Introduction

The academic staff members of Nigerian Universities are referred to as faculty or lecturers, and are expected to perform three principal functions of teaching, research and community service. According to Winfield & Jarret (2001), the demands of academia naturally exposes faculties to occupational stress and the need to balance several conflicting issues such as teaching, research, work-life balance, promotion and professional development. The optimal execution of faculty’s duties requires expertise in such areas as excellent tutoring, examination processing, project/dissertation/thesis supervision, technical reports, paper presentation at conferences, article publication, book editing, and administrative obligations. The faculty’s’ abilities and competence in each of these functions determine the velocity of their professional development. Consequently, qualified and competent faculty are needed for the realization of the goals of university education in Nigeria. However, when qualified and competent faculty are employed, there is the need to address the issue of continuity in the system. The senior faculty will get old and ultimately retire someday, there is therefore the need for succession planning if the standard of education is to be optimized and maintained.

Also, the academic setting is a knowledge based system that requires free and consistent exchange of information especially in this age of globalisation and rapid technological changes. Mentoring of entry level academics is therefore inevitable in the quest for professional development in the academic milieu. Junior or entry level academics should be paired with senior faculties in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship. Mentoring in academic settings as a means of providing guidance and support towards the achievement of professional development is increasingly being recognized (Clarke, 2004 and Barkham, 2005).
Olasupo (2011) posited that unless a senior faculty volunteered to mentor the entry level academics, such are likely to perish in the academic world. This assertion was supported by the findings of Heather (2006) which revealed that new faculty left without mentoring were found to be stressed and dissatisfied with their jobs, unlike their mentored counterparts who reported job satisfaction.

Although both the mentor and the mentee enjoy a number of benefits from the mentoring relationship, they may also encounter some problems in the course of their interaction. Akanni (2011) opined that since there are two sides to a coin, mentoring can have both positive and negative sides. When the relationship is mutually beneficial to both the mentor and the mentee, it can be regarded as positive and healthy, whereas when there is no mutual benefit, the relationship can be considered as negative or dysfunctional. Dysfunctional mentoring occurs when the mentoring relationship results in negative outcomes for the mentor, the mentee and the organization. Consequently, this paper’s main preoccupation is to address issues that are related to dysfunctional mentoring in ivory tower. Specifically, this paper discussed such issues as:

- Meaning and types of mentoring
- Benefits and Challenges of mentoring in the academia
- Implications of dysfunctional mentoring on the academic development of faculty in Nigerian Universities
- Core conditions for effective mentoring

**Meaning of mentoring**

There are several definitions and interpretations of the word ‘mentoring’. According to Schooley (2010), mentoring involves a formal or informal developmental partnership where employees receive information, advice, and guidance from an experienced professional, usually within the organization, who has expertise and a strong desire to help others grow in their jobs. Moorhead & Griffins (2004) defined mentoring as an arrangement in which more experienced workers help less experienced workers grow and advance by providing advice, support and encouragement. Mentoring is also a dyadic relationship between a more experienced member of an organization and a less experienced individual (Ismail & Arokiasamy, 2007). Mentoring encompasses coaching, sharing perspectives, and transferring knowledge and wisdom to the mentee(s). Olasupo (2011) posited that a mentor in the academic setting is generally a senior faculty member who advises or guides a junior faculty member...
in matters relating to achievement of academic success. On the other hand, mentee or protégée is a junior faculty who is the recipient of mentorship. He is also of the opinion that in recent years, mentoring is fast becoming one of the easiest ways of developing the skills and talents of individuals in many different organizations, including the academia, since learning as academic work involves multiple changing processes of personal development.

**Types of mentoring**

There are three types of mentoring arrangements as posited by Byrne (1991), and these include traditional/informal mentoring, professional mentoring, and formal mentoring.

**a) Traditional Mentoring**

Traditional mentoring is also referred to as informal mentoring. It is the oldest form of mentoring arrangement involving senior persons subjectively choosing protégés considered to possess relevant qualities. The selection of protégés is based on the personal choice of the individual mentors which could be based on shared values and interests such as religious or ethnic affiliation, gender, etc. A major concern with this type of mentoring arrangement is the neglect of protégés’ qualities and professional competence in favour of the mentors’ subjective biases. For instance, male mentors may select only male protégés because it is a common belief that males are naturally superior to females; neglecting the obvious qualities of some female protégés.

**b) Professional Mentoring**

Professional mentoring is a process engendered by top management and leadership. It may be considered as semi-formal mentoring because although management support and encourages this, it is not a compulsory aspect of their operations. The organization creates a facilitating atmosphere for mentoring relationship and allows senior employees the freedom to choose whether or not to participate in the mentoring programme and also to choose the protégés. In professional mentoring, organizations create suitable platform for the mentoring programme without directly influencing the process, rather it is allowed to run its natural course.

**c) Formal Mentoring**

Formal mentoring is an improvement on professional mentoring because of the inclusion of mentoring as a systematic policy issue and a standard part of organizational practice. In the formal setting, mentoring is a core component of organizations’ employee training and development programmes.
Douglas (1997) stated that formal mentoring programmes are those that are assigned, maintained and monitored by the organization. The organization has direct input in the mentoring arrangement; there are fixed rules and regulations guiding mentoring programmes within these organizations. The importance of mentoring to employee development and ultimately the achievement of organizational goals cannot be overemphasized. It reduces the cost of training and development of the human capital, serves as a tool for succession planning and a career guide to new or junior employees (Byrne, 1991).

**Qualities of a Good Mentor and Mentee**

The types of mentoring arrangement notwithstanding, there are certain qualities required of both the mentor and the mentee if the mentoring programme is to be a success. The following qualities were highlighted by Nasa First (n.d) as characteristic of a good mentor:

- **People Oriented**: A successful mentor is one who provides sufficient time with the mentee, possesses good people skills and knows how to effectively communicate and actively listen.

- **Good Motivator**: A mentor needs to be able to motivate a mentee through encouraging feedback and challenging work assignments.

- **Effective Teacher**: A mentor must thoroughly understand the skills and knowledge required by the mentee's position and goals and be able to effectively teach these skills to the mentee.

- **Technical excellence**: A successful mentor is usually one who has been successful in their field of expertise and possesses the educational background and experience needed for achievement.

NASA FIRST also highlighted some qualities of a good mentee, which include:

- **Eager to Learn**: A mentee has a strong desire to learn new skills and abilities, or a desire to develop existing skills and abilities.

- **Team Player**: A mentee usually must interact with many others as a part of the requirement of his or her position. It is important the mentee cooperate and communicate with these others.

- **Patient**: A mentee must be willing to put time and effort into the mentoring relationship. A mentee must persevere through the difficulties that arise during the learning process.

- **Risk Taker**: This means that a mentee must move beyond tasks that he or she has mastered and accept new and more challenging experiences.
Benefits and Challenges of Mentoring in the Academia

The benefits of mentoring is based on a developmental social learning perspective which posits that behaviour is learned in interaction with others, especially when they serve as models (Sarason, Sarason, Piece, Shearin & Sayers, 1991; Baldwin, 1992). Mentoring affords the transfer of skills which protégés can apply in diverse professional circumstances, promotes productive use of knowledge, clarity of goals and roles, career success, career growth, salary increases and promotions, career and job satisfaction (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & Mckee, 1978; Kram, 1985; Fagenson, 1989; Scandura, 1992; Aryee & Chay, 1994; Burke, Mckeen & McKenna, 1994; Okurame, 2002; Okurame & Balogun, 2005). Sweeney (2004) posited that mentoring is regarded as one of the best tools for “reducing stress for novice teachers, orientation to curriculum and promoting the creation of better norms of collegiality and collaboration”.

In the opinion of Okurame (2008), mentoring helps in the resolution of challenges and predicaments, making it more likely that an individual attains his career goals and growth. Mentoring is especially valuable for the transmission of positive attitudes as mentors provide invaluable information on the mission and philosophies of the organisation as well as help employees cope with career stress and give proper orientation towards workplace values (Murray, 1995; Gilley & Boughton, 1996; Payne, 2006). Mentoring is not only beneficial to the mentee or the young academic but also to the mentor or senior academic. Okurame (2008) corroborated this when he pointed out that being recognised as the mentor of a successful protégé enhances the reputation of the senior academic/partner among his or her peers.

These benefits notwithstanding, the mentors and mentees also encounter several challenges in the mentoring relationship. Olasupo (2011) observed that various factors are posing a significant threat to successful mentoring within the academic settings. For instance, the advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its attendant use of e-mails and other web services increasingly make the professors to owe allegiance to fellow professors across the country than to the junior faculty members at home. Schneider (1997) confirmed that senior faculty members now prefer foreign-based interactions and exchange than home-based one. Invariably, the generation gap
between the senior and junior faculty members can be considered as a hindrance to effective mentoring in the academia.

Also, Rodriguez & Sjostrom (2000) observed that another obstacle to successful academic mentoring was found in the models because they perceived themselves as older, wiser, tenured and holding all the powers. This mentoring relationship was argued to be hierarchical and not collaborative or communal. Olasupo (2011) further stated that the challenges of successful mentoring programme in academic setting include inappropriate choice of mentor and protégé, unrealistic expectation by both mentor and mentee and inferiority feeling on the part of the protégée. These challenges experienced in the mentoring relationship when not properly managed culminates in dysfunctional or negative mentoring which may have adverse consequences on all parties involved in the mentoring programme, that is, the mentor, mentee and the organization or institution. It is, therefore, expedient to examine the concept of dysfunctional mentoring and its implication for the effective academic development of faculty in Nigerian Universities.

Features and Consequences of Dysfunctional mentoring

Eby, McManus, Simon & Russell (2000), posited that while research illustrates that positive forms of support occur in many mentoring relationships (Chao, 1997; Kram, 1985, Scandura, 1992), there are evidences that mentoring can have unhealthy aspects. Dysfunctional mentoring is characterized by negative relations, sabotage, difficulty, spoiling, submissiveness, deception, and harassment.

i. **Negative relations** refer to situations marked by bullying, exploitation, or egocentric behaviour, with the intent to harm the other person, and it is discussed as a serious form of relational dysfunction (Scandura, 1998). Dealing with negative relationships is one of the many challenges faced within the mentoring relationship (Pinho, Coetzee & Schreuder, 2005). According to Eby & McManus (2004), this type of relationship is characterized by malice or bad intent.

ii. **Sabotage** involves an act of revenge aimed at harming someone. It can be active (e.g. badmouthing a mentor to others) or passive (e.g., giving one’s mentor the “silent treatment”). Either way, the intent is to harm the other person (Scandura, 1998). Eby & McManus (2004), stated that proteges are likely to use passive or indirect methods of sabotage since they typically do not have direct control over valued resources such as promotions and job assignments. Nonetheless, such sabotage can damage
a mentor’s reputation or cast doubt on the mentor’s ability, which can harm the mentor personally or professionally.

iii. **Difficulty** occurs when there are conflicts and disagreements between mentor and protégée (Scandura, 1998). These often result from differences in judgment that can lead to problems relating with one another. Another manifestation of difficulty involves problems that arise from unclear or incompatible expectations for the relationship (Young & Perrewe, 2000).

iv. **Spoiling** refers to a good relationship that has gone sour because of real or perceived disloyalty or disappointment (Scandura, 1998). Like difficulty, there is no bad intent toward the other person; rather, the interactions between relational partners become ineffective over time. For example, the relationship may be viewed as stagnant, too intense, stifling, or requiring too much commitment (Duck, 1981).

v. **Benign deception** is also conceptualized as marking an ineffective relationship. Benign deception includes behaviors such as impression management and ingratiating where the intent is to enhance one’s self-image (O’Hair & Cody, 1994; Scandura, 1998). Even though no harm is intended, it violates relational trust which is an essential component of effective relationships (Huston & Burgess, 1979).

vi. **Submissiveness** may lead to over dependence on the mentor, which can create relational difficulties and lead to the termination of a mentorship (Ragins & Scandura, 1997; Scandura, 1998). It can also contribute to controlling behavior on the part of the mentor, establishing a pattern of relating which does not contribute to protégé growth and individuation from the mentor (Kram, 1985).

vii. **Harassment** is also a “serious dysfunction in mentoring relationships” and can take the form of sexual, gender, or racial harassment (Scandura, 1998). With such behavior the intention is negative; it is aimed at psychologically harming, putting down, or controlling the target (Eby & McManus, 2004).

When dysfunctional mentoring occurs, the relationship is either terminated or maintained, if maintained, it results in a number of consequences for both the mentor and the mentee. These outcomes as outlined by Scandura (1998) are presented in the table below:
### Mentors outcomes | Mentee outcomes
---|---
Self esteem (-) | Stress/Anxiety (+)
Job satisfaction (-) | Mentoring propensity (-)
Stress/Anxiety (+) | Jealousy (+)
Absenteeism (+) | Betrayal (+)
Turnover (+) | Overdependence (+)
Mentoring propensity (-) | Overestimation (+)

**Fig I: Outcome of Dysfunctional Mentoring** (Scandura, 1998)

**Implications of Dysfunctional Mentoring on Academic Development of Faculty**

Dysfunctional mentoring has a number of implications on academic development of faculty in Nigeria. When mentoring relationship becomes dysfunctional it implies that urgent efforts must be made to restore the relationship before it degenerates into psychological warfare or open confrontation between parties or termination of the mentoring practice. Existence of dysfunctional mentoring also implies that young academics or mentees will not be able to adequately acquire the necessary guidance required for academic excellence. This means that these young academics will not be well equipped to transmit relevant knowledge and technical know-how to younger academics which are necessary ingredients for excellent academic performance.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

It is evident from the above discourse that mentoring is an inevitable practice in the academic world. Succession planning in the Nigerian academia has also necessitated the need for effective mentoring programmes to ensure the continuity of sound and productive educational system. However, mentoring relationship is not without its attendant problems, one of which is the crux of this paper. Dysfunctional mentoring militates against the success of mentoring programmes and can lead to the termination of the mentoring relationship. In cases where the relationship is retained, this can have grievous consequences on both the mentor and the mentee, and in the long run the organization for which they work. For this not to be it is recommended that the following core conditions for effective mentoring are strictly adhered to:

1) **Psychological connection:** There must be a psychological connection between the mentor and the mentee. Both parties should be naturally drawn to each other. There must be a common ground, mutual understanding and interest. Rogers (1957, 1959) supports this assertion in his
conditions for therapeutic change, where he emphasized the existence psychological connection between the client and the therapist.

2) **Shared and clearly defined goals:** Mentoring goals should be clearly stated and endorsed by both the mentors and mentees. The emphasis is on mutual understanding and agreement on the terms and conditions of the mentoring relationship.

3) **Progress evaluation and assessment:** The mentor and mentee or a competent third party should objectively and systematically evaluate the progress of the mentoring programme.

4) **Selection of mentors and mentees:** There should be clearly defined procedures for the selection of mentors and mentees. A number of factors should also be considered before mentor and mentee are joined together in mentoring relationship. These factors should not exclude personality-make, gender, veracity especially on the part of the mentor, area of interest and so on.
References


