

Mentorship Culture and Academic Staff Job Effectiveness in Public Universities in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract. The study examined the extent to which mentoring programmes encourage job effectiveness of public University lecturers in North-central Nigeria. The study utilized the survey method of research to sample opinion of respondents for the study. The population of this study consists of all the seven thousand seven hundred and forty seven (7747) academic staff members and two hundred and fifty three thousand eight hundred and seventy two (253872) students working and studying in the thirteen public Universities and the Federal Capital Territory in North-central Nigeria. The sample of 501 lecturers from two Universities was used. This was based on Yamene (1967) formula for sampling. Data was collected using the 'Academic Staff Mentorship Programme Questionnaire (ASMPQ) for lecturers and Academic Staff Effectiveness Questionnaire (ASEQ) for students. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and the Pearson correlation was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between job effectiveness of academic staff and University mentoring programmes in public Universities in North-central Nigeria. The findings also revealed that mentorship programmes for lecturers have positive influence on their job effectiveness. The study recommends that the University management should as a matter of policy develop and carry out mentorship programme strategy for junior academic staff to inbuilt it as an important skills learning tool for job effectiveness policy.

Keywords: Mentorship, Culture, Academic Staff, Job Effectiveness and North Central Universities

1. Introduction

Universities over the years serve as training grounds of high-level manpower development centers for the various sectors of the economy. The primary responsibility of the University is to produce a world class certified graduate in character and learning. A lecturer is a key element in this process and the success or failure of it depends on individual lecturer effectiveness. The issue of lecturers' effectiveness has become an issue of serious concern because apart from the quality of graduates which is allegedly being challenged by students, parents, employers, government, the international labour market and many foreign Universities, majority of the Universities seem not to be making desired impact in the socio-economic and political development of the nation. University culture is the atmosphere that is created by the social and professional interactions of the individuals; values, beliefs and norms that exist at the University that can encourage or discourage effectiveness. Consistent employees' effectiveness relies heavily on their environment and assistance they obtain from it in the shape of supervisory or managerial support, consistence learning from seniors, training and development programmes and peer support. Employees who are cared and provided timely learning through training and mentoring at different intervals and on the job coaching are much encouraged and they

comparatively outperform those who are lacking these facilities. However, such Human Resource practices are inadequate as mentors appear inaccessible to mentees.

Due to changes in organizational trends and practices, more acceptable techniques and methods for effective performance of various routine activities with the need of the time are needed. Increased and consistently effective teaching, research and community service performance relies on the lecturers who are the assets of the Universities. This effectiveness relies much on their environment and assistance they obtain from it in the form supervisory support, learning from seniors and peer support. The relationship between a younger lecturer and an academic supervisor or mentor is critical to the success of the learning experience, to the sense of satisfaction of both participants, to the development of research skills, and to the shaping of successful career pathways of both parties. Mentoring is the sharing of personal experiences. It is to informally transmit the knowledge one had gained to someone less experienced, so that he may grow and practice as an individual. This is a relationship in which personal development is the key outcome. Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and psycho-social support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career or professional development. It entails informal communication, usually face to face and during a sustained period of time between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience and a person who is perceived to have less (Bozeman & Freeney, 2007). The mentor is someone who engages in a long term, on-going relationship with a new or young employee by mutual agreement. While the relationship may be initiated by arrangements such as academic advising, or classroom teaching, normally for their personal ends. Mentoring is a holistic approach relating primarily to the identification and nurturing of potentials in a long relationship where the goals may change but always set by the learner, the learner owns both the goals and the process (Koontz & Weihrich, 2004). Mentoring function at work place can be performed by someone

other than the immediate supervisor. Also mentoring in organizations have been described as a viable vehicle for effective management of employees capabilities, time and talent as well as a tool for grooming new and junior employees for future leadership roles Ogunrewo and Ngema in Njoku, (2017).

In order to help empower academics to become more effective and productive in their jobs and provide quality services mentoring programme is a veritable means in enhancement of job skills and competences in organizations. The concept is not new in the academic world but recently it has been emphasized in the academic circles in the region in Nigeria as there is a growing need for high job performance standard and the desire for academics to compete comparatively with other academics in the world. One of the ways to expand individual academics and collective skills, competences and maintain positive work attitudes and behaviours may be through mentoring- a development relationship that enhances individual and collective and professional growth. This is a cultural value whereby an experienced senior academic staff member helps to develop technical, interpersonal and organizational skills of a less experienced junior staff member, who is called the protégé (Darwin & Palmers, 2009). It is the idea of an older manager choosing a younger manager for whom he will act a coach, counselor or sponsor. It is a personal relationship between a superior and a subordinate that emphasizes on teaching and learning and facilitating improved job performance. It is the process of forming and maintaining intensive and lasting developmental relationship between a variety of developers and junior person. It is also a managerial process that aims at improving the organizational working relationship, culture and philosophy, identification and nurturing of potentials (Njoku, 2017). The purpose of mentoring programme is to achieve individually or in teams, and assists managers within team building. It also helps individuals gain clarity in their thinking, commitment, challenge and help individual to change limited beliefs. An effective mentoring programme helps managers to become a source of support rather than a threat, for example, to

assist them in bringing out the talent and potentials of their team, and identify and solve problems.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The various sectors of the economy including the University system, employees are a tool of achieving the tasks without considering their emotions or requirements. This reduces their attention and interest in the work and they try to avoid performing effectively according to the will of the University. Such lecturers are least beneficial to the workplace as they are consistently lacking their interest in their work. Lecturers who are provided timely on the job coaching and mentoring are much encouraged and effective and outperform those who lack these facilities. In the private Universities some of these practices exist but public Universities are far away from this concept and, they hardly realize the importance of it. The benefits of these practices will attract attention of the public Universities and imbibe them as part of their plans and policies.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to:

- Examine the extent of academic staff mentoring in public Universities in North-central Nigeria.
- Determine the extent of job effectiveness of academic staff in public Universities in North-central Nigeria.
- Find out the influence of mentoring on academic staff effectiveness in public Universities in North-central Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

What is the extent of public Universities' mentoring programme in North-central Nigeria

1.4 Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between mentoring and academic staff effectiveness in public Universities in North-central Nigeria.

2. Mentoring in Academic Environment

Mentoring is the technique of attaching the higher skilled or experienced person with the goal of making lesser skilled person grows and develops specific competences, skills and attitudes. Mentoring not only supports in polishing the abilities and competences of individuals and groups but also provides positive alteration of employees' skills to their improved performance and organizational outcomes Blass and Ferris, 2007, Ahmad and Shahzad , 2014 in (Tanoli, 2016). Mentoring helps and relaxes the employee' hehaviour as it guides them to develop and adjust themselves to their working environment. Hence it helps them to provide positive feedback. Planned mentoring programmes are a cost saving activity as its managing is less expensive in terms of avoidable mistakes by employees. In order to increase individual and team commitment to an organization and its goals; allow individuals to gain greater insight into the University workings, an effective mentoring programme in academic environments is useful. It can also help increase communication within the University, help to change organizational culture to a better level, give individuals the chance to meet different people within the university network, and improve levels of performance success.

Mentoring is a beneficial University tradition and value to the overall University growth in terms of early identification of talent that might otherwise go unnoticed, changing employee attitude and morale, and transmission of informal University expectations. For instance, mentoring explains the relationship between less experienced or junior employees with a senior and highly experienced person who can be a supervisor or a mentor. The mentor is responsible for grooming the younger employees in order to enhance their capabilities to accomplish their tasks in a perfect and effective manner (Tanoli, 2016). Mentors provide knowledge on the basis of their track experience and prepare less skilled and experienced employees for challenging tasks and advancement of their career. Bryan and Terberg in Njoku (2017) enumerate the advantage of mentoring to include increased success, increased publication rate, professional friends

and networking. Despite the benefits inherent in mentoring, there could be challenges when implementing a mentoring programme. such challenges includes where the University culture does support it or does not support it, favoritism and resentment from those not chosen to participate in the programme, unrealistic expectations of the mentoring programme, personality conflict and poor matching of mentors and those to be mentored (Njoku, 2017).

3. Co-supervision and Academic Staff Effectiveness

Co-supervision is a part of the mentoring programme. The practice enables younger academic staff members to understudy their senior colleagues in the process of supervision of graduate students' projects and attendance of seminars and conferences. This is a norm that was cherished in the Universities but it is declining so much that younger lecturers struggle to handle some research topics presented to them by graduate students for supervision due to lack of mentoring as they are left to find solutions to their problems. This has increased their levels of mistakes and reduced level of quality research outputs in the public Universities in the region. The job of supervising graduate students is a complex and demanding one. If supervisors can anticipate and avoid problems, supervision can be one of the most rewarding aspects of the teaching in a University environment. Supervision is an activity undertaken by someone occupying a formal role within an organization that has explicit expectations and accountabilities to both the person being supervised, and the organization which provides the context for the supervisory relationship. The relationship between a graduate student and an academic supervisor is critical to the success of the learning experience, to the sense of satisfaction of both participants, to the development of research skills, and to shaping of successful career of both student and the supervisor

In literature there is much debate around the advantages and challenges of co-supervision to the traditional single supervision model.

However, the following merits are worth considering working with co-supervisor:

- The graduate student will benefit from different perspectives and experiences;
- The supervisors benefit from sharing the responsibilities, particularly if problems ever arise;
- There will always be support for the graduate student if for some reasons one supervisor becomes unavailable; and junior academics can be initiated into good practice by experienced supervisors.
- Both mentoring and supervision have role in the academy in relation to graduate student learning and younger academic staff members' development for effective job performance.

Traditionally, only the best should be supervisors. Graduate supervision especially was once the privilege of tenured faculty members (Njoku, 2017). As such, it is viewed in some academic cycles as an earned status reflecting the confidence of academics in their knowledge and skills to create the next generation of academics and practitioners. Graduate students challenge supervisors' assumptions, test their knowledge, ask intriguing questions, introduce new ideas, remind their them of old myths, and generally enrich academics' life in meaningful ways far more than in most academic meetings. But such culture is not enjoyed today by the younger academics for unknown reasons which form part of the baises for the study. The role of the supervisor is an intensive form of teaching, and guidance than just the transfer if knowledge. The role is a supportive one where the supervisor may be a mentor, coach, guide, model and manager, with the goal of preparing graduate students and younger academics for careers both within and outside the academia.

From the foregoing, it is clear that training in a work situation is concerned with extending and developing employees' capabilities and enabling an individual acquire abilities for better performance in their jobs and given tasks. Lecturers need constant training both on the job and off-the job in order to understand new

challenges taking place within the learning and teaching environment. This is because the efficiency of any institution depends on how well its members are trained and through training, more skills would be acquired and lecturers themselves would become great resources to the University. However, Hannagan (2002) argues that there is no guarantee that trained employees actually benefit from participation in training and that employees are usually unproductive especially while undergoing long-term training let alone the additional expenses. Although most of the studies posit that training is a correlate of individual job effectiveness, few are on the benefits as a motivator and none is found in the context of the area of the study. The above did not attempted to relate short term and long term training such as mentoring and co-supervision as factors in employee performance and more so, it was carried out in a different context.

The relevance of the concept of University culture especially mentoring and co-supervision for school effectiveness may certainly be an interesting lead for explaining the secret of effective schools and their employees; however, a major problem in linking school culture of mentorship to school academic effectiveness is that the measures of organizational culture still lack conceptual clarity. The persistent failure to hit annual effectiveness and performance targets by the Universities suggest that the region's Universities' academic programmes and policies are weak and unproductive. Effective and appropriate approaches in the Universities are very important in the achievement of University education goals. Effective teachers carefully plan and implement appropriate teaching and learning approaches as learning is dependent on the appropriate pedagogical approaches teachers use in the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms. However, some Universities' policies influence teacher pedagogy. Most Universities' administrators simply employ first and second class upper degree graduates to lecture even when some of them do not possess appropriate pedagogical approaches, attitudes, skills and competences. Yet the Universities seem to lack vibrant staff value orientation, induction and development programmes or fail

to utilize such development programmes for training and retraining of such category of staff and others, leaving them to find solutions to such challenges. This gap seems to be further widened by inadequate or the non-mentoring of such younger lecturers who are not exposed by their senior lecturers. The lack of vibrant staff development programmes on a continuous basis will not help new lecturers to clarify and modify their attitudes, values, skills and competencies in modern methods and discoveries in their fields and they will soon become irrelevant (Adetoun, 2006).

The increasing pressure to catch up with the developed world regarding global competitiveness requires effective teachers. However, as a result of lack of proper recruitment processes by many of the Universities in North-central Nigeria, some of the lecturers possess little or no expertise experiences and knowledge on University job. Consequently, these present effectiveness challenges to the lecturers. Staff development programmes in terms of mentoring and co-supervision can link the interests of the University with the interests of their employees. Training has thus, added value to human resources hence become skilled. If the region's Universities are to enhance the job effectiveness of lecturers, then efforts should be made to facilitate these programmes if they perceive that this would be valuable. Universities do organize training programmes to enable the teachers improve their teaching methods and enhance their effectiveness or performance. Davenport (1999) contends that employees are not costs, factors of production, or assets but rather investors in a business. Nonetheless, staff development programmes may be viewed as generalized investments in human capital. Such investments can reassure employees that the expenditure of their time in the University will contribute to their development and thus improve employee commitment and loyalty.

Tiberondwa (2000) points out that staff development programmes include training, attendance of seminars, workshops, conferences and short courses within and outside the institution. They also include sabbatical leaves,

promotions which are expected to lead to effective performance in activities and in tertiary institutions. Staff development programmes primarily aimed at improving employee competence so as to ensure transfer of quality knowledge, skills as required attitudes of trainees, as well as improved performance on the job in the various work situations. Mentoring as argued by many authors is a component of staff development and if carried out effectively, it can lead to improvement in the performance of employees and it can either be on short term or long term basis. Odinga (2010) posits that short term training encompasses a wide variety of programmes such as seminars, workshops, conferences, and college diploma or certificate programmes varying from one to six months. Short term training contributes to individual's personal development, increases their productivity and income at work and facilitates every body's participation (Sheridan, Murdoch & Harder, 2015). In this regard, the Human Resource Manual of (University of Ilorin, 2014) posits that before going on training, staff members must have offered 'three years of uninterrupted service to the University'. Also, staff proceeding on study leave must be bonded for an equivalent period of study leaves.

4. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The population of the study consists of six thousand six hundred and eighty two (6682) academic staff members and two hundred and forty thousand six hundred and forty four (240644) students of the two public Universities in North-central Nigeria. Six public Universities were randomly selected as sample size for the study with a population of 4678 lecturers and 123465 students. The sample of 469 lecturers and 2350 students from two Universities were used. This was based on Yamene (1967) formula for sampling. The questionnaire is used to collect data and two research instruments tagged 'Academic Staff Mentorship Programme Questionnaire (ASMPQ) for lecturers and Academic Staff Effectiveness Questionnaire (ASEQ) for students of public Universities in North-central Nigeria were used to collect data for the study. The Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson Correlation coefficient were used to answer the research questions and test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: What is the extent of University mentorship programme in public Universities in North-central Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Result of Public Universities' Mentorship Programme in North-Central Nigeria.

S/N	Item	N	Agg. Mean	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Staff development programme	501	14.540	2.910	3.185
2	Research publications	501	28.870	3.609	5.043
3	Induction and value orientation	501	12.440	2.488	2.067
4	Mentorship	501	10.750	2.688	2.248

Table 3 shows mean and standard deviation result on extent of University mentorship programme in public Universities in North-central Nigeria. The result shows that item 3 have Mean score above the criterion Mean of 3.00, indicating that research publication of academic staff members is not affected by University mentorship programmes for academic staff. Also items 1, 3 and 4 have mean scores below the criterion mean of 3.00. This implies that staff development, value orientation and mentorship are variables that affect job effectiveness of academic staff of Universities. This is an indication that mentorship for younger academic staff matters most than other factors in term of academic staff effectiveness.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between mentorship and academic staff effectiveness in public Universities in North-central Nigeria

Table 11

Pearson Correlation of Relationship between University Culture of Mentorship and Academic Staff Effectiveness in Research in Public Universities in North-Central Nigeria

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P value	Decision
Mentorship	501	66.63	8.30	0.009	0.848	Accept Ho
Academic staff effectiveness	501	363.59	85.95			

5. Discussion

The study examined the influence of University mentorship culture on academic staff job effectiveness in public Universities in North-central Nigeria. This was due to the perpetually observed problems of weak University culture and poor job performance of academic staff experienced in public Universities in North-central Nigeria. Results tend to show that University culture is weak and negatively influenced job effectiveness of academic staff of public Universities in North-central Nigeria and hence University goals are hardly attained. Nevertheless, there is a common reasoning that the Universities' academic programme designs and students' dress code policies have little or no influence on academic staff effectiveness in public Universities in North-central Nigeria. The finding showed that new lecturers do not get adequate support from members to help them adjust to their new environment. Value orientation programmes for new lecturers are required to ensure that departmental practices are learning-friendly.

With regards to information, majority of new lecturers were not given information booklets in the form of handbooks containing all they need to know about their University as well as their conditions of service. Personal experience shows that even the very senior lecturers that have spent years in the University system have never seen the University handbook. Adequate information is vital to put the new staff on the right footing to know the mission, vision as well as procedures and practices of the Universities.

The result corroborates Ajayi, Awosusi, Aroguntade and Ekundayo (2011), starting a new job in a new work environment presents series of challenges to an individual irrespective of previous experiences. Therefore, positive steps should be taken to cushion the effect of these demands and ensure an easy transition period for the new employee in terms of roles and responsibilities, organizational norms and relationship with work colleagues. Furthermore finding showed that mentoring positively influenced the effectiveness of academic staff but majority cannot access their mentors as shown. mentoring enhances ones job potentials; enhance ones inter-personal relationship with superiors; gain more clarity of job tasks, improve collaboration and networking at work place and developing initiatives and working under minimal supervision. This is confirmation that mentoring had influence on the performance of lecturers by making them gain clarity of their job duties, develop initiatives and working under minimal supervision and enhanced their job potentials. It implies that lecturers who had the opportunity of being properly mentored by seniors are more effective on their jobs. The finding is consistent with the outcome of Schmidt (2003), Hamlin and Sage (2011), Tanoli (2016) and Nojoku (2017) that mentoring provides better staff development opportunities for workers to learn to learn on the job and to cope with challenges of their work schedule. It also make workers to have a better understanding of their duties, enhances their output and operational efficiency. The implication of the finding is that attaching the younger employees with seniors or highly professionals of their own field maintain their abilities and provide correctness to their

mistakes they make in routine activities. This further implies that a mentoring oriented work place encourages the employees to work with commitment and they become the source of continuing these practices by delivering them to their new entrants, junior colleagues and less experienced team members.

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