MENTORING AS A TOOL FOR CAREER AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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Abstract

Many organizations including the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Ghana emphasize mentoring programmes through their training and development efforts in order to enhance employee knowledge, skills and ability. The UDS is the only public University in Ghana that was established without being affiliated to an existing university. This situation greatly disadvantaged the institution in terms of its human resource capacity. The aim of this study was to investigate how mentoring might be strengthened to facilitate and augment the University's quest for qualified human resource. The descriptive survey making use of a questionnaire and key informant interview were used to collect data. Findings of the study revealed that informal mentoring is prevalent on all campuses of the University. It was also found that paucity of mentors, laxity of young employees to avail themselves for mentoring and disrespect are the major challenges impeding mentoring in the institution. The study concludes that formal mentoring should be strengthened to complement the informal mentoring which is already prevalent.

Introduction

Human beings have an inherent desire to achieve in all facets of life. Different organizations adopt different measures to ensure that employees perform. Organizations make use of in-service training and development together with arrangements that guide the development of individual members of staff internally or externally to help employees achieve. However, these sources of help often have common elements; they are provided formally and undertaken within a line management or supervisory structure (Kay & Hinds, 2009). Such formal training and development structures and programmes are intended to benefit both the individual and the organization and, for the most part, are delivered professionally by well-intended trainers, managers and supervisors.

Mentoring which is thought of as one of the most effective ways of helping people to progress in their careers is increasingly becoming popular as a powerful personal development and empowerment tool as its potential is being more realised. Mentoring, Ptolemey (2008) posits basically involves a passing on of skills from a mentor to a mentee and goes on to see it as a guidance process which also has an element of building a relationship. It is usually said to be a partnership between two people (mentor and mentee) normally working in a similar field or sharing similar experiences and it is based on mutual trust and respect (Parsloe, 2008).

Mentoring may be for a new employee or for a staff considered to have a high potential for achieving in a particular profession. The latter is more prevalent in many institutions and that is often what many people and organizations consider to be mentoring (Shaw, 2012). Mentoring is becoming increasingly popular because as Bello (2011) indicates, the mentoring process has such enormous and inexhaustible advantages or benefits that it can be explored in a variety of ways by many organizations. Mentoring, Bello (2011) further states is also significant because it facilitates knowledge transfer and skill acquisition.

The primary function of a mentoring relationship is to further the career of the mentee, but the person being mentored is not the only one who benefits from the relationship. Mentoring has been acknowledged to have numerous and enormous benefits for all involved – the mentor, the mentee or protégé as well as for the organization. Bello (2011) quoting (Ragins & Cotton, 1999) indicates that for mentees, the benefits may include increased professional opportunities and networks, access to power bases, growth of professional knowledge and skill development, career advancement and more effective, happier performers.

It is in recognition of the numerous benefits of mentoring in facilitating career development and growth of staff that the University for Development Studies' Centre for Continuing Education and Interdisciplinary Research developed a mentoring policy for the University. In the preamble to that policy, it is stated that there is the need for a clear-cut policy on mentoring so as to ensure the professional development of staff (UDS, CCEIR, 2012). Studies show that to achieve a successful mentoring programme, the organization must create a healthy organizational culture that enhances the growth and development of the programme (Race and Skees, 2010). Some key elements that must exist within the organization to sustain a mentoring programme include (1) a stable infrastructure, (2) managerial and executive support, (3) schedule flexibility, (4) incentives, and (5) recognition. Also, the goals, vision, values, morals, and ethics of the organization and that of the mentoring programme need to be aligned (Race and Skees, 2010). Undoubtedly, mentoring is becoming an important part of organizational development and practice today. It has become an important tool for growing the human resource of the organization.

The Study Area
The University for Development Studies was established in 1992 by the Provisional National Defence Council Law 279 (PNDC Law 279, 1992) (UDS Graduate School Handbook, 2011). It is one of nine public universities in Ghana and it runs a multi-campus system with campuses located in three of the 10 administrative regions of Ghana - Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions. UDS was set up with a clear mandate of blending the academic world with that of the community in order to provide constructive interactions between the two for the total development of Northern Ghana in particular and the country as a whole (PNDC Law 279, Section 2,1992).

Unlike other universities in Ghana, UDS operates a trimester system. Eight weeks of the third trimester is devoted solely for Field Practical Training (FPT) in the communities in the subjects taught. This FPT programme offers the students the opportunity to experience the actual work environment and real living conditions of the rural folk and to adapt to them.

The University has a faculty and staff strength of 1379; out of this number, 483 are senior Members (UDS, 2011).

The selection of UDS for the study is therefore based on the uniqueness of the institution with regards to its satellite

campuses, practically oriented programmes and the fact that the institution is relatively young and faces human resource challenges as compared to other public universities in Ghana.

Problem Situation

The University for Development Studies (UDS) is the only public university in Ghana which started without being affiliated to an existing university to mentor its growth and development. This has resulted in many challenges regarding its human resource development as the staff were largely recruited from either research institutes or directly from school after their graduate studies. Some of the staff could only boast of teaching assistantships and that posed and is still posing serious problems regarding the administration of departments and faculties (Dittoh, 2011).

The ratio of Professor/Senior Lecturer to Lecturer/Assistant Lecturer was very low. The situation worsened with time as the number of young staff increased while the number of older ones decreased due to retirement (Dittoh, 2011). Over 80% of all managerial staff in the University are above 50 years. This creates the potential for many vacant managerial positions due to retirement, which would exacerbate the current problem of Senior Members with the requisite qualification and experience to manage the institution in the next eight (8) to ten (10) years (UDS Personnel Statistics, 2012).

Apart from managerial positions, it is also common to find new and young staff occupying key areas without any experience or the requisite orientation or mentoring that they need to creditably perform their assigned responsibilities. Things are further aggravated by the total absence of mentoring programmes for these new and young staff of the University to guide their career advancement. It is in the light of the above that this study seeks to investigate whether mentoring could be used as a tool for career development to meet the human resource needs of the University.

Research Design

The survey method was used to conduct this study. Babbie (2010) posits that this method is probably the best method available to the social science researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing and measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population. The study adopted the mixed research method, making use of questionnaires and structured interviews.

Study Population/Sample

UDS was chosen as the study area; at the time of the study the staff strength of UDS stood at 1379, out of which 483 constituting 35% of the total staff are senior members. The study selected this category of staff because their professional advancement depends on their ability to combine teaching and research, and also carry out the core business activities of the institution and need developmental programmes that will help strengthen their skills and knowledge.

Sampling Techniques

This study adopted a mixed methodology, thus both quantitative and qualitative sampling styles were used. Babbie (2010) indicates that the sample would be a representative of the population only if it has some basic characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.

The study population is made up of strata in four different campuses; proportional allocation was used to determine the number of respondents per campus. A simple random sample was used to select respondents in each campus. Purposive sampling was used to select another group comprising Professors, Deans (Senior Faculty from each campus, Principal Officers from Management and Lecturer/equivalent constituting a total of ten

(10) for interview purposes. These people were selected because they form the mentors and mentees who need mentoring for professional development.

Sample Size

The sample unit of this study is the Senior Members from various campuses of the University. The sample size was determined through the use of a table by Sarantakos (2005). This table by Sarantakos 'calculates' sample sizes based on ranges of population sizes. A population of 480 gives a sample size of 214 which was used for this study.

Methods of Data Collection

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was chosen as one of the data collection tools for this study because the units of respondents were spread out in the three Northern Regions of Ghana, a questionnaire was selected so as to easily get to the respondents. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were asked.

Interview

Structured interviews were also conducted to complement the questionnaire and to deepen the research results. The category of persons interviewed included a cross section of senior members who have been mentors and mentees in one way or the other.

Techniques for Analysis and Presentation

The qualitative data was organized in themes using descriptive narratives to reflect opinions of respondents for analysis purposes. The quantitative data was analysed using frequency distribution and correlations based on data obtained from the administered questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel were used to process and summarize the data into statistical tables.

Research Question

Main Research Question
The main research question is: How might mentoring be strengthened to facilitate and augment the University's need for qualified and performing faculty and staff?

Sub-Research Questions
The main research question would be answered by finding answers to the following sub-questions;

    i.   What form of mentoring exists in the University for career development?

    ii. What are the impact/effects of existing mentoring processes of the University?

   iii. What are the challenges that militate against effective mentoring of university faculty and staff?

Research Objective

Main Objective

The main objective of the study is to investigate how mentoring might be strengthened to facilitate and augment the University's need for qualified and performing faculty and staff.

Sub - Objectives

- To investigate the form of mentoring that exists in the University
- To determine the impact/effect of existing mentoring of faculty and staff in the University.
- To investigate the challenges that impede effective mentoring in the University and to suggest recommendations.

Relevance of the Study

The motive of the study is to contribute to the formulation and implementation of a mentoring programme that would help the institution and like institutions in Africa to build competent and adequate staff to meet its human resource requirements. This study would therefore be relevant to the institution and staff who need support in order to advance their careers. Above all, it will extend the frontiers of knowledge on mentoring as a tool for career and human resource development as there is little or no literature on mentoring in Ghana.

Presentation and Analysis

The information is largely presented in a narrative form with statistical tables and graphs used to complement the issues highlighted.

Socio-Demographic Data Age Distribution

The information gathered bothered on the age distribution of respondents, sex grouping, academic qualification and work experience within and outside the university.

Table 1

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	% age
21 - 30	6	3.0
31 - 40	85	42.5
41 - 50	71	35.5
51 - 60	36	18.0
61+	2	1.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field data, 2012

Out of 200 respondents, 85 of them were between the ages of 31-40 representing 42.5% while 71 (35.5%) respondents were between 41-50 years. Only 18% were aged 51-60 while respondents aged 61+ represented one percent (1%). These are on retirement and are engaged on contract. Cumulatively, 99% of respondents were in the active working class with only 1% outside this category. It can be observed that the experienced staff to occupy managerial positions and carry out higher responsibilities are few and are therefore overburdened with the huge managerial workload. The number of respondents above fifty years was significant, thus confirming the statistics from the Personnel Unit of the University which show that 80% of managerial employees are above fifty years and therefore have less than ten (10) years of service. This implies that the University will soon lose these experienced persons with vital knowledge and expertise due to retirement at the age of 60.

Academic Qualifications

Academic qualifications are essential in any academic or research institution. This question therefore tries to assess the academic qualification of the study population.

Table 2: Academic Qualifications of Respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency	% age
PhD	44	22
MPhil	63	31.5
MSc	59	29.5
MA	33	16.5
MFA	1	.5
TOTAL	200	100

Source: Field Data, 2012

From the responses, 44 (22%) respondents hold PhD degrees, 63 (31.3%) hold MPhil degrees, while 50 (29.5%) and 33 (16.5%) hold MSc and MA degrees respectively. This indicates that most Senior Members (78%) of the University joined with the minimum qualification which is a Master's degree. It is also worth noting that a good number of the PhD holders are at the rank of lecturer, which could indicate they joined the university straight from school or had not had much working experience hence their low research output.

Work Experience
Work experience, Bello and Mansor (2012) state, is an indicator of exposure to work ethics, level of responsibility, and contributions to job performance. Since experience is very crucial in mentoring, the research needed to assess the experience of respondents to ascertain the availability of mentors and prospective mentors in the institution

Table 3: Rank/Status and Length of Service of Respondents

Status/Rank	Work Experience within the University System (Years)							
	<1	1-5	6-10	11-16	17-20	21-25	26 +	Total
Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Associate Professor	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Senior Lecturer	0	2	2	11	3	0	0	18
Lecturer	10	11	30	34	5	10	18	118
Sen. Asst. Registrar	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Asst. Registrar	6	5	10	15	10	6	4	56
Total	16	18	42	66	18	16	24	200

Source: Field Data, 2012

The results of **Table 3** indicate that majority of respondents (83%) have university work experience between 6-26 years which is a substantial period for these persons to progress to either Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor or its equivalent rank in the case of the administrative staff.

Also, only 17% have less than one to five years university work experience with 18 respondents being Senior Lecturers, three Associate Professors and one Professor. In the administrative staff category, only four of the respondents are Senior Assistant Registrars. These results clearly show that progress of employees in this institution is very slow and there is the need for drastic strategies to be put in place for staff development and progression.

University's mentoring programme

When asked if the University engages employees in mentoring, 48% respondents answered in the affirmative, 42% said no and a further 10% did not answer.

Even though many respondents were not aware of any mentoring, the study revealed that there is both formal and informal mentoring in UDS.

From **Table 4** below**,** 60% responses from questionnaires and interviews mentioned informal mentoring, 17% mentioned formal mentoring and 23% said they are not aware of any mentoring in the system. Apart from the forms of mentoring, a further investigation was made to ascertain the type of mentoring that is mostly practised.

Table 4: Forms and Types of Mentoring in UDS

Form	Frequency	%
Formal	34	17.0
Informal	120	60.0
No Response	46	23.0
Total	**200**	**100**
Type		
Group Mentoring	6	3.0
Peer Mentoring	34	17.0
Team Mentoring	12	6.0
Reverse Mentoring	2	1.0
One-on-One Mentoring	98	49.0
No Response	48	24.0
Total	**200**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2012

The responses indicate that majority of employees are not aware of the formal mentoring programmes for employee development. It is significant to note that, as many as 60% of the respondents identify informal mentoring as very pervasive. This raises questions regarding how deeply rooted informal mentoring is in the University.

The responses also show that there are various types of mentoring, but mostly, it is one-on-one and peer mentoring which are commonly practiced in the institution with 49% and 17% responses respectively. Since less than 30% of the respondents have attained 17 years or more working experience and about 12% are of the rank of Senior Lecturer and above. Given that one-on-one mentoring is mostly preferred, it paints a picture of strain and stress on the

few experienced mentors as there are over 80% faculty who are potential mentees.

Informal Mentoring in UDS

The interview results revealed that during the early days of the University when the academic faculty were few, the first Vice-Chancellor used to invite junior faculty to his office to give some informal counselling and guidance.

An interview with a mentor revealed that in recent times mentoring is becoming virtually non-existent because people come and they are 'full of themselves', but mentoring is a two-way affair and takes place when one person agrees or identifies that s/he needs to be mentored and the other thinks s/he can mentor. He added that most of the young lecturers come and think that they have

'arrived' and thus show gross disrespect for older or more experienced lecturers just because of the fact that they are lecturers or colleagues. Thus the informal mentoring existing is only benefiting a few of them (those who humble themselves and want to be mentored). This is a confirmation of Gunn's (1995) assertion that although, informal mentoring relationships have many positive benefits, only a small percentage of capable people might receive this type of mentoring and its benefits.

Formal Mentoring in UDS

The Management of UDS acknowledges the importance of organised and structured mentoring and on realising that the existing informal mentoring is inadequate, instituted a formal mentoring programme. Although few respondents (17%) agreed that there is formal mentoring in the University, interviews with Senior Officers revealed that new and young employees who were employed between 2008 to date are given mentors. Responding to how the assignment or matching is done in the mentoring relationship, it was noted that at the recruitment interview, panel members (Deans and HoDs) are asked to get mentors at the faculty level for the newly employed faculty or staff, if it is not possible to get mentors at the faculty, then the mentees are assigned to mentors at other Faculties, Schools and Centres. Though this is the norm, it appears not to have been practicalised as 83% of potential mentors and prospective mentees mentioned that they are not aware of any formal mentoring either by the University or at the faculty level. They however, agreed that it is crucial for new and young employees coming into the institution whether from school or other organisations to receive mentoring because every organisation has its culture and experiences.

Most of the mentors indicated that they do not believe in formal mentoring where mentees were allocated to mentors by the institution, they were however, of the view that mentoring could be formalized in a flexible and voluntary manner by the institution only by facilitating the process and providing information on the need for mentoring through workshops that will bring potential mentors and prospective mentees together for skills training, which will give mentees the opportunities to make their own choices and the institution then formalizing it by writing to the parties. A mentor explained:

"If a mentee is assigned to me formally based on my subject area and interest, I will not mentor the person, but if I had initial interaction with the mentee before the assignment is made, I will mentor the person" (Interview with a Mentor, 15/09/2012).

This is consistent with Madhuri and Patil (2010) who argue that there certainly has to be an element of choice of person the individual feels happy to take on, whether there is a similar degree of choice with the person being mentored is debatable, and may depend on the nature of the organization and the individuals. Whichever method is used to find a mentor is not as important as finding and keeping a mentor who is committed to help the novice to succeed. Given the ultimate importance of this relationship, it may be better for administrators to orient new and young employees and later encourage them to select mentors that they feel comfortable with after a period of time.

The study also revealed that some mentors do not believe in formal mentoring if it is to be paid for. They are of the opinion that when mentoring is paid for, people will do it because of the money; hence, it will not achieve the purpose for which it was introduced. They however, agree that mentors' efforts could be recognised by some form of reward, but the reward should be tied to results.

Responding to how mentoring could be made effective in the institution, training, appraisal, personal attitude and implementation issues came up. Thus, in the

view of the mentors, anybody who attains the rank of Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor has to go through mentoring training or orientation to acquire or strengthen his/her mentoring skills.

In an interview, one of the Directors of the University noted that, for the institutionalisation of effective mentoring, mentoring results should be incorporated into the professional evaluation of employees; that is showing the number of junior colleagues one has successfully mentored. Mentor publishing with mentees was collaborated in an interview with other mentors that publishing with the mentee is important and will make the programme effective, especially if it is the mentee's first publication.

Personal attitude was also noted as very important for effective mentoring for career advancement. In that regard the mentee's relationship with his/her mentor and others in the university system is very important for one's development.

Furthermore, it was noted that the effectiveness of mentoring will also depend on the mentor's attitude, guidance and advice given to the mentee.

Results from the study show that a good number of staff have experienced mentoring or are engaged in informal mentoring and they are therefore willing to participate and support the structured mentoring programme. Mentees interviewed were of the view that when new employees get the more experienced ones to guide them; they get to learn the organisation's culture and progress faster in the organisation. They also benefit from the experiences of the older ones. However, there is the need to rethink the process of attaching mentees to mentors as it will not ensure effective mentoring. Douglas (1997) notes that a disadvantage is experienced if the mentor-mentee relationship is forced.

The process of implementation was also noted as being very important for effective mentoring. From the responses, fifty-eight (58) representing 29% indicated that they prefer senior faculty-junior faculty mentorship. Majority of respondents view the acquisition of mentoring skills through training as very important for successful implementation, while 41% mentioned seminars and workshops to provide for parties involved in the mentorship relationship to share experiences.

Perception on Import of Mentoring
Literature has shown that experience motivates people to seek mentoring relationships and in the academic setting, mentoring is the surest way to progress in the profession. As noted by Mansor (2011), experience presents the knowledge and skills gained in doing a particular job or activity over time which indicates the level of one's exposure to work ethics, level of responsibility, and contribution to professional development. This study sought to determine respondents' perceptions and experiences of mentoring.

Table 5: Perception of Mentoring Among Faculty and Staff

Statements: Mentoring	SA	Agree	Disagree	SD	NR	Total
Enhances personal abilities	128 (64%)	50 (25%)	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	18 (9%)	200 (100%)
Helps employees to acquire knowledge and skills for effective job performance	112 (58%)	68 (34%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)
Develops new and inexperienced faculty and staff skills in the profession faster	124 (62%)	62 (31%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)

	SA	A	NR	D	SD	Total
Grooms new/junior staff to acclimate faster in the institution culture	126 (63%)	56 (28%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Facilitates the future succession plan of the institution	94 (47%)	76 (38%)	16 (8%)	6 (3%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Helps in retaining employees	44 (22%)	96 (48%)	34 (17%)	16 (8%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Exposes employees to other professionals	52 (26%)	90 (45%)	36 (18%)	8 (4%)	14 (7%)	200 (100%)
Strengthens discipline amongst ranks of the institution (Org. structure)	44 (22%)	104 (52%)	34 (17%)	10 (5%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Effective mentoring is influenced by rewards and recognition	48 (24%)	62 (31%)	68 (34%)	14 (7%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Participant mentoring effectiveness commitment cannot influenced	8 (4%)	30 (15%)	86 (43%)	58 (29%)	18 (9%)	200 (100%)
Continuous M&E is not necessary in mentoring programme	18 (9%)	20 (10%)	76 (38%)	74 (37%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)
Mentoring is meant for promotion	18 (9%)	24 (12%)	90 (45%)	50 (25%)	18 (9%)	200 (100%)
Lack of management interest in mentoring is not a challenge	10 (5%)	26 (13%)	82 (41%)	70 (35%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)
Inadequate mentors is not a challenge to mentoring	10 (5%)	26 (13)	82 (41%)	70 (35%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)

*Source: Field Data, 2012 Note: (**SA-Strongly Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, NR-No Response**)*

In seeking further to understand how staff and faculty perceive mentoring, **Table 5** shows that 64% respondents strongly agreed and 25% agreed that mentoring enhances their personal attributes. A further cumulative 92% opined that mentoring helps employees to acquire knowledge and skills from mentors for effective job performance while 93% say new faculty get to develop and progress faster. The importance of helping new faculty to acclimatize and integrate into the University was affirmed by a cumulative 91%. A significant 85% of the respondents were of the view that mentoring facilitates future succession plans of the University due to the generational transfer of knowledge and experiences that take place. A further 17% of the faculty disagreed that mentoring enables employee retention but a cumulative 70% agreed.

Mentoring and Rewards
As to whether effective mentoring was influenced by rewards and recognition, respondents were almost evenly distributed with a cumulative 55% agreeing and 45% holding a contrary view. It is further instructive that as little as 21% cumulatively agree that mentoring is meant for promotion.

This implies that as many as 79% affirm the earlier point that progression in academia largely depends on a person's research and publication output. If the contrary existed, many of the mentees who are unable to obtain mentors would be disadvantaged and this would not augur well for staff development. Also, about 82% of the respondents assert that lack of interest by management in mentoring poses a challenge in maximizing the benefits of such a relationship. This situation is further compounded if there are few faculty members who can serve as mentors, as demonstrated by a cumulative 76% of respondents who opined that inadequate mentors pose a serious challenge to a successful mentoring programme to enhance staff career development

Mentoring Experience
Responses showed that 128 respondents had mentoring experience representing 64%, while 26% said they had no mentoring experience and 10% declined to respond. The high percentage of faculty/staff who have had mentoring experience notwithstanding the low level of formal mentoring that exists suggests that faculty/staff are determined to appropriate to themselves the benefits of

mentoring for their career development. It further affirms the fact that informal mentoring (which constitutes about 60%) seems to be the way out for most of the faculty/staff who seek to benefit from the experiences of senior colleagues within the University environment. Though, respondents acknowledged that peer mentoring could be necessary, it could not be as beneficial as being mentored by a more experienced colleague.

Furthermore, 90% of the people interviewed agreed that they received mentoring right from the master's level to the PhD degree from their Professors and colleague senior lecturers. The mentors stressed that they were taught what and how to teach and were guided as to how to write quality research papers for publication. They expressed their willingness to support the young ones, but quick to add that it takes a hard working person to be mentored; thus it is the duty of the mentee to identify someone that s/he wants as a mentor and approach him/her for assistance.

Effect of Mentoring of Faculty and Staff

Respondents noted that mentoring has both positive and negative effects.

Benefits

Mentoring has several benefits to the parties involved in the relationship. While the parties benefit from the relationship, the organization also benefits, directly or indirectly.

Table 6: Responses on Benefits of Mentoring

Response	Frequency	%
Helps develop career path and practical competence within their fields	54	27
Builds confidence, experience, motivatesand improves work performance	48	24
Helps in succession plan	12	6
Helps to take up responsibilities of their supervisors in their absence	10	5
Helps staff to acquire skills and knowledge	38	19
No response	38	19
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data, 2012

The findings from **Table 6** show that 54 respondents, representing 27% agreed that mentoring helps the individual build a career path and develop competence in the profession. Forty-eight (24%) mentioned competence, experience and job performance as the benefits derived from mentoring, while 38 (19%) mentioned knowledge and skills development. Only 5% and 6% of respondents saw mentoring as a means of delegation and preparing young ones for succession in an

organisation. These responses confirm existing literature that mentoring benefits all the parties - the mentee, mentor and the organisation at large. The study also revealed that mentoring has enormous benefits when well-planned and implemented except that the mentee might fail to take instructions from the mentor or the mentor him/herself is not experienced enough to provide mentoring that meets the mentee's needs. From the survey, 54 respondents representing 27% from Table 6 indicated that mentoring guides the mentee on what to do and what not to do.

"As a mentee, it will help him/her to learn the job, chart a path and meet set targets early by being aware that early research is the way to make it in academia" (Mentee interview, 28/09/12).

Also, twenty-four per cent of respondents mentioned that mentoring will also enable the mentee to get to know the organisation's culture and learn the job faster, hence improve on his/her performance. Thus, mentoring gives academic faculty the opportunity to get to know the research and scientific world, get access to research protocols and grow in the profession faster. A respondent who is above 50 years mentioned that mentoring is a long term relationship as mentees still stand to benefit from their mentors after the assigned or agreed mentoring period through recommendations to carry out projects and other assignments. He mentioned that he still gets projects through the recommendations of his mentors who are outside Ghana. Agreeing that mentoring is a two-way affair the respondents noted that the mentor will also learn from the mentee because she/he has some experience either from other organisations or even new ideas from school.

All the mentors interviewed collaborated that their experiences are different and that they stand to benefit as mentors. For example, the mentors will get closer to the mentees, learn from them and know the calibre of staff or young ones joining the system. Below is the view of a mentor who has been engaged in mentoring young ones informally over the years:

"Personally I did not receive much but the little mentoring I had helps me a lot because it was at the critical moment in my life; at the time I did not know I was due for promotion, I would have probably been somewhere below my present rank, somewhere Senior Lecturer but the way my mentor advised me actually helped me to rise up in my academic career, mentoring is important" (Mentor, 18/08/2012).

Mentoring and Managerial Skills

Statistics from the Personnel Unit of the UDS indicate that approximately 80% of managerial employees are above fifty years and have less than ten (10) years of service, it has therefore become imperative to build the managerial skills of faculty through mentoring.

Table 7: Responses on Mentoring and Managerial Skills

Statements - Knowledge transfer by way of mentoring:	SA	Agree	Disagree	SD	NR	Total
Does not motivate employees	10 (5%)	20 (10%)	82 (41%)	74 (37)	14 (7%)	200 (100%)
Reduces employee's task performance	10 (5%)	18 (9%)	66 (33%)	96 (48%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Negatively affect rate of promotion	6 (3%)	24 (12%)	70 (35%)	92 (46%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Does not encourage delegation	10 (5%)	20 (10%)	74 (37%)	88 (44%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Promotes unhealthy competition	6 (3%)	24 (12%)	72 (36%)	90 (45%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)

	SA	Agree	Disagree	SD	NR	Total
Develop leadership skills	106 (53%)	70 (35%)	14 (7%)	2 (1%)	8 (45%)	200 (100%)
Exposes employees to enhanced managerial skills	80 (40%)	88 (44%)	16 (8%)	6 (3%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Provides the opportunity to apply new professional approaches to challenge without anxiety	76 (38%)	96 (48%)	8 (4%)	12 (6%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Provides employee with skills to participate in university committee service	46 (23%)	110 (55%)	24 (12%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)

*Source: Field Data, 2012. Note: **SA-Strongly Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, NR-No Response***

From **Table 7**, a significant 84% of the respondents agreed that mentoring exposes employees to enhanced managerial skills. A cumulative 88%, 86% and 78% of respondents underscored the fact that mentoring helps to develop leadership skills, provides the opportunity to apply new professional approaches to challenges without anxiety as well as skills to participate in University Committees' service respectively. Also, it is refreshing to note that majority of respondents (between 78% - 81%) disagree with the misconception that knowledge transfer by way of mentoring is detrimental to employee motivation, task performance, healthy competition, rate of

Statements - Knowledge	SA	Agree	Disagree	SD	NR	Total

promotion and delegation of responsibilities and authority.

Mentoring and Research

Since research and publication activities are key within the academic setting, the study sought to explore respondents' understanding of what possible role or relationship mentoring can engender within the University.

Table 8: Responses on Mentoring and Research Skills

From **Table 8**, a cumulative 88% agree that mentoring enhances seminar presentation skills while 83% underscore that mentoring familiarizes employees with literature search skills. A further 83% opined that mentoring provides employee guidance on professional conferences attendance whereas 84% contend that mentoring familiarizes employees with professional literature that is relevant for their research and publication needs. As to the fact that mentoring does not increase publication the output of mentees, a slightly higher number of a cumulative respondents (55%) agree with 43% of the respondents disagreeing. On a closely related matter that mentoring is not the panacea to an employee's publication output; respondents were almost divided equally with 46% agreeing and 49% disagreeing to this preposition. On the contrary, a significant 85% disagree that mentoring does not promote joint publication. This is evidential of the commonly held view that where the mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee is very strong, the latter tends to benefit greatly from the former's vast research and publication experience by way of joint-authorship of research papers. A further 82% disagree that academic professional development is not dependent on publication.

transfer by way of mentoring						
Provides employee guidance on professional conference attendance	86 (43%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	6 (3%)	18 (9%)	200 (100%)
Enhance seminar presentation skills	80 (40%)	96 (48%)	12 (6%)	4 (2%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Familiarizes employees with literature search skills	66 (33%)	100 (50%)	22 (11%)	4 (2%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
Familiarizes employee with professional literature	64 (32%)	104 (52%)	18 (9%)	2 (1%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)
Does not increase publication output	20 (10%)	90 (45%)	76 (38%)	10 (5%)	4 (2%)	200 (100%)
Does not promote joint publication	6 (3%)	14 (7%)	98 (49%)	72 (36%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Is not a panacea to publication output	30 (15%)	62 (31%)	64 (32%)	34 (17%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
Academic professional development does not depend on publication	8 (4%)	16 (8%)	70 (35%)	94 (47%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)

Challenges of Mentoring in the University

Respondents were asked whether there were challenges to mentoring and if these could impede the effectiveness of mentoring in the institution. Many (140) of the respondents representing 70% said yes there are challenges to mentoring and 11% said no while 22% did not respond to the question.

When probed further, the respondents came out with the specific challenges of mentoring in UDS as presented in **Table 9** below.

Table 9: Identified Challenges of Mentoring in UDS

Challenges Time cost	Frequency	%
	37	18.5
Inadequate mentors	67	33.5
Mentoring hand book design is not made available to users	33	16.5
Mentoring is not considered as a core component of human resource development activity in UDS	26	13.0
Mentees are not prepared to learn from mentors	37	18.5
Total	200	100

About thirty-three (33.5%) respondents noted the inadequacy of experienced people in the university to serve as mentors; thus there are far more people to be mentored than there are mentors available for mentoring. This point was collaborated in an interview interaction with prospective mentees who quite agree with the mentors' assertion that they do not avail themselves to be mentored; however, they were of the view that their slow professional advancement is due to the inadequacy of experienced faculty and staff to mentor them.

Also, the young ones attributed their slow progress to the bureaucracy of the system and victimisation of some senior faculty who are manipulating the system. For example, a research might be conducted by the mentee and the mentor might use the information as if it was his/her own research work or publish it as the lead author. Again, it was found, through an interview with a mentee, that he had been able to get more than four publications and served as a lecturer for the past four years and would not apply for promotion because of fear of possible victimisation by his superior at the department level.

Though respondents are aware of the mentoring guidelines prepared by the University, they still see guidelines as a challenge. In that regard, 16.5% mentioned that the guidelines document was not circulated to users, as such there were bound to be challenges if the guidelines were not made available to guide the relationship. They explained that the mentoring process could be hijacked by either party, causing the relationship to become that of master-servant relationship. This, in their view, could lead to conflict of interest and if left unresolved could negatively affect the mentoring relationship and impede success. The guidelines, according to some respondents should spell out what is expected of parties in the relationship. The research also revealed that some mentors take undue financial advantage of their mentees. For example, the mentee might get a scholarship or a project and the mentor may feel s/he must share part of the funds or even take more of it; a situation like that, they explained, turns the mentoring relationship to that of master-servant relationship. Although, about 82% of the respondents assert that the lack of management interest in mentoring does pose a challenge in maximizing the benefits of such a relationship, only 11.5% respondents noted management commitment as a possible challenge to implementing structured mentoring in UDS.

Conclusion

Having a mentoring programme for young academic and administrative staff members might change the staff equity profile, as such investing into a mentoring programme should become a strategic priority of the university. This can reduce the shortcomings experienced by the institution in terms of human resource capacity building needed for the achievement of its vision. With more experienced staff members, the University would be more visible in the global academic environment.

Mentoring helps to foster strong relationships between mentors and mentees' ultimate career selection. An effective mentor helps the mentee to navigate not only the network of professional organizations and committees but also helps to attain a global platform of professionals whose careers are without borders. Hence, there is an urgent need for faculty and staff mentoring programmes to be actively pursued in all campuses of the university.

Although mentoring was noted as being key to contributing to the success of respondents, it was noted that there are many barriers to mentoring in UDS.

The strengthening of formal mentoring programmes was noted as necessary since staff members would have fair access to mentoring. This will also address the problems associated with cross-gender mentoring as all will be educated on the dos and don'ts of the relationship. Findings from the study have shown that many staff favour mentoring programmes. Therefore, the institution should be able to mentor junior and new employees with the few experienced mentors who are willing to serve as mentors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the environment and available literature, the following recommendations are made:

There is an urgent need for the strengthening of the formal mentoring programme to augment the informal mentoring for junior academic and administrative staff development. This will benefit the employees and the University at large.

Furthermore, senior faculty and staff members that are identified as mentors should be given mentoring training to make clear the objectives as well as their roles and responsibilities.

The essence and need for openness, honesty and commitment in any effective mentoring relationship should be constantly emphasised.

Mentoring should be incorporated into the human resource development policy of the University and be part of the administrative workload of employees and each Faculty /Department should identify annually persons to become mentors.

Mentoring should not only be limited to new and young academic faculty and staff members, but should also include existing faculty and staff who have no former university lecturing, administration and research experience.

Formal mentoring programmes should also be used to address succession challenge by identifying staff members who have the potential to fill future positions. This will solve the situation where contract appointees are being made to occupy substantive positions.

Formal assignment of mentor to mentee will not promote effective mentorship, and mentees should identify their own mentors to ensure compatibility. This could be done by using the information made available by the institution on potential mentors. The coordinating unit is then notified through the channel of communication of the institution for formalisation.

There should be an appointed officer to coordinate the overall mentoring programme and the coordinator must be a senior person, who can keep a watching brief on each of the relationships, assemble people from time to time for briefing, debriefing, or development sessions, set up new relationships and so on.

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