
MENTORING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST- A REALITY OR A FALLACY?

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ABSTRACT: *There is growing interest in teacher induction and widespread support for the idea of assigning experienced teachers to work with newly recruited teachers. Still, we know relatively little about what mentors in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) do, how they think about their work, and what their mentees learn from their interactions with them. This article presents the perception of approximately 150 Lecturers/Assistant Lecturers who were recruited between 2008 to 2013 academic year. As the literature on mentorship indicates, mentorship plays an important role in a mentee's life therefore, so to sustain and develop experience lecturers, mentorship programmes need to be relevant, personalized and unique. The methodology used in this study employed descriptive design (non-experimental). The target population was made up of lecturers in the University of Cape Coast. The accessible population was made up of all the 270 assistant/ lecturers in the university who were appointed between 2008 to 2013 academic year. The results showed that on the whole respondents acknowledged that mentors play some roles in the mentoring system. Concerning the perceptions of future mentoring, more than half of the mentees had some concerns about future mentoring. About two thirds of the respondents agreed that mentoring issues should be considered during promotions. It was recommended that UCC and administrators in particular should clearly articulate the goals of mentoring programmes and to highlight the ways in which they can directly impact mentee's achievement.*

KEYWORDS: Mentoring, Mentees, Assistant lecturers, Lecturers

INTRODUCTION

Any newly recruit into any establishment has lots of concerns when they first enter the field of work, regardless of how well prepared they are and the certificate they hold. This is a major transitional period in an individual's life. According to Eisenman & Thornton, (1999), during this period, beginning teachers are unsure of their skills in classroom management, planning, finding classroom resources, time management, working with co-workers, and dealing with family. According to Gilles, Wilson, & Elias (2010), teachers go through three stages of concerns during their induction period. The first stage, which is the survival stage, beginning teachers struggle with personal and professional competence, their apprehensions include ineffective classroom management, student and peer acceptance and doubt of their teaching capabilities. In the next stage (mastery) beginning teachers' concerns are more situational and these include skill mastery, teaching methods and classroom resources. The final stage (impact), the teachers concerns shift fully to how they are affecting their students and their own personal growth.

Fourie and Alt, (2000, p.20), assert that in educational institutions today, educators have to compete not only with the demands of teaching, but also with the administration and management of new curriculum systems with new structures and processes of governance and management such as quality assurance. Since educators are expected to adapt to these

realities, it implies they will need to acquire additional knowledge and skills that will enable them to meet the expectations of the institutions in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Regardless of the length and time they have been in a teaching profession, educators need a someone who can listen to their needs, concerns and fears, a person who can keep them up to date with knowledge and skills, someone to keep them up with changes occurring in their profession(Fourie &Alt, 2000).

It may be based on these assumptions that many higher institutions of learning assign newly recruits to a more senior and experienced member who acts as mentors. In the case of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), once a lecturer/ assistant lecturer is appointed, his/ her appointment letter states clearly the name of the mentor. One basic role of the mentor is to recommend mentees for confirmation and promotion when necessary. All things being equal, one can assume that the specified roles of mentorship may be carried out by the mentors before they can make adequate judgment of their mentees as mandated by the University, but to what extent are these roles carried out, what are the modalities in carrying out mentorship roles, what are the expectations of mentees of their mentors, how beneficial has the mentoring system been to mentees, how mentees view or perceive the supposed roles of their mentors is the subject of our discussion.

Statement of the problem

Institutions are becoming aware that dynamics at the work force is changing at a fast rate with daily changes in science and technology. Undoubtedly, there is pressure on educators for accountability and performance appraisal coupled with the introduction of new instructional materials and methodology. The newly recruited teacher is suppose among other things to teach, participate in research and extension services and also think of his or her own progression. There is therefore the need to balance teaching, research and extension activities such that professional progression is not sacrificed.

These issues and more probably informed administrators of UCC of the need to assign newly recruited senior members to more experienced members. However, Bess (2000) argues that only few faculty members are psychologically ready to engage in all the roles assigned to them. In the light of this, the study intends to investigate how mentees (assistant/lecturers) perceive the mentoring system in the University of Cape Coast and or how their mentors have influenced their career.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to evaluate mentees perception of mentorship. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify mentees perceptions on future mentorship
- Examine the roles of mentors in the mentoring process
- Explore the differences in mentees' perception of the roles of mentors across socio-demographic characteristics(sex)

Research questions

The research questions guiding the study include the following:

- What are mentees' perceptions on future mentorship?
- What are the roles of mentors in mentoring?

- How does mentees' perception of the roles of mentors vary across socio-demographic characteristics (sex)?

Significance of the study

Lots of researchers are of the view that mentoring is a channel for human and professional development (Hine, 2008; Hall, 2006). It is therefore hoped that findings from this study will assist university administrators to formulate new policies which will help improve and strengthen the mentoring system in the University of Cape Coast.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mentoring what it is, its relationships and functions

Society expects educators to continuously acquire new knowledge and skill to keep up with the changes that are occurring within their educational institutions. Educators are being challenged to change from what is viewed as traditional ways of teaching techniques to a modern way (Day, 1997; Hine, 2008p.9). The teacher in this century is expected to be more of a facilitator and a guide rather than to encourage the lecture method. The ability of the educators to meet all the societal and organizational expectations depends on the professional orientation that each individual educator possesses Bess (2000). It is a fact that not all educators will readily have the knowledge and skills demanded by the new curriculum systems implemented by the institutions. Bess (2000) is of the view that definitely there will be some educators especially the newly recruits who may lack the experience necessary to perform to the standard required by the institutions. Day (1997) believes that, educators have the option to use the resources that are readily available to them such as the more experienced colleagues. It is possible that the more experienced colleagues will share their knowledge and experience with the less experienced ones and this could be done through mentorship.

An examination of mentoring conceptualizations in organizational settings supports literature that suggests that there is a wide degree of variance in the concept thus prompting numerous definitions. Merriam (1983) posited that "Mentoring appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people and, a third thing to those in academic settings" (p. 169). Though operational definitions of mentoring vary from programme to programme, it is generally considered to be a relationship where a person with greater experience supports a person with less (Hall, 2006). For us in teaching, we will look at the definition from the perspective of higher education. Anderson (1988) presents one clearest definition in the academic setting, stating that mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person serving as a role model teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and or personal development.

This definition by Anderson is embedded in the historical meaning of mentoring, as presented in the Greek story where Odysseus entrusted the care and education of his child to a friend named Mentor while the father was away on his adventures. This Greek mythology suggests mentoring connoted a variety of relationships. Some of its synonyms include role model, coach, guide, sponsor, friend, and advisor. History is full with examples of such relationships: Socrates and Plato, Freud and Jung, Haydn and Beethoven, Hoad and Mead, Sartre and de Beauvoir (Jeruchim & Shapiro, 1992).

Cummings and Worley (2005) believe that mentoring is a powerful individual development intervention that can be used as a means of assisting and guiding educators to work closely with new educators, guiding them through their first year in the profession. Nicholls (2002) on the other hand, explains that mentoring is a practice that can facilitate professional development and create change. He believes that because knowledge is dynamic in an ever changing educational arena, it can never be complete. It is therefore important that mentoring opportunities are made available to all educators within the institutions whether a person is new, mid career or veteran.

There is widespread agreement that mentoring in general is helpful for a variety of purposes and in a number of contexts. For example, mentoring is considered to be one of the best methods to increase self-esteem in young people (Buell, 2004). With regard to adults, mentoring has proven to be an important part of business culture, through senior executives or management assisting with the development of junior employees. In a survey of the 150 largest companies in America, 57 percent of executives responded that mentoring was “extremely important” while another 39% said it was “somewhat important” (Buell, 2004).

While there is a great deal of research being conducted regarding mentoring in the business world, there are comparatively fewer studies on the mentoring of university and college faculty. Some suggest this lack of research may be due to the fact that university or college administrators in general might consider mentoring as unimportant or unwarranted (Sullivan & de Janasz 2004). The researchers further argue that there may be an assumption that most faculties are already prepared for their careers due to extensive research in their field and because of their existing relationship with dissertation or theses advisors. It is assumed that these advisors took on the role of a mentor during the new faculty member’s pursuit of their graduate degree and as a result some university administrators may feel a new faculty member’s training is complete.

In education, mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning or new teacher. It is generally accepted that a mentor leads, guides and advises another teacher more junior in experience in a work situation characterized by mutual trust and belief. Typically, mentoring programmes pair novice teachers with more experienced teachers who can ably explain school policies, regulations and procedures; share methods, materials and other resources, help solve problems in teaching and learning, provide personal and professional support; and guide the growth of the new teacher through reflection, collaboration, and shared inquiry (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992).

According to Kram (1983), mentoring is a relationship between an experienced employee and an understudy where the experienced employee acts as a role model and provides support and direction to the protégé. Kram’s (1988) influential work on mentoring in higher education helped lay the foundation for defining the phases of the mentoring relationship. These phases are: initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. The mentorship phase during the initiation stage is when roles are clarified for both the mentor and the mentee. During the cultivation stage, the mentor and mentee learn more about each other’s capabilities and begin to maximize in the functions of mentoring. Here, optimal learning occurs and developmental needs are met. But this intensity may wane off as the mentee gains confidence and new knowledge which leads to the next stage which is separation. At this stage, the functions provided by the mentor decreases and the mentee become more independent. At the

redefinition stage, a lasting friendship evolves to one of informal contact. Here, mentorship becomes more peer-like friendship, but the mentor may still continue to offer support when necessary (Kram, 1988).

Head, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) believe that mentoring “can make a difference for teachers, but it needs to be real mentoring complete with its complexity in process and function.” Freedman (1993) reports that the most frequently mentioned characteristic of effective mentors is a willingness to nurture another person. Therefore, individuals recruited as mentors should be people-oriented, open minded, flexible, empathetic, and collaborative.

With this understanding, mentoring is assuming national importance as a vital and essential component in the personal, educational, and professional experiences of newly recruit in higher institutions. It has been suggested that there are themes imbedded in the concept of mentoring. Golian and Galbraith (1996) identified the following set of common themes that suggest mentoring is a process within a contextual setting; involves a relationship between a more knowledgeable and experienced (perhaps older) individual and a less experienced individual, provides professional networking, counselling, guiding, instructing, modelling, and sponsoring; is a developmental mechanism (personal, professional, and psychological); is a social and reciprocal relationship; and provides an identity transformation for both mentor and protégé. The researchers acknowledge that numerous definitions do not recognize the essence of a good mentoring relationship, such as the necessity of a reciprocal and developmental process for both the mentor and mentee. Effective mentoring holds great promise to enhance the teaching and learning process. A major element to that success is the mentor’s ability to practice effective mentorship. This therefore suggests that a good mentor should have an in-depth knowledge of the system, work ethics and overall vision of the department, faculty and the university as a whole. A review of literature suggest that listening skills, questioning techniques, the mentor having strong inter- personal skills, strong supervisory skills, interested in another person’s development and a person who is easily approachable and the ability to provide construct feedback are important attributes that a good mentor should possess (Fibkins& Dreher,2007). What is to be noted is that, the mentoring relationship is such that at the end of the day certain essential services such as role modeling, teaching, resource person, should be provided. In the educational setting, the mentor is expected to guide the mentee to develop competencies in teaching, research and extension work, publication and general professional development. These services can be provided through coaching, training, observation, discussions, counselling and demonstration. The mentor will therefore need the aforementioned skills to be able to carry out the services successfully (Clutterbuck, 2004).

The literature makes a distinction between two forms of mentoring activities: formal and informal. Clutterbuck argues that formal mentoring involves a structured programme in which mentoring relationships are established and supported (2004, p. 27). In contrast, informal mentoring is viewed by Gray (1985, p. 15) as coincidence. Clutterbuck asserts that formal mentoring is far more effective than informal mentoring, although most academics, particularly in the USA, suggest the opposite (2004, p. 27); so, there is an on-going debate and a clash between scientific studies and the experiences of practitioners.

The Impact of Mentoring

Ryan (1986) says beginning teachers are beset with problems, some known and others as a result of either the beginner’s characteristics or the school environment. The author suggests

finding an older experienced teacher who: is willing to help, can act as a guide, can be a resource, and trusted confidant to assist the novice in coping with the trials and tribulations of being a beginning teacher would be much valuable. Huffman and Leak (1986) state that a beginner is many times expected to perform the same tasks and duties as the seasoned veteran, but without orientation or guidelines. How do we expect the beginning teacher to fulfil the goals of the institutions? Research has indicated that mentoring is beneficial to the mentor, the mentee and the institution as a whole (Marshall Egan & Song, 2008; Hezlett 2005, Geber, 2003). According to these researchers some of the personal benefits that accrue to mentees from mentoring are: increased in self esteem, self respect and self confidence. These attributes can assist the mentee to develop greatest determination and motivation to succeed.

Undoubtedly, mentoring helps the mentee to gain access to the mentor's accumulated knowledge and expertise and this will help the mentee to be more efficient in life and at work. Studies also indicates that, mentoring assist mentees in acquiring such skills as technical, interpersonal, time management and self organizational skills. These skills will ultimately provide the mentee with greater independence in terms of increased decision making, planning and problem solving skills. On the part of the mentors, mentoring provides an opportunity for the mentor to share their professional knowledge and skills with mentees. This provides mentors the satisfaction that they have been able to impact their wisdom and expertise to others. Organisational commitment is an important issue in good mentorship. Mentorship enhances an individual's psychological state that increases his/her relationship with an organisation and has implications for the decision to continue membership of the organisation.

Evidence from the literature shows that mentoring programmes helps newly appointed teachers to become better practitioners; learn school procedures and policies as well as classroom management strategies. Moreover, student learning is enhanced as a result of teacher development. One of the common themes in education today concerns teacher accountability, for the newly recruited teacher to be accountable to stakeholders, one of the surest way is through effective mentoring programmes. This implies careful planning, support in the form of well-designed mentoring programmes. Mentoring can play a critical role in frequently improving the professional knowledge and skills that teachers need to train and prepare students for the next century. However, to be effective, mentoring programmes must be developed taking into account the complexity, process and function of the programmes (Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes & Garret-Harrison, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for the study was a descriptive design (non-experimental) since it does not allow for any manipulation of the key variables. A descriptive design describes and interprets what exists. Creswell (2003) asserts that descriptive study design is concerned with conditions or interrelationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are clear and trends that are developing. The descriptive design was considered suitable for this research because the objectives of the study were basically to identify mentees perceptions on future mentorship, examine the roles of mentors in the mentoring process and explore mentees' perception of the roles of mentors in general.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire method of data collection was employed to collect the data from all teaching staff of the University of Cape Coast for the period of 2nd February 2008 to July 15th 2013. Basically, the questionnaire was solely closed ended questions designed with a response set using a five point Likert Scale of (1=Strongly agree - 5= Strongly disagree) and divided into various modules to address specific issues in the study. Twumasi (2001) is of the view that for efficiency in collecting statistically quantifiable information in the social science, questionnaires are the best. Moreover, this method was adopted based on the assumption that most of the teaching staff can read and write in the English language and also to keep with the tenets of quantitative research which stresses objectivity. In addition, the questionnaire technique afforded respondents the necessary flexibility required to enable them answer the questions at their own convenience.

The questionnaire was pretested on 20 teaching staff of the University of Education, Winneba in March, 2013. This was of essence because there was the need to ascertain clarity and internal validity of the questionnaire. The internal validity of the instrument stood at a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.89. Again, it afforded the researcher an opportunity to do away with irrelevant or improperly worded questions which could affect the content validity of the main data. Further, it provided insight on likely difficulties that may arise in the data collection process.

Sampling Method and Techniques

The sampling technique employed in the study was the convenience sampling technique, a non-probabilistic method. This was so because of the absence of a sample frame Again, Depoy and Gitlin (1998) stated that purposive sampling is normally employed when the target population is known because it consists of people with special knowledge and characteristics. From the foregoing, it is therefore not out of place in this instance to have used purposive sampling.

Data analysis

Out of a total of 160 questionnaires that were filled by the respondents, 150 questionnaires (94.0% response rate) were found useful for analysis. Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) assert that the issue of how large a sample size should be is unanswered and debatable. They are of the opinion that based on a large sample distribution theory; reliable estimates can be obtained from sample between 100-150 respondents. The data was analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 17. The data was first coded and entered into the SPSS software for analysis. The data was carefully edited (cleaned) to remove all outliers or extreme values which could have affected the validity of the results. Two major statistical tools were used in analysing the data. Basic descriptive statistics using the mean scores was used to measure the distribution of the responses. Standard linear regression and inferential statistics were used to examine the predictors of mentees overall perception of mentoring.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table 1 presents the results on the socio-demographic characteristics of mentees captured in the study. More males (74.7%) than females (25.3%) participated in the study. About two thirds (66.0%) of them were within the age cohorts of (30-39) and the least (2.7%) were those

between the ages of 20-29 years. Substantial proportions (76.7%) of them were married and had attained Masters of Philosophy as their academic qualification (59.3%).

Table 1: Respondents socio-demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	112	74.7
Female	38	25.3
Age		
20-29	4	2.7
30-39	99	66.0
40-49	47	31.3
Marital status		
Married	115	76.7
Singles	35	23.3
Academic qualification		
Ph.D	34	22.7
M.phil	89	59.3
Msc	27	18.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The first objective of this study was to identify the various roles of mentors in mentoring. Descriptive statistics involving frequency in terms of the percentage in agreement, mean, standard deviation, and standard error were used to analysis respondents' perceptions on the roles of mentors. Table 2 presents summary of the results.

Table 2: Mentees perception of role of mentors in mentoring

Roles of mentors	N	Percentage in agreement	Mean	Standard deviation
Encourages mentee on educational opportunities and career growth	150	74.0	1.91	0.93
Provides ongoing support about the work of mentee	150	65.9	2.17	0.92
Mentor shares personal examples of difficulties overcame to accomplish career goals	150	61.6	2.18	0.99
Encourages mentees to use him/her as a springboard to explore ambitions	150	55.3	2.36	1.01
Makes time for mentees personal concerns	150	67.0	3.00	0.97
Guiding mentee through a realistic appraisal of skills	150	51.1	2.47	1.00
Provides practical suggestions for improving mentees career	150	69.2	2.18	0.79
Serves as a role model on successful job performance of mentee	150	78.7	1.88	0.93

On the overall, respondents acknowledged that mentors play some roles in the mentoring system (Mean=2.28). Specifically, they agreed to issues such as mentors encouraging

mentees on educational opportunities and career growth (Mean = 1.91), provides ongoing support about the work of mentees (Mean = 2.17), mentors shares personal examples of difficulties they overcame to accomplish their career goals (Mean = 2.18) and serves as role model on successful job performance of mentees (Mean = 1.88). More importantly, respondents acknowledged that mentors provided practical suggestions for improving their career (Mean= 2.18). On the contrary, the study established that mentors did not encourage mentees to discuss personal concerns (Mean = 3.00).

Source: Fieldwork, 2013.

Predictors of mentees overall perception of mentoring

A mentoring system is either perceived to be good or otherwise. One of the objectives of this paper was to examine the predictors of mentees' overall perception of mentoring. Standard Multiple Linear Regression was employed in the analysis. The independent variables included: mentees' sex and age, rank of mentor, roles of mentor and outcome of mentoring whereas the mentees' overall perception of mentoring served as the outcome variable. However, before using the tool, assumptions of regression analysis namely; normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were inspected to ensure that they are not violated. The independent variables correlated with the dependent variable at correlation coefficient of (0.60 to 0.88). Inter- item correlations among the independent variables were moderate with the maximum been 0.35, so all the causal variables were retained for further analysis following Pallants' (2002) recommendation that correlation of less than 0.7 is considered appropriate. The sample size of 150 respondents was also considered satisfactory (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The output is presented on Table 2

Table 3: Predictors of mentees overall perception of mentoring

Variables	Beta	t-value	P-value	Tolerance	VIF
Sex of the mentee	0.156	1.845	0.067	0.697	1.414
Age of the mentee	0.064	0.348	0.728	0.944	1.059
Rank of the mentor	0.156	1.928	0.056	0.707	1.414
Roles of the mentor	0.364	2.036	0.000*	0.734	1.363
Outcome of mentoring	0.246	3.079	0.002*	0.730	1.369

**sig.* ≤ 0.05, *R square*=0.57, *Adjusted R square*=0.58, *F value*=14.26, *overall p- value*=0.00

On the overall, the model significantly explained 57.0% of the variance in mentees' overall perception of mentoring. Despite the significant prediction of the model to the phenomenon of mentees perception, not all the variables proved to be significant. Two out of the four variables proved satisfactorily. The most influential element was 'roles of the mentor' (B = 0.36, p = 0.00) followed by outcome of mentoring (B = 0.24, p = 0.00)

Mentees perceptions on future mentoring

As regards mentees perceptions about future mentoring, more than half (56.5%, Mean = 2.60) of the mentees had some concerns about future mentoring. About two thirds of the respondents (65.9%, Mean = 2.38) agreed that mentoring issues should be considered during promotions (Table 4).

Table 4: Mentees perceptions on future mentoring

Perceptual views	N	% in agreement	Mean	Standard deviation
Mentoring issues should be considered during promotions	150	65.9	2.38	1.24
There should be a report on mentoring quarterly	150	63.8	2.26	1.11
Mentees should participate in choosing their mentors	150	60.6	2.42	1.41
Number of years of mentoring should be extended	150	60.6	2.42	1.41
Mentees should be rotated	150	20.2	3.80	1.29
There is more room for improvement on the roles of mentors	150	68.0	2.44	1.24
Overall concerns	150	56.5	2.60	1.28

**Based on a scale of 1-5; 1-strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=disagree and 5=strongly disagree*

Source: Fieldwork, 2013.

Again, mentees were of the view that there should be a report on mentoring quarterly (Mean = 2.26), mentees should participate in choosing their mentors (Mean = 2.42) and that there is more room for improvement on the roles of mentors (Mean = 2.44). Nonetheless, respondent disagreed on the issue of rotating mentees (Mean = 3.80).

DISCUSSION

Naturally mentors are supposed to play certain roles in the mentoring system. Respondents' indication that mentors encourage their mentees on educational opportunities and career growth is not out of place. This notion is supported by Ryan (1986) who advocates that beginning teachers are beset with problems therefore they need expert advice to be able to cope with the trials of being a beginning teacher. One of the roles of mentors is to assist mentees in climbing up the academic ladder through acquiring higher skills and competencies. This they do through sharing methods of teaching, experiences and advices regarding publications, seminars and other academic development programmes. They share personal examples of challenges encountered and how they rose amidst those difficulties to accomplish their career goals (Buell, 2004).

The general notion is that as guardians they are supposed to coach them appropriately within the assigned period so that they will fit well in the academic system. However, respondents stated that mentors hardly made time for their personal concerns. Past research on mentorship has demonstrated that when individuals from different groups increase their contact with each other, even if within limited conditions, more positive effect can result (Allport, 1979). In this study, it was found that the amount of time that mentors and mentees spend together was very minimal. Dreher and Ash (1990) are of the view that psychosocial support is important in mentoring because it is intended to facilitate feelings of competence and includes serving as a friend and counsellor by providing positive regard and acceptance.

On the contrary, respondents' disagreement that their mentors do not make time for their personal concerns is expected. The assumption maybe that since personal concerns of mentees are to some extent their secrets, mentors are remaining silent on such roles as it may be tantamount to digging the concealed.

The results of the regression model that point to 'rank of the mentor' and the 'outcome of mentoring' being significant in predicting mentee overall perception of mentorship suggest that each factor independently of the other influences how they perceive mentoring. Rank of a mentor denotes his or her academic attainment, position in the organisation, achievements and level of influence. Anecdotal evidence has it that rank of a mentor defines the extent to which he or she can influence and impart the mentee. Therefore, as the case maybe, mentees overall perception of the mentoring system will depend on the rank of the person they are assigned to. This suggests that as to whether a mentee will perceive mentoring as effective or not depends on the qualification of the mentor (Hezlett 2005).

Outcomes are the manifestations of the mentoring process or the results of mentoring. This indicates whether mentees have been impacted by mentors or the mentoring process (Pagalis, Green & Baucer, 2006). It also encompasses the organisational benefits from the mentoring system. DuBois and Karcher (2002) assert that in the vast literature there is consensus that mentoring is associated with a wide variety of good outcomes for protégés ranging from improvement in academic adjustment and retention to career development. Therefore, mentees usually hold the view that mentoring systems that daunts negative outcomes and encourage positive behaviours are perceived as effective mentoring likewise if observed to promote unhelpful results; it is judged as a bad mentoring system. Outcomes may also be linked to the ability of mentoring to meet mentees expectations thus their subsequent overall views about the system.

Respondents request that future mentoring should incorporate quarterly reporting is seen as a step in the right direction. This is to say that it will serve as an evaluation process to assess the degree to which the mentoring programme was implemented and operated as planned. Perhaps, this will enable management to determine whether the intended objectives of mentoring have been achieved or not, where there are deviations, corrective adjustments made, consequently putting both the mentor and mentee on track. Participation of mentees in choosing their mentors will give them a sense of ownership and belonging. When mentees are involved in choosing their own mentors it will help them identify mentors they can work with thereby contributing to a fruitful mentee-mentor relationship (Jacobi (1991).

On the contrary, it may also be argued that, it can create sidelining of certain senior members leading to tension. The request by mentees that the number of years of mentoring should be extended is explainable that the current one to two year period of mentoring may not be sufficient for any affective impact of mentorship to be made. According to Martin (2002, p. 129), the most neglected characteristic of a mentoring relationship is the failure to adequately support the prospective mentor with the skills necessary to be an effective mentor. Nevertheless, the extension may also lead to delay tactics on the part of mentors in executing their expected roles since they might assume they have enough time at hand and thus affecting the quick growth and development of mentees.

Rotation of mentees would afford them opportunity to learn multiple, varied professional and personal development knowledge, skills and abilities from the different mentors they will come into contact with unlike if modeled by just an individual. However, mentees disagreed with the idea of rotation during the mentoring process.

CONCLUSION

The review of literature suggests that mentoring is a viable policy options in education and as mentoring programmes continue to be developed and refined, it is important to acknowledge the many challenges to forging and sustaining productive mentor/ mentee relationships. According to Daresh (2004), collaboration between veteran and new or aspiring leaders can promote an environment that is conducive to high levels of student achievement. To achieve these benefits, mentoring programmes need to pragmatically address the pressures of accountability and the need for institutions of higher learning to design elements that can sustain meaningful and mutually beneficial mentoring experiences in their institutions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

Although this was a small study, the findings have implications for universities with mentoring programmes. It was clear that the mentoring relationship was valued by mentees in this study despite the perceived idea that mentors hardly made time for their mentees. It is important for UCC administrators to clearly articulate the goals of mentoring programmes and to highlight the ways in which they can directly impact mentees achievement. In the present high-stakes testing environment, many educators feel a need to focus only on issues and programmes that can affect student performance to the disadvantage of their own personal growth. Newly recruit need time to engage in authentic practices afforded them through mentoring to be able to cope with the demand of the institutions. The issue of time needed for staff development activities such as mentees orientation needs to be managed and creatively addressed by administrators and this requires strategic visioning and planning.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the importance of the findings, the study has a number of limitations. First of all, the data did not show whether certain personal characteristics of mentees (e.g. an open-minded approach or their attitude to change) had an impact on mentoring in general. In addition, only the mentee's side of the story was considered, it did not take into consideration mentors views. Similarly, nothing is known of the mentor's expertise, availability and consent. Lastly, although UCC started formal mentorship since 2006, only members recruited between 2008-2013 were used in this study.

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