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AL-HIKMAH UNIVERSITY, ILORIN

**Mentoring Practices Among Academic Staff In Selected Higher Education
Institutions In Kwara State, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The paper examined mentoring practices among academic staff in selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study applied a survey research design using a semi-structured questionnaire as a data collection instrument. A total of 325 academic staff served as the sample size for this study using the convenience sampling technique to facilitate the online selection of respondents. Data was collected online via a Google questionnaire and analyzed accordingly. Findings of the study revealed that supervisory and informal mentoring was practicalised in the selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study further revealed a high level of satisfaction and beneficial outcomes derived from mentoring practices across the selected HEIs. However, mentoring practices in HEIs were faced with several institutional challenges such as lack of training, lack of institutional support, lack of incentives and motivation on the part of management, and lack of interest among others. Based on the findings of the study on institutional challenges, policy recommendations were offered such as institutionalizing formal mentoring, developing of mentoring policy, and others to aid the successful implementation of mentoring practices in these institutions.

Keywords: Mentoring Practices, Formal Mentoring, Informal Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, Supervisory Mentoring

Introduction

Mentoring had been an aged long practice in organizations both locally and globally, however, their levels of implementation may vary based on different approaches and practices. It is widely embraced in most organizations due to unquantifiable benefits that accrue to mentors, mentees, and the organization at large. Mentoring has been defined simply as a close relationship in which a mentor willingly gives time and other resources to teach, and groom a younger person called a protégé (Johnson & Anderson, 2010). In another sense, mentoring can be seen as an exceptional developmental tool, a caring and sharing relationship where one person invests time, knowhow and efforts in enhancing another person's growth, insight, and wisdom (Okurame, 2008). This depicts a two-way relationship between the mentor and the mentee, such that the mentor's wealth of experience, know-how and wisdom has the capability of grooming the mentee to an acceptable level or standard; also, the mentee has the capability of influencing his or her mentor positively. In a mentoring relationship, although the mentee gains more from the

knowledge and experiences of the mentor, the mentor equally gains from the relationship. Therefore, mentoring can be referred to as a dyadic relationship where both parties gain from each other's professional knowledge, experiences, and exposure.

Mentoring as a developmental tool has benefitted organizations in several ways such as improving employees' commitment, personal and professional growth, and ensuring increased productivity and organizational success (Hester & Setzer, 2013). However, in the case of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), mentoring practices are inevitable in order to ensure continuity and succession planning in the academia due to the constant need to recruit new academic staff to fill vacant positions, and also the retirement of long-serving staff (Olowookere, n.d.) Apart from this, there are other beneficial outcomes such as improved commitment to the organization, employees successfully completing their probationary periods, increased flow of information, management, and leadership support, increase job satisfaction, decrease employee turnover, and improves employee performance among others (Mentoring Handbook, 2006; Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, & Barksdale, 2006).

Some studies (e.g. Hester & Setzer, 2013; Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, & Barksdale, 2006) identified two components of mentoring: career support and psycho-social aspects that are also applicable to HEIs. Career support focuses on the work advancement and career progression of the protégé in the organization; while psycho-social functions relate to benefits enjoyed by the mentee from the mentor in the form of personal advice, timely feedback, as well as improved self-esteem. These two components of mentoring are equally utilized in HEIs across the globe regardless of the mentoring type-formal or informal mentoring.

Without any gainsaying, mentoring practices in the academic environment are popularly referred to as "academic mentoring". It is imperative for academic staff in higher institutions to embrace mentoring activities for career progression, networking, and collaboration, and other benefits such as increased productivity, high rate of publications, increased career satisfaction, greater self-efficiency, increased network, and development of skills among others (Fox & Corrice, 2010). However, in spite of these benefits, most HEIs in Nigeria rarely measure the effectiveness of their mentoring practices, perhaps due to a lack of appropriate feedback mechanism in place. Besides, most HEIs in Nigeria face some challenges in setting up formal mentoring programmes due to problems such as lack of institutional support, lack of policy, lack of funds, problems in selection and matching of mentors and mentees, lack of cooperation between the mentor and the mentee, lack of mentoring culture among others (Okarume, 2013). As a result of this anomaly, formal mentoring practices in academia may be dysfunctional if not properly planned. This is unlike informal mentoring, which is spontaneous and is often practiced due to its flexibility in the selection of mentors and protégés, and also because it is based on the relationships with close associates, colleagues, and friends in the workplace. Based

on the accrued benefits of the mentoring activities especially in higher educational institutions, it is germane to evaluate the impact of mentoring among academic staff.

HEIs refer to institutions like universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education where academic activities such as teaching, research, and community services are carried out by academic staff. Academic staff members are lecturers or faculty members that are saddled with responsibilities of teaching, research, and community services. Several studies (Afolabi, Faleye & Aremu, 2015; Okarume, 2013; Hester & Setzer, 2013; Fox & Corrice, 2010) have examined mentoring programs among faculty members in the literature, however, very few of these studies have examined mentoring practices in HEIs in Nigeria. These studies have revealed mixed findings as regards mentoring practices within the Nigerian institutions that were surveyed. Also, these studies have not ascertained the various types of mentoring that were commonly practiced in HEIs and the level of satisfaction derived from these practices by academic staff. Based on this lacuna in the literature, there is an urgent need to appraise the current mentoring practices among academic staff in selected HEIs in Kwara State due to the dearth of literature on their mentoring practices. In view of this, this study examined mentoring practices in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess mentoring practices among academic staff in selected higher institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. The following specific objectives are to:

1. identify types of mentoring practices mostly used in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria;
2. determine the benefits of mentoring practices among academic staff in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria;
3. investigate the level of satisfaction in mentoring relationships in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria;
4. identify institutional challenges faced in setting up mentoring programmes in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria; and
5. proffer policy options that would improve mentoring practices in HEIs in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Mentoring

Mentoring is an important developmental tool that can help in the improvement of employees' careers and the growth of the organization. Mentoring has been viewed by different researchers based on diverse perspectives. In the past, mentoring was seen as a close relationship between an experienced senior colleague that is willing to groom and develop a junior colleague with lesser experience. However, in the 21st Century, mentoring practices have shifted from what they used to be in some decades back. Mentoring can occur based on group interactions or in diverse circumstances to help anyone gain new insight and abilities. It is best practiced across organizational levels due to several opportunities it may offer such as faceless and timely interactions between the learner and advisor (Emelo, 2011).

Mentoring programmes can serve as a potent tool in motivating employees to perform excellently in their jobs. For instance, an employee that is adequately mentored would be motivated to work independently and selflessly for his or her organization. Therefore, in an academic setting, mentoring may serve to motivate senior or junior faculty members whenever they meet their career and social needs.

Empirical Studies on Academic Mentoring Practices in HEIs in Nigeria

Few researchers have investigated academic mentoring practices across the globe and in Nigerian HEIs. Some of these studies which investigated academic mentoring in specific institutions are discussed briefly:

Okurame (2008) examined mentoring experiences in Nigerian academia. Forty-eight members of the academic staff in a Nigerian university social science faculty represented the sample size of the study. The findings of the study revealed that the few existing mentoring relationships are informal in nature. Activities such as delegating work activity by mentors to their protégés, delegating conference/workshop attendance by mentor to protégés, research interests, involving protégés in research projects, and supervising protégé's thesis were implemented. Results showed that mentors supported their protégés in getting connected to research networks, writing publications, counseling and advice, and financial support. The respondents identified barriers to mentoring such as unresponsiveness on the part of junior academics, lack of formal mentor/protégé structures, and lack of funds. Based on these findings, a robust formal mentoring structure needs to be in place in institutions of learning to address the challenges of mentoring practices in academia.

Ismail, Abdullah, and Francis (2009) examined the impact of mentoring on individuals' advancement. A total of 153 employees in a public university in East Malaysia represented the sample size of this study. The findings of this study indicated that formal and informal mentoring had a positive impact on psychosocial support. It also revealed that formal and informal mentoring had a positive and significant impact on individuals' career development. The findings of this study have proven that well-implemented formal or informal mentoring programmes can lead to increased career advancement and psychosocial support.

Afolabi, Faleye, and Aremu (2015) investigated the perception of mentoring (and its nature) by academic staff of the Obafemi Awolowo University. The population of study comprised only academic staff in the university. Two hundred (200) academic staff were selected using the purposive sampling technique from 13 faculties in the university. A structured questionnaire titled 'Academic Staff Mentoring Questionnaire' was used for data collection. Results revealed that a high proportion of academic staff members were involved in the mentor-relationships; also, the majority of the academic staff had a favourable perception of mentoring. The study concluded that most academic staff in the university were involved in the mentoring relationships; and also perceived mentoring as a veritable means of academic development. On the whole, these few empirical studies have revealed that mentoring practices are inevitable in HEIs, however; there are bottlenecks that can hinder successful mentoring outcomes.

Benefits of Academic Mentoring

Academic mentoring in most Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) has attracted global attention due to its positive impact on the mentor, mentee, and the institution at large. On the part of the mentors, academic mentoring, if implemented successfully could lead to beneficial outcomes such as improvement of performance over time and development of leadership qualities (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Hudson, 2013). On the part of the mentee, mentoring helps to reduce isolation, boost confidence and self-esteem, professional growth, enhance self-reflection, problem-solving capacities, and promote career success (Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010). On the whole, both mentors and mentees experience personal satisfaction from effective mentoring relationships (Bell & Treleaven, 2011). However, it is worthy of note that positive mentoring outcomes may not be realized, if the mentoring relationship fails to achieve its purported goals and objectives.

Level of Satisfaction of Academic Mentoring

Very few researchers have ascertained the level of satisfaction of mentoring programmes by academic staff. This is due to the fact that oftentimes, proper feedback mechanisms are not put in place to determine the level of satisfaction on the mentee or mentor's side. In academic mentoring, satisfaction can be evaluated based on the level of impact on the academic and career life of staff. In other words, satisfaction could be expressed either by the mentor or mentee depending on the beneficial outcome of such mentoring programmes. For instance, Folz, Sprunger, Sheehan, Aranda, Bozyski, Romsey & Gonzalvo (2018), in their study on mentee satisfaction, identified the characteristics that were associated with high mentee satisfaction in a Teaching Certificate Program. A 31-item survey instrument was administered to all participants of the program. Findings revealed that 80% of program participants were satisfied with their mentor relationship. The characteristics associated with their satisfaction varied from mentor availability, accessibility, frequency of interaction, reviewing lecture slides, providing midpoint feedbacks, providing career advice, and attending mentee lectures. The result of this

study depicts that different sets of criteria can be used to assess satisfaction either on the part of the mentee or mentor.

Institutional Challenges Faced in Academic Mentoring

Researchers have proven that there are barriers that might militate against successful mentoring practices in academic settings. Therefore, failure of mentoring programmes, had been attributed to factors such as lack of commitment to the mentoring process on the part of the mentor or mentee; or both management and employees in organizations do not appreciate the benefit of mentoring programmes, therefore affecting its success (Myburgh, 2004). Academic mentoring practices may fail most time due to the following challenges as identified in the literature (Nowell, White, Benzies and Rosenau, 2017; Douglas, 1997; Long, 1997). These are prevailing challenges of mentoring practices that are applicable in HEIs such as: vulnerability of mentees, limited pool of mentors, time workload, competing priorities, lack of support from leadership, lack of mentoring culture, and culture of competitiveness among others as discussed below:

- i. **Vulnerability of Mentees:** Mentoring occurs within a relationship, therefore, the in case of dysfunctional mentoring, mentees could be vulnerable due to various forms of abuse uses that could take place between the boss and subordinate's uncooperative attributes.
 - ii. **Limited Pool of Mentors:** In some institutions, there could be few available mentors who are willing to take up that role. As a result, this could create an imbalance ratio between the mentors and mentees. If mentees are too many for a particular mentor, it can affect the mentoring outcome negatively.
 - iii. **Time Factor:** Mentors may not have adequate time to undertake mentoring due to tight work schedules, workloads, and engagement in extracurricular activities.
 - iv. **Lack of support from Management:** The lack of support from management could be on account of inadequate resources to organize mentoring programme effectively such as lack of funds, lack of mentoring procedures, administrative bottlenecks, and no clear vision on the part of management among others.
 - v. **Lack of mentoring culture:** Mentoring culture involves the norm, attitude, values, beliefs, and practices of mentoring which are supposed to be imbibed by the parties involved. Without a culture of mentoring, parties would not be guided by the rules and practices of mentoring. Mentors and mentees do not know what is expected of them when the culture of mentoring is not entrenched in academia.
 - vi. **Culture of Competitiveness:** The culture of competitiveness pervades academia due to the emphasis on working independently. For instance, researchers are promoted individually based on their number of publications. As a result of this practice, seniors may not be willing to take up mentoring their juniors because they are burdened with setting the pace rather than working to groom others. This mentality or mindset of competitiveness may impact negatively on mentoring practices in academia.
- These institutional challenges need to be critically examined by individual HEIs and issues identified should be addressed based on their unique practices.

Methodology

A survey research design approach was adopted for this study using a semi-structured questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents in the study area. The study focused on three selected Universities in Kwara State with a total sample size of 325 academic staff. The selected universities are the University of Ilorin, Kwara, State University (KWASU), and Al-Hikmah University. These higher education institutions belong to various ownership levels which are: Federal, State, and private organisations respectively.

The semi-structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Mentoring Practices among Academic Staff (QMPAS)" comprises five sections focusing on different areas: Section A comprises demographic information on respondents, and Section B focuses on types of mentoring practices in selected universities. In addition, Section C contains information on the benefits of mentoring practices while Section D comprises information on the level of satisfaction among academic staff on mentoring practices. Section E entails information on institutional challenges faced in mentoring practices

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The researchers established the face validity of the instrument that was used for data collection. It was determined by two experts in the field of Library and Information Science. The instruments were validated after several corrections, proofreading, and reviews by the experts. The face validity of these scales was considerably high based on experts' opinions. Again, the Cronbach Reliability of the two scales measuring benefits of mentoring and Institutional challenges were determined to know whether the items measured what it purports to measure. A pilot study was carried out on 25 non-academic staff of the University of Ilorin. The Cronbach Reliability score for the two developed scales was on the high side as shown in the table below:

Table 1

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Measures of the Self Developed Scales

Scale	Items	Score
Benefits of mentoring	12	0,94
Institutional Challenges	15	0.91

Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. All respondents that took part in the online survey and responded well to the Google questionnaire were used for this study. A total of 350 respondents responded to the online survey, however, 325 respondents were found usable for the study. Therefore, 325 academic staff represented the sample size for this study based on valid responses from the three WhatsApp Platforms (UNILORIN, KWASU and Al-Hikmah Universities respectively).

Data Collection Procedure

The Researchers opted for an online survey due to Covid-19 restrictions at the time data was collected for this study. Data was collected online via Google Questionnaire and collated via Google excel sheets. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. The researchers forwarded the Google questionnaire to three notable academic platforms of the selected Universities.

Method for Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collected

Presentation of Results

Analyses of data collection and interpretation of results are hereby presented below.

Table 2

Demographic Attributes of Respondents in the Study Area

Demography	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	230	70.8
Female	95	29.2
Age		
25-30 yrs	7	2.2
31-35 yrs	25	7.7
36-40 yrs	54	16.6
41-45 yrs	60	18.5
46-50 yrs	74	20.8
51-55 yrs	48	14.2
56-60 yrs	14	4.3
61yrs and above	39	12
Academic Status		
Assistant Lecturer	39	12
Lecturer II	54	16.1
Lecturer I	95	29.2
Senior Lecturer	72	22.2
Reader	18	5.5
Professor	34	10.5
Years of Experience		
1-5 yrs	67	20.6
6-10 yrs	110	33.8
11-15 yrs	32	9.8

16-20 yrs	20	6.2
21-25 yrs	31	9.5
26 yrs and above	59	18.2

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of respondents in the study area. In terms of gender, 230 (70.8%) were males, while 95(29.2%) were females. Thus shows that majority of the respondents were males. In terms of age, the respondents were in the following categories: 7(2.2%) were between 25-30 years, 25(7.7%) 31-35 years, 54(16.6%) 36-40 years, 60(18.5%) 41-45years, 74(20.8%) 46-50years, 48 (14.2%) 51-55yers, 14(4.3%) 26-60yers, and lastly, 39(12%) were 61years and above. The majority of the academic staff were between 46 -50 years. The academic status of the respondents are as follows: 39(12%) Assistant lecturer, 54(16.1%) Lecturer II, 95(29.2) lecturer I, 72(22.2%) Senior Lecture, 18(5.5%) Reader, while 34(10.5%) were in the rank of professors. The majority of the respondents were Lecturer 1. Lastly, the years of working experience of the respondents ranged from 1 to 26 years and above. For instance, 67(20.6%) of the respondents had 1-5years of working experience, 110(33.8%) 6-10years, 32(9.8%) 11-15years, and 20(6.2%)16-20years. 31(9.5%) 21-25years. While 59(18.2%) were 26 years and above. The majority of the respondents were between the category of 6-10 years of working experience.

Table 3

Type of Mentoring Practices mostly used in selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Types of Mentoring Practices	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Formal mentoring	120	36.9
2	Informal Mentoring	144	44.3
3.	Supervisory Mentoring	168	51.7
4.	Peer Mentoring	81	24.9
5.	Situational Mentoring	70	21.5
6	Trainee Initiated Mentoring	82	25.2

Table 3 shows the various types of mentoring mostly practiced in the selected Institutions of learning. These mentoring practices were in varying degrees, For instance, 130 (36.9%) Formal mentoring, 144(44.3%) Informal mentoring, and 168(51.7%) Supervisory mentoring. 81(24.9%) Peer mentoring, 70 (21.5%) Situational mentoring. while 82(25,2%) have been involved in Trainee initiated mentor. The majority of the respondents engage in supervisory mentoring, followed by informal mentoring, and formal mentoring. The least type of mentoring practice is situational mentoring. Supervisory mentoring had the highest occurrence due to the compulsory task of project supervision assigned to lecturers in their various departments.

On the whole, Table 4 showed that some benefits of mentoring practices had high preferences as indicated by respondents: (84%) enlarging professional network, (83.7%) intergenerational understanding, (80.3%) improving leadership/coaching skills. (80%) increased career satisfaction among others. The results depict that mentoring practices across the selected institutions are beneficial to lecturers to a very large extent, hence the need to promote mentoring practices among academic staff in HEIs.

Table 5

Level of Satisfaction in Mentoring Relationships in selected HEIs in Nigeria

S/N	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Highly Satisfied	143	44.0
2	Satisfied	90	27.7
3.	Partially Satisfied	58	17.8
4.	Poorly Satisfied	13	4.0
5.	Not Satisfied	21	6.5

Table 5 reveals the level of satisfaction experienced by academic staff in their mentoring relationships in varying degrees. For instance, 143 (44.0%) were highly satisfied, 90 (27.7%) satisfied, 58 (17.8%) partially satisfied, 13 (4.0%) poorly satisfied, while 21 (6.5%) were not satisfied. The results depict that majority (71.7%) of the respondents were satisfied in their mentoring relationships, while the least (10.5%) were not satisfied in their mentoring relationships.

Table 6

Institutional Challenges of Mentoring practices in selected HEIs in Nigeria

S/N	Institutional Challenges of Mentoring Practices	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mea n	Std. Dev.
1	Conflict of interest between mentors and mentees	31(9.5)	108(33.2)	141(43.4)	45(13.8)	2.62	.841
2	Insufficient time for pair meetings	46(14.2)	175(53.8)	66(20.3)	38(11.7)	2.30	.833
3	Generational misunderstanding between mentor and mentee.	25(7.7)	94(28.9)	154(47.4)	46(14.2)	2.69	.812

Folayan O.T & Bashorun M.T (2022). Mentoring practices among Academic Staff in selected Higher Education Institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria

4	Lack of mentoring culture among stakeholders	91(28.0)	108(33.2)	99(30.5)	27(8.3)	2.19	.940
5	Hard to figure out shared interest between mentors and mentees	41(12.8)	138(42.5)	127(38.1)	13(4.0)	2.35	.754
6	Lack of Policy to support mentoring practice	98(30.2)	110(33.8)	90(27.7)	27(8.3)	2.14	.945
7	Lack of institutional support by management such as funds and infrastructures	118(36.3)	122(37.5)	58(17.8)	27(8.3)	1.98	.936
8	Lack of cooperation between the mentor and the mentee	65(20.0)	86(28.5)	134(41.2)	40(12.3)	2.46	.947
9	Problems in selection and matching of mentors and mentees	85(26.2)	108(33.2)	104(32.0)	28(8.6)	2.23	.936
10	Mentoring programmes could be rigorous and time consuming to set up	67(20.6)	132(40.6)	106(32.6)	13(4.0)	2.20	.817
11	Lack of structuring and organization of mentoring programmes	77(23.7)	147(45.2)	87(26.8)	14(4.3)	2.12	.816
12	Lack of proper monitoring and feedback on mentoring programmes	91(28.0)	156(48.0)	57(17.5)	21(6.5)	2.02	.846
13	Lack of incentives and motivation by management	105(32.3)	142(43.7)	44(13.3)	27(8.3)	1.98	.900
14	Lack of interest and zeal to pursue successful mentoring programmes.	81(24.9)	133(40.9)	79(24.0)	20(6.2)	2.12	.869
	Lack of training programmes for mentors and mentees.	112(34.5)	154(47.4)	33(10.2)	13(4.0)	1.83	.777

Key: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 6 shows that the 221(68%) of the respondents indicated insufficient time, 199(61.2%) lack of mentoring culture, 208(64%) lack of policy support, 240(73.8%) lack

of institutional support, 199(61.2%) mentoring programmes could be rigorous and time consuming to set up, 224(68.9%) lack of structuring and organization of mentoring programmes. Also, 247(76.0%) of the respondents indicated lack of proper monitoring and feedback on mentoring programmes, 247(76.0%) lack of incentives and motivation by management. Similarly, 214(65.8%) of the respondents said lack of interest and zeal to pursue successful mentoring programmes, and 266(81.6%) lack of training for mentors and mentees. On the contrary, majority of the respondents disagreed on the following challenges as hindering successful mentoring: 186(57.2%) conflict of interest between mentors and mentees 200(61.6%) generational misunderstanding between mentors and mentees and 174(53.5%) lack of cooperation between mentors and mentees respectively. On the whole, this result revealed that some challenges had high occurrences across the selected institutions in the order of the following preference: lack of training, lack of institutional support such as funds and infrastructure, lack of proper monitoring and feedback, and lack of incentives and motivation by management. The findings of the study suggest that majority of the respondents agreed that major challenges faced by institutions hindering successful mentoring programmes are varying in proportions.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined mentoring practices across selected HEIs in Kwara State, Nigeria, in terms of types of mentoring, level of satisfaction benefits gained and challenges hindering successful mentoring programmes in the study area. The results of this study will be discussed in line with the objectives that were earlier identified.

The first objective was to identify the type of mentoring mostly practiced in the selected institutions. Results revealed the types of mentoring programmes in varying degrees across the selected institutions. The formal, informal, supervisory, peer, situational mentoring, and trainee-initiated types of mentoring are available. However, a slightly above the average number of academic staff were involved in supervisory mentoring, followed by informal mentoring. The finding of the study is in line with Afolabi, Faleye, and Aremu (2015) who affirmed that academic staff is involved in mentoring relationships, while, this study has shown that supervisory mentoring is mostly practiced among academic staff across the three institutions. This type of mentoring practice frequently takes place often by academic staff in the area of project supervision of final year students in most institutions of learning. Also, informal mentoring is also being practiced, while peer mentoring, situational, and trainee initiated were the least practiced mentoring type.

The second objective was to determine the benefits of mentoring in the selected institutions of learning in Kwara State. The findings of the study revealed that mentoring practices in the selected institutions of learning are beneficial in several ways such as enlarging professional network, improving communication skills, and improving leadership, and coaching skills. In addition, it facilitates cultivating intergenerational understanding, increased career satisfaction, increased productivity, promoting greater self-efficiency, and improving the rate of publication. Similarly, it enhances collaborative work, yields improvement in supervisory skills, and grant writing skills, and enhanced

the teaching method. This finding corroborates existing studies (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Hudson, 2013; Bell & Treleaven, 2011; Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010).

The third objective was to ascertain the level of satisfaction in mentoring relationships among academic staff in the study area. The findings of the study revealed that 143 (44.0%) were highly satisfied, 90(27.7%) were satisfied, 58(17.8%) were partially satisfied, 13(4.0%) were poorly satisfied, while 21(6.5%) were not satisfied. These results depict that majority (71.7%) experienced satisfaction in their mentoring relationships, while the least (10.5%) were not satisfied in their mentoring relationships. This finding supports Folz, Sprunger, Sheehan, Aranda, Bozyski, Romsey, and Gonzalvo (2018) affirmed that mentoring satisfaction is a derivative of beneficial outcomes. Therefore, the benefits derived from mentoring programmes in the selected institutions can be adduced to the satisfaction derived from their mentoring relationships.

Again, the fourth objective was to assess the challenges faced by the selected institutions in the successful implementation of their mentoring programmes. The findings of the study revealed some major challenges hindering mentoring practices as insufficient time, followed by lack of mentoring culture, lack of policy support, lack of institutional support, and rigorous and time-consuming setup. In addition, lack of structuring and organization of mentoring programmes, a lack of proper monitoring, and feedback on mentoring programmes, and a lack of incentives and motivation by management. Moreover, lack of interest, zeal to pursue successful mentoring programmes, and lack of training for mentors and mentees were part of the challenges. Lack of training, lack of institutional support such as funds and infrastructure, lack of proper monitoring, feedback, and lack of incentives and motivation by management were major institutional challenges. The results of this study support other studies (Nowell, White, Benzie & Rosenau, 2017; Okurame, 2008) that identified and established similar institutional challenges in the literature.

Policy Recommendation on Mentoring Practices for the Selected Institutions

Based on the findings of the study, the following policy recommendations will help to address urgently the institutional challenges of mentoring practices in the selected HEIs:

- i. Formal mentoring practices should be institutionalized in the selected HEIs to enhance and sustain successful implementation.
- ii. Selection of mentors and mentees should be undertaken by Management for formal mentoring programmes in HEIs.
- iii. Mentoring policy should be developed by individual Institutions and strict conformance to mentoring procedures by all stakeholders that are involved.
- iv. Training programmes should be organized regularly on mentoring practices to sensitize mentors and mentees on the right approaches to successful mentoring.
- v. Proper monitoring and appropriate feedback mechanism should be put in place to prevent dysfunctional mentoring.
- vi. Mentoring culture should be emphasized and imbibed across the selected institutions.

vii. Regular disbursement of funds to implement successful mentoring practices across the selected institutions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that mentoring practices are actually implemented in institutions of learning, but are not formalized. Therefore, due to this lapses, successful implementation of mentoring practices cannot be guaranteed across institutions due to several institutional challenges as identified in this study. Therefore, these challenges, need the intervention of management and government to fully address and mitigate the problems of mentoring practices across institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will help institutions of learning to contribute positively to successful mentoring Outcomes: Management of HEIs should adequately motivate mentors to successfully execute their roles. Also, mentoring guide or manual should be designed to facilitate successful mentoring practices; and to prevent dysfunctional relationships between mentors and mentees. In addition, supervisory allowance should be in place to motivate academic staff at all levels of supervision. Similarly, peer mentoring should be encouraged across departments and faculties in the selected institutions. Furthermore, informal mentoring should be given more priority due to its high level of flexibility and acceptability of such practices across the selected institutions. Additionally, emphasis on feedback is essential to measure the satisfaction and effectiveness of the mentoring programme using specific criteria. Government should fund HEIs adequately to aid in the successful implementation of their mentoring programmes.

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