

# **Mentoring as a competency Tool for the Development of The University Teaching Staff- A Case Study of Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined Mentoring as a competency tool for the development of the University teaching staff using Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko as a case study. A cross sectional survey of all the faculties was carried-out with a sample size of 100. The sampling technique is purposive sample. The data analyzed is from 80 respondents and out of this, professors, readers and senior lecturer constitute 32(40%) respondents, which we referred to as Older Adults, and others constitute 48(60%), which we referred to as younger Adults. The study found that the commitment, enthusiasm and generosity of those involved is a task that must be common to all the teaching staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. This paper strongly advocate for mentoring program and policies in the University systems as a means of building a new generation of academics and responsible leader of tomorrow.

**Keyword:** Mentoring, Role-Modelling, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Mentoring occurs in a variety of context and for a variety of purposes. Some programmes are designed to develop specific discipline related knowledge or skills, while others may use the mentoring relationship to assist the young person to develop career aspirations or general life skills and social support. Such different purposes may determine the most appropriate characteristics of the mentor, the programmed organisation or the structure. The literature on mentoring suggests who is a mentor. A mentor may be a guide, a friend, a listener, a peer leader, confidant, and a teacher. A mentor could be just about anyone with the patient, time and energy to empathize with and assist a young person.

As it may not be possible to provide mentors for everyone some selection must be made. The goals of the programme will determine the selection criteria. (Farmer, 1999). In the university setting particularly for academic programs, the goal of mentoring is to improve the teaching

skill and the research skill of the staff. However, improvement in this area requires constant training and updating of oneself. This is how a competency of the staff could be ascertained.

### **Relevant Literature**

Mentoring is not a new concept. It has existed in various forms throughout man's history. Indeed, the word to mentor derives its origin from Greek mythology of folklore. The term mentor originated in Homer's the odyssey, preparing to go to battle in the Trojan War, entrusted to his friend mentor, the charge of his son, Telemachus and the friend took proper care and management of the son's care. Mentor responsibility went beyond that son's life; it includes physical, intellectual, spiritual, social and administrative development of Tellemachus. Mentor even went further and facilitated Telemachus ability to think and act for himself. The success of this action of Homer becomes the beginning of and what is referred to as mentoring. (Cited by Crow and Mathew 1988 pg 2).

It is clear from above that mentoring is more than teaching since it goes beyond intellectual development, Daniel (2000) defines mentoring as holistic approach and avenue for personnel development. Allesila (1998) looks at mentoring as an adviser, a tutor, a supervisor, a sponsor and role model. Fadola (1995) see mentoring in the human resource perspective as a process of using specially selected training individuals to provide guidance and advise that will help develop careers of the protege or mentee allocated to them. According to Clutterback and Sireency. (1997), a mentor is commonly described as a friend or guide who is responsible for overseeing the career development of another person outside the normal managers/subordinate relationship. Maccallum and Beltman (1999) argues that most of the definition on mentoring are virtually thought as classic definition where an unrelated adult focuses on responsibility for socializing youth above and beyond the extent normally required by their social role where a of commitment and involvement are shown.

Mentoring generally refers to a relationship established between a young person and one who is older that lasts overtime and is focused primarily on the developmental need of the younger individual (Guetzloe 1997). A mentor functions while at the same time, introducing new and often contradictory ideas and helping the protégé develop a positive sense of the future (Pascarelli 1998). A mentor seeks to help navigate through everyday challenges of school, society and community by drawing upon himself a greater knowledge and experience and genuine concern for the youth. (Lauland 1988). A mentor, most of the time serve as a teacher, sponsor, role model, confidant and more. (Little 1990).

For public service, a mentoring relationship is characterized by an experienced public servant (the mentor) taking an active role in the mentee development through offering guidance, support and advise (Martin, 1997). All the definitions above provide the dilemma for mentoring research since it presents different types of meanings to mentoring. Also, mentoring in the field of higher education, management/ organizational behavior and psychology agrees with the definition diversity that plagues mentoring research because it ascribes different roles or function to the mentor. (Jacob 1991).

Jacobs, however identifies fifteen roles of mentors such as acceptance, socialization, challenge, protection, advocacy, coaching and instruction and to stimulate acquisition of knowledge. He postulated three components of mentoring as below:

Emotional and social support,

Direct assistant with career and professional development,

Role modeling.

Researches on mentoring reveals two basic aspects of mentoring. The “training aspect” which is discipline oriented focusing on the development of people as a teacher, administrator or managers. This model promotes efficiency and effectiveness as appropriate mentoring outcomes. The second is the “people centered model”. This focuses on personnel development as the primary objective of mentoring. This model promotes self-awareness and personal direction as the primary purpose of mentoring. (Hurt 2000). The main objective of this paper is to develop a framework for good mentoring programmes in the university system particularly for the junior teaching staff. To evaluate the practice that can cumulate to formal mentoring programmes for the university teaching staff, that is a requirement for starting mentoring programmed in the university system.

### **Why Mentoring**

The rationale behind mentoring in business and higher education is that a talented younger person can be guided and extended by a mentor with the relevant expertise. A recent and compelling argument concerns changes in western society, which is seen as impacting negatively on the relationship available to young people, in particular adolescence. In general, parents are the center or source of emotional, financial and social support for their children. Students who are successful academically or in business have support from parents and teachers as well as sustained access to other knowledgeable and caring adults (Lauland 1998). Recent society changes in families and communities have eroded this network of supportive adults. Fewer people know their neighbor, single parents now heads more household, and lastly we have time pressures. Current pressure of rate of poverty, divorce, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, violence and stress compound the situation. The situation for adolescence appears even more crucial. In 1990, 15.6% of crimes in the USA were perpetrated by 14-17 years old (Dondero 1997). Even in Nigeria, the percentage is higher. Young people are aware and uncomfortable. The older people seemed threatened by their presence in the street. If care is not taken, all rich men in Nigeria would not be able to drive safely on the streets because of the increasing crime rate.

It must be noted that many young people can identify adults who are important to them (Hamilton & Daring). This suggested number of factors culminating to the increased importance of the role of non-parental adults in mentoring role during adolescence.

Positive relationships are powerful in assisting youths in potentially disadvantaged situations in the development of resilient qualities such as having healthy, non-violent relationships, a positive outlook, high self-esteem, strong problem-solving skills and sense of humor (Bein 1999).

Pascarella (1998) claim that today's youths live cravings for belongingness, connectedness and this points to the need for some significant others to guide, support, coach and in some cases simply to physically attend to them, Freedman (1995) suggests that mentoring springs from the fundamental insight that adults in our society are not spending enough time with kids (p.271). Warner, 1996 cited in Laulad, 1998 suggest that the number of young people in USA who could benefit from a mentor is estimated ranging from fourteen to fifteen million.

Bora and Philips (1984) asserted that as society becomes increasingly older, the fulfillment and satisfaction of the older generation are becoming correspondingly greater concerns. Mentorship is one way in which older adults may realize the significance of their lives and professional contributions. Dondero 1997 maintains that senior citizens make excellent mentors because they have abundant life experience and the time to devote to the programme.

**Mentoring Functions**

Jacobs (1991) identified four theoretical perspectives underlying the different mentoring functions. These perspectives and the corresponding mentoring components are learning (characterized by direct assistance) academic and social integration (emotional support), social support (direct assistance as emotional support) and social and cognitive development (role modeling). With the role modeling function, social learning theories have distinguished between “expert” and coping models. However, the mentoring components above are emotional support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and roles model. Some mentoring evolves almost by serendipity. However, organizations, particularly university system, considering mentoring programs need to clarify their goals and expectations before putting together their mentoring plans. They can also seek access to other who has been involved in the program. Many higher institutions have developed and researched well mentoring programs; the ones we have access to are U.C David’s, school and Bristol business school all in Europe.

The programme of mentoring is built on trust and respect, therefore, mentoring program implementation need to reflect these qualities of trust and respect (Olorunleke and Dabiri 2006). It is in the light of the above that we are interested in the mentoring programs in the university system since it will affect the competences in the system.

**Methodology**

The population surveyed consists of all academic staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. A cross sectional survey of all the faculties was carried-out. A sample size of 100 questionnaires was distributed, only 80 responded. The sampling technique is purposive sample. Efforts were made to ensure adequate representativeness as no class of lecturer was neglected. Four-research assistant, mainly drawn from the final year student (2013) of Business Administration department of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko was trained and allocated to each faculty. Primary data were used in this survey and the research instrument was questionnaire. The questionnaires are administered to professor, readers and senior lecturer, lecturer 1, lecturer 11, Assistant Lecturer and graduate assistants. The questionnaires were highly structured , open ended and distributed by hand. The questionnaire seeks to find out the practices that can cumulate to mentoring practices in Adekunle Ajasin University. A frequency distribution and simple percentage was used for the analysis to explain the responses of both the matured lectures (Old adults) as well as the starters (young adults). With the aim of finding out what is the position of mentoring in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko and what could cumulate to mentor practices in the institution.

**Analysis**

The data analyzed is from 80 respondents and out of this, professors, readers and senior lecturer constitute 32(40%) respondents, which we referred to as Older Adults, and others constitute 48(60%), which we referred to as younger Adults.

As observed above, mentoring relates to the relationship between older and younger adult. This is why the study first looks at age and academic positions to be able to separate the older and the younger adults as below

**Table 1**

Age \ Academic position	21-30 Frequency (Percentage)	31-40 Frequency (percentage)	41-50 Frequency (Percentage)	51-60 Frequency (Percentage)	60andabove Frequency (Percentage)
-Graduate assistant	2 (2.5)	6 (7.5)			
-Assistant Lecturer		9 (11.25)	4 (5)		
-Lecturer 11		8 (10)	9 (11.25)		
-Lecturer 1		6 (7.5)	6 (7.5)		
-Senior Lecturer			8 (10)	3 (3.75)	
-Readers			5 (8.25)	4 (5)	2 (2.5)
-Professors				5 (8.25)	3 (3.75)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The table above shows that both the age and academic position could be used for deciding the young (mentee) and older (mentor) adults when organizing mentoring programmes in the University system.

**Table II: Mentee-Mentor in Relationship**

	Younger Colleagues		Older Colleagues	
	Yes Frequency (Percentage)	No Frequency (Percentage)	Yes Frequency (Percentage)	No Frequency (Percentage)
Q. In your choosing profession, have you ever "benefited from/given" assistance to older/younger colleagues	21 (43.75)	3 (2.8)	13 (40.6)	3 (9.4)
Q. is anyone particularly interested in you	16 (33.33)	8 (16.7)	9 (28.1)	7 (21.9)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 11 revealed that 21 or 43.75% young adults have benefitted in one way or the other from Relationships with an older colleague while 13 or 40.6% older colleagues have rendered assistance to the younger ones. Also 16 or 33.33% and 9 or 28.1% younger and older colleagues respectively revealed that someone is interested in their development. However, some have not given or benefited from any assistance to or from younger ones, we have 3 or 2.8% for young adults and 3 or 9.4% for older adults. We also have a high proportion of those who believe no one is interested in them, 8 or 16.7% for young adults and 7 or 21.9% for older adults.

Table III: type of Assistance in Relationship

Q. Type of assistance	Young Adults Frequency (Percentage)	Old Adults Frequency (Percentage)
-Financial related	3 (10.3)	4 (20)
-Work related	3 (10.30)	2 (10)
-Career related	11 (37.9)	8 (40)
-Family related	3 (10.3)	2 (10)
-Personal development	9 (31.03)	4 (20)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The above table revealed that the type of assistant expected in the university system for good mentoring and which is career related and personal; development. For young adults, 11 or 37.9% respondents have benefitted from career related assistances while 8 or 40% of the older adults have either given or benefitted from career related assistance. The next important assistance is Personal Development, which has 9 or 31% respondents for young adults and 4 or 20% respondents for Older Adults respectively. Others assistance is expected to be equally important and they are work related and family related with 3 or 10.3% each for young adults and 4 or 20% for financial related and 2 or 10% for work related and family related assistance for older adults.

Table IV: Career in Relationship

Q. How many junior/senior colleagues have picked interest in your career	Young Adults Frequency (Percentage)	Older Adults Frequency (Percentage)
-many	10 (20.8)	7 (29.16)
-Four people	7 (14.5)	5 (20.83)
-Two people	15 (31.23)	7 (29.16)
-one person	12 (25.0)	1 (4.16)
-Silent	4 (8.3)	4 (16.67)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

From table 3, we discover the importance of career and we probe further the number of people interested in other colleagues for career development. The interesting aspect is that some respondents are silent on this and this signifies that they don't have interest in another colleague for career development purpose. The important aspect of mentoring is the interest of both mentee and mentor which is absent for this category of respondents. Those who are silent are 4 or 8.3% for young adults and 4 or 13.67% older adults.

Table v: Work Motivated Factors

Q. What motivate you to work in the University	Frequency (Percentage)
-salary	6 (7)
-Environment	6 (7)
-Academic freedom	54 (67)
-Advice from teacher/parent/guidance	4 (5)
-The only option available	6 (7)
-Others	5 (6)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

### **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of the result will be done under the stakeholders in mentoring programmes, which include mentors, mentee and the coordinator, in other to see what improvement is necessary for the development of the programme in Adekunle Ajasin University. These we hope will answer the question of how you deals with issues relating to the selection and preparation of those involved in mentoring particularly as it concern the academic staff.

### **The Mentors**

From our questionnaire, we could recognized those we can categorize as a mentor and they include the professors and readers and senior Lecturers and those people constitute about 40% of our sample (32 respondents), (see table 1). These set of people are erudite scholars, well experienced beyond Adekunle Ajasin University, have seen more walls of the classroom (that is they have a degree not below that of doctorate degree) and most of the time they are matured with ages. However, the literarture (for example, Carunthors 1993, Faries (1999), Songsthagen and Lee (1996)] as quoted by Maccallum as Beltman (1999) suggest other characteristics of mentor as below:

See the mentee as a special person and be comfortable with possible extreme differences in background; Set high standards and instill in the mentee the confidence to meet those expectations; respect the individual ability and right to make his or her own choices in life; Empathize and understand another person's struggles rather than pity or judgment, see solutions as well as barriers; serve as friend, listener, role model, advocate, tutor, negotiator, sounding board supporters, critics as net workers, provide help support, guidance regarding skills and self-confidence; Share resources, experience and knowledge, observe confidentially show interest, mutual respect and affection use their communication skills to foster interaction in informal settings.

Looking at the above, the responses for the old adults about mentoring show that there are some interests shown to other junior adults. That is 60% (19 respondents) of the respondents have shown interest to their junior colleagues. Other old adults said they have show interest to many junior colleagues, 20% have shown interest to four or 16.67% while interest shown to two is by 7 respondents or 29.16% ad to only one person is by 1 respondents or 4.16% (table iv)

The statistics also revealed that 60% of the senior colleagues stated that some junior ones had shown interest in them (see table 11). The above revealed that it is easier to start mentoring in Adekunle Ajasin University once the senior colleague are ready and the junior own had shown interest. What is left is the administration of the programmed, which will be one of the focuses of this write-up. The interest shown will assist in working towards other characteristics of mentors.

### **Mentees**

In the questionnaire administered, we tried to find out what motivates the respondents generally. The results shows that; over 60(67%) were motivated to work in the University for academic freedom purposes, others reasons include salary 7%, environment 7%, advices 5%, the only options available 7%. From the above we see that the lecturers cherished their academics freedoms, but experiences had shown that this freedom affects work altitude, research attitude and even their personal life. This had caused a lot of problem for the administration of the university and the development of the staff concerned. These problems can be taken care of by mentoring. Also we have some old adults (16.67%) of teaching staff

that were silent on the issue of given assistance to any junior colleague. That observation do not agree with the common phrases used in the University, that is “we climb on each other shoulders”. We also have some junior colleagues 20% who claim not to have benefitted from any assistance from any senior colleagues, this calls for a great concern and mentoring is the most important tool to address this shortcomings. That willingness, as observed above, is very germane for the success of mentoring programme. To achieve this willingness and in preparing mentees, Laulad (1998) suggest that the mentee (teaching staff) might be included in the planning process with input asked for and used... Before the programs starts, participant should have the orientations that might include, the purpose of the programmed, some potential benefits for participants in the care requirement to progress in career, how to approach research opportunities and support from inside as well as from outside and which one to explore etc. the limit of the relationship. The mentee is (younger adults) own part in the relationship are that they must be willing, they must keep appointments, show respect for mentors and accept corrections and training from mentor, that is the younger adults in this case, in communication and problem solving.

### **Recommendations**

One of the most important components of mentoring programmes is the coordinator and this is deficient in areas where we lack formal mentoring programmes like Adekunle Ajasin University. In any case, we need to establish the position of a coordinator.

### **The Coordinator**

Through deficient in Adekunle Ajasin University, all mentoring programmes need coordinators; however, the person filling this role may vary with the focus of mentoring. The coordinator needs to be enthusiastic organized and have good skills. Any successful mentoring progress must have a coordinator as a team with a leader who, among others, is well respected in the community and has an establishment bane of support from the University management, He must understand the bureaucratic intricacies of dealing with realities, business and civic organisation. He should have have superior organisation and coordination skills, should have authority to make decisions on behalf of the University Management. For the team leader or coordinators to get support from the institutions and the community, its roles includes deciding on the purpose of programme formulating goals and objectives, allocation of funds, written roles description, appointment of program staff, responsibility to recruits, train and reward mentors. From the above; it is the responsibility of the university management to appoint coordinator or team and the team leader.

Furthermore, having look at the requirement for successful mentoring program in tertiary institutions as stated above in Nigeria, particularly as it affects Adekunle Ajasin University, the major recommendation of this paper are that Nigeria government should establish a mentoring program office as a department in the Ministry of Education and to saddle it with the task of coordinating and evaluating the program, as it is being done in advance country of USA, Australia and Israel among others. These programs should run from post secondary school to the tertiary level, which now include the university. Secondly research and development in mentoring field should invite the interest of research institutions, government department particularly university and ministry of education and individual research in human resources development for the purpose to building a greater tomorrow for the country. Lastly, a contusive atmosphere is needed for mentoring program and the university management should be responsible for this.

## **Conclusion**

As observed in the literature on mentoring, the commitment, enthusiasm and generosity of those involved is a task that must be common to all the teaching staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. This paper strongly advocates for mentoring program and policies in the University systems as a means of building a new generation of academics and responsible leader of tomorrow. More and more Nigeria are ageing and when they look back, will they feel successful that "they had build a replacement of themselves as academicians" this is a food for thought.

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