadership endeavors increasing numbers and diversity of leadership development programmes in colleges and universities represent a success story for the importance of leadership education in higher education (Guthrie and Jenkins, 2018). According to American Psychological Association (2006) in the initiation stage of mentoring, two individuals enter into a mentoring relationship. For informal mentoring, the matching process occurs through professional or social interactions between potential mentors and mentees. Potential mentees search for experienced, successful people whom they admire and perceive as good role models. American Psychological Association (2006) also stated potential mentors search for talented people who are "coachable." Mentoring research describes this stage as a period when a potential mentee proves him- or herself worthy of a mentor's attention. Both parties seek a positive, enjoyable relationship that would justify the extra time and effort required in mentoring.

Planning a successful mentoring programme

Mentoring involves a strategy that can assist young people of all circumstances in achieving their dormant or underutilize potentials. Mentors are mainly experienced and caring individuals who, along with others such as parents or guardians, provide young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, relevant and constructive example. In any country, educational planning according to Akpan (n.d) is necessitated by varied reasons which include among others, the desire of government to meet the yearnings, needs and aspirations of the citizenry, the demand for education and access to education, provide quality education to the people, to respond to technological development, to ensure global competitiveness and more importantly to actualize government political philosophy. Akpan (n.d) further noted that, the type of educational planning adopted in a country is not decided by professional planners or technical planners and the democrats but by the polity. The polity is a representative body of the government in power at the time of the programme will offer and the nature of the mentoring sessions; the types of individuals you will recruit educational planning. Bahr (2007) stated that there are three different types of Education Plans according to duration and coverage: which are) long - term plans medium term plans: annual plans. Mrackham Graduate School (2015) emphasis the need for a work plan which include; short-term and long-term objectives as well as a series of deadlines for completing each step. Then when modifications seem necessary, discuss these with your mentor and agree upon a new work plan. Contact your mentor at regular intervals (expectations

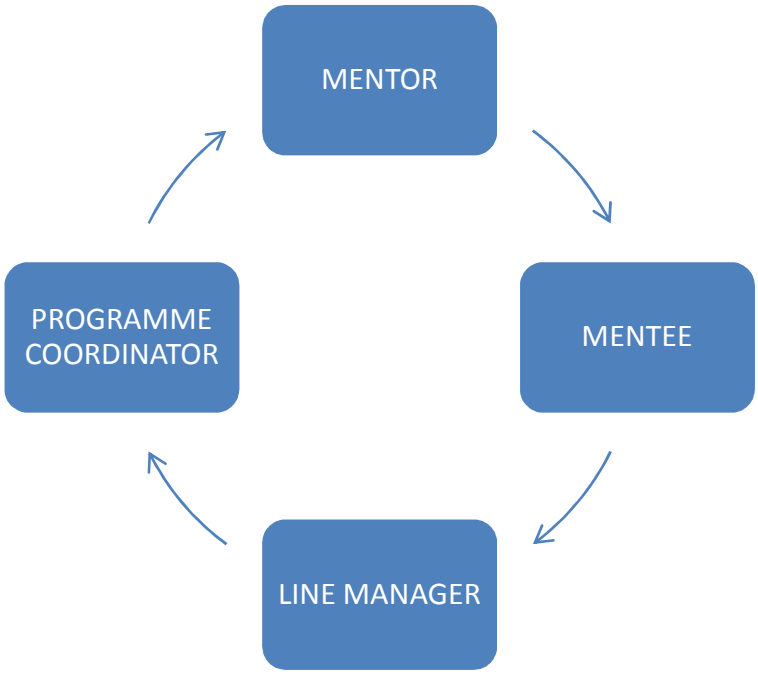

Figure 1. The mentoring quadrangle (Clutterbuck, 2004).

vary by discipline and stage of study) to discuss your progress. Also pursue additional training and experiences you need in order to achieve your professional goals.

According to Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership (2005) Programme Design and Planning is the first and the key element in building your programme, because the design is the blueprint you will follow to carry out all other aspects of the programme. When you have completed the design and planning, you will have made the following decisions: The youth population you will serve, the type of mentoring as mentors (e.g., senior citizens, corporate employees, college students); your programme goals and expected outcomes for mentors, mentees and sponsoring organizations; when and how often mentors and mentees will meet; how long you expect mentoring matches to endure; the purposes of your mentoring programme (e.g., socialization, academic support, job/career guidance); the setting of your mentoring programme (e.g., faith-based site, community organization, school/university, workplace); the programme's stakeholders; how to promote your programme; the best way to evaluate the progress and success of your programme; and a protocol to ensure that your programme staff regularly contact mentors and mentees to discuss how their relationships are going. Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005). Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership (2005) also noted that effective programme Management ensures that your mentoring programme is well managed. A well-managed programme promotes accuracy and efficiency; establishes credibility; and enables you to gauge progress effectively and identify areas that need improvement. Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership (2005) further added that in building a solid plan for managing your programme, it must include the following elements:

(a) An advisory group.
(b) A comprehensive system for managing programme information.
(c) A resource development plan that allows for diversified fundraising.
(d) A system to monitor the programme.
(e) Strategies for staff development.
(f) Strong pro-mentoring advocacy efforts in both the public and private sectors.
(g) Effective public relations and communications efforts.

Dimitrov (2009) emphasized that you have to be explicit about which rules are set in stone in order to help students navigate institutional policies. For example, the expectation to complete a research ethics protocol for studies involving human subjects is new to many international graduate students, and they may not know that they absolutely cannot begin to collect data while they are waiting for ethics approval. Dimitrov (2009) further emphasized the explanation of which rules or deadlines may be flexible. International students may not be aware that they could get an incomplete grade in a

course for medical or compassionate reasons. Students have been known to abandon their entire graduate programme, because they were unable to hand in a course paper on time due to illness or death in their family. Explain the possible consequences of not following rules to students early on in the programme. For example: “The editor at the XY journal will not read your manuscript if the references are not in APA format.”

Basically there are several ways or methods that a mentors can devise to sustain effective mentoring relationships. According to Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership (2005) these include:

Maintain a steady presence in the mentee’s life. That means showing up for scheduled meetings or, when that is not possible, telling the mentee in advance, in order to avoid any disappointment. A phone call, e-mail or fax can help when a face to face meeting isn’t possible. Focus on the mentee’s needs not the mentor’s own wants and needs. Mentors should look to improve the mentee’s prospects while respecting the young person’s life circumstances and perspective. This includes not trying to transform the mentee or impose the mentor’s own values on the mentee. Pay attention to the mentee’s need for fun. Get to know the mentee’s family without getting over involved. Mentors need to understand that they are not substitutes for parents. Seek out and use the help and support of mentoring programme staff.

Davis-Kean (2005) noted that the relatively low educational attainment of youth from low-income backgrounds has been a long-standing social problem in the United States. For decades, researchers and policymakers have been concerned with reconciling the ideal of an American educational system that allows ample opportunities for upward mobility with the reality that educational outcomes are strongly linked to other factors, including family income.

Mentoring research and theory are useful in the sense that they aim to provide practical findings relevant to individual, organization and social needs. Many researchers focus explicitly on the ways in which individual careers can benefit from mentoring while others focus on the organization and develop ideas or findings aimed at improving organizational performance (Payne and Huffman, 2005; Singh et al., 2002). Some mentoring researchers focus on “supervisory mentoring” questioning whether or not one’s boss can be a mentor and whether supervisory mentoring is preferred to nonsupervisory mentoring or vice versa (Tepper and Taylor, 2003). Eby et al. (2000) investigated the conditions under which protégés are most likely to report negative mentoring experiences, such as abuse, neglect, intentional exclusion, tyranny, deception, and incompetence. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) seek to demonstrate that despite the publications of hundreds of studies of mentoring, many of the findings are less useful than one might hope because fundamental, conceptual, and theoretical issues have been skirted. Findings are abundant but explanations are not. The device used to demonstrate this point is a simple thought experiment of a putative mentoring relationship. The thought experiment demonstrates the difficulty of using existing research and theory to answer fundamental questions about mentoring.

In Nigeria education system, as well as most under developed countries, mentoring of student has not been taken up with all seriousness. In teaching profession, there is need to emphasize the importance of mentoring of student throughout their course of study in order to ensure efficiency as well as learn from the experiences of the professional teachers. The study examined the impact of academic mentoring on academic performance of Lagos State University students’.

METHODOLOGY

A self-structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from the students. This study used descriptive case study and quantitative research approach. The study population of …twelve thousands gave a sample size of four hundred (400) respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from students’ respondents. Data collected was processed and analyzed using SPSS version 20 Chi-square was used to test the hypothesis at 5% level of significant.

Research hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between academic mentoring and students’ performance.
Ha: There is significant relationship between academic mentoring and students’ academic performance.

RESULTS

In (Table 1), 232 respondents representing 58% were male while the remaining 168 respondents representing 42% are female. Table 2 shows the level of the respondents; students in 100 levels were 48representing 12.0%, while 200 levels were consisting of 272 forming 68.0%, while 300level were consisting 56 forming 14.0%, while 400 level were consisting of 24 forming 6.0%. Table 3 shows the faculty distribution of the respondents, 14% of the respondents are Management Science students, 27.0% of the respondents are Education students, and 40.0% of the respondents were social science students, while 19.0% of the respondents were students from other faculties.

Test of hypothesis

The data collected to test this hypothesis is analyzed

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by gender

SEX	Male	Female	Total
Number and %	232 (58 %)	168 (42 %)	100

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by Level.

Students Level	100L	200L	300L	400L	Total
Number and %	48 (12.0%)	272 (68.0 %)	56 (14 %)	24 (6.0%)	100

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents faculty

Faculty	Management Science	Education	Social Science	Other Faculties	Total
Number and %	56 (14.0%)	108 (27.0%)	160 (40.0%)	76 (19.0%)	100

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of the significant relationship between academic mentoring and students' academic performance.

F	DF	Level of sign	X^2 Cal	X^2 Tab	Decision
322	6	0.05	20.0	5.09	Rejected

using the chi-square statistical technique. Summary of findings is presented in (Table 4). Table 4 shows that the calculated value of Chi – square at 20.0 is greater than the table value of 5.09 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between academic mentoring and students' academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic mentoring and students' academic performance in Lagos State University. This result is in consonance with the findings of Ashtiani and Feliciano, (2012) that found out that mentorship is the only factor with a strong independent association with both college entry and degree attainment among youth who have grown up in poverty. Ehrich and Hansford (1999) stated that organizations should view mentoring as a potentially beneficial process that requires careful long term planning and skilful human resource leadership. Ehrich and Hansford (1999) also stated that It is important to stress that there are many models of mentoring and that implementing a professional or formal mentoring programme does not imply that procedures such as informal mentoring or peer mentoring should not be included in an overall human resources policy. Jucovy and Garringer (2007) noted that given these positive outcomes for youth, and the enormous number of young people who might benefit from the support of caring adult, youth-serving organizations are eager to implement new mentoring programmes or expand their current ones. To complement the traditional community-based model where mentors and youth decide where and when they will meet organizations are increasingly looking to school based programmes as a strategy for spreading the impact of mentoring.

Conclusion

This study observed that in Nigeria as well as other developing countries, mentoring of students has not been accorded the necessary importance and attention in all level of education as well as citadel of learning. Hence, in teaching profession, there is need to emphasize the importance of mentoring of students during their course of study so as to learn from the experiences of the professional teachers.

Recommendations

(a) Mentorship programmes geared toward facilitating positive relationships in adolescence should be expanded and made accessible to more youth in poverty.
(b) Numerous mentoring and early intervention programmes that provide supportive settings where low-income youth can find caring mentors should be establish.
(c) Students should also be given a broad orientation on what academic mentoring is, right from their elementary education up to their tertiary education.
(d) Finally, enough funds and adequate facilities should

be provided for prospective mentors in higher institutions of learning for them to be effective and efficient.

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