

**LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING IN AN ACADEMIC SETTING  
THE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE  
MENTOR AND THE MENTEE (A CASE STUDY OF OSUN STATE  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, ESA-OKE).**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Leadership and mentorship are workplace concepts which have assumed a global dimension in recent times. The line between the former and the latter is so thin that both are sometimes conceived as the two sides of a coin. The inter-relatedness of both concepts is so strong that it is almost impossible to mention one and leave out the other. This is because while the focus of any mentorship programme in any organisation is geared towards developing leadership, leadership itself is conceived as the process of social influence in which one person seeks the help and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Mentorship, especially in an academic setting, enhances academic growth. It also launches the organization which embraces the concept into global relevance. This paper discussed leadership in general in relation to the concept of mentorship; and in particular in Osun State College of Technology Esa-Oke, Nigeria. The paper examined leadership and mentorship programmes in the institution, and discovered that an effective leadership structure is in existence while formal academic mentoring is completely absent. To ensure a smooth transition of viable academic traditions, an effective formal academic mentoring programme should be put in place. The paper suggested, among others, that formal academic mentoring programme should be established in the four faculties and seventeen departments of the College while their activities shall be monitored by the Mentoring and Leadership Unit, which shall be created out of the existing Directorate of Academic Planning of the College.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Academic institution, Mentorship, Mentor, Mentee.

**Introduction**

Education is an essential tool in the life of an individual. "It is the process of physical and mental culture whereby a man's personality is developed to the fullest"(Awolowo, 1981). It can be formal, informal and non-formal. Formal education is provided in a classroom within a school system under the leadership of a teacher with a specific curriculum. At the end of active exposure to learning, examination is given and a certificate is awarded. Informal education is the second type, and it takes place outside the school system. It is without a specific curriculum. It begins at birth, continues throughout life till death. The teachers are fathers, mothers, elders in the family and community. No certificate is given because there is

no examination, but elders and people around can easily testify to the fact that the learner has been well trained or not. Non-formal education refers to training given by master craftsman or woman through apprenticeship scheme. It has specified curriculum, and certificates of proficiency are awarded at the end of the training. Such entrepreneurial skills include hairdressing, plumbing, tailoring etc.

In Nigeria, formal education is received at four main levels: Early Child Care and Development, Basic Education, Post-Basic Education and Career Development and Tertiary Education. Tertiary Education is the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and other specialised institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). Some of the goals are to contribute to national development through high level man power training, provision of accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians, provision of high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work (National Policy on Education, 2013). These goals are pursued through quality student intake, quality teaching and learning, as well as research and development, staff welfare and development programmes; and provision of a more practical based curriculum relevant to the labour market. This then implies that appointment of quality lecturers, at regular intervals, is highly essential to the achievement of these goals; and as such, a good leadership as well as mentoring system is a veritable tool in achieving smooth academic transition.

## **OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING IN HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS**

Leadership is not a job, a task a role, or a level on an organizational chart. Leadership is a sacred calling to make life-enriching difference in the world. A beautiful and inspiring story from the Talmud illustrates the point: Every blade of grass in all of creation has an angel bent over it whispering three words of encouragement – Grow, Grow, and Grow. Whatever our belief system, most of us can relate to the impulse to grow. The impulse to grow as people, to grow as a family, to grow as a team, to grow as a society –this impulse to grow is the evolutionary pull of life itself. When we are awake to this impulse to be more, to grow more, to contribute more, then we open ourselves to the possibility of making a greater contribution to all those we touch (Kevin Cashman, 2007)

This quotation brings out the essence of leadership, which is influencing growth, wherever one has the opportunity to lead. It is a situation in which a person who has achieved a higher

level of growth assists a newcomer to grow. Thus, a leader is someone who leads by example and has the integrity to do the right thing even when it is not popular. A good leader has positive influence over others, inspiring them to become a better person and example for others to model their lives after them against (Mark,2016). This definition is closely related to mentoring and shall be considered at this juncture. Mentoring is a concept that has its origin in Homer's Greek mythology, Odyssey, in which a character, 'Mentor', was chosen to educate, support, guide and serve as teacher to Odysseus's son, Telemachus. At the time, Odysseus, who was the King of Ithaca, had gone to fight the Trojan War (Villani, 2009). Since then, the term has been used to refer to a one to one reciprocal relationship between a more experienced and knowledgeable faculty member (the Mentor) and a less experienced one, the Mentee (Hagard et al, 2012). It is a relationship that is governed by regular and constant interaction over a period of time to enhance the professional development of the Mentee. The mentoring relationship can be formal or informal.

From these explanations, it is obvious that both leadership and mentoring are two sides of a coin. The interrelatedness of the two concepts is so strong that it is almost impossible to mention one and leave out the other. This is because, while the focus of any mentorship programme in any organization is geared towards developing leadership, leadership itself is conceived as the process of social influence in which one person enlists the help and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. There are different types of leaders as well as leadership styles. The next section examines eight types of leaders as highlighted by Corey (2013):

**Autocratic leaders-** These are leaders who make decisions without the contributions of other people. They always impose their will and cannot be challenged. People who need close supervision and monitoring benefit from such leaders, but they are loathed by creative ones.

**Task-oriented leaders-** They are leaders whose concern is getting the task at hand done, and as such, they can be autocratic. These leaders always ensure that the work is well defined while other needed facilities are put in place. A major flaw of these leaders is that they are not concerned about the welfare of their people.

**Transformational leaders-** These are highly inspiring leaders who expect the best from everyone around them. The advantage of this is high productivity, while the disadvantage is dependence on people which may cause disappointment.

**Charismatic leaders-** These leaders are powerful orators with an engaging personality. Because they are skilled communicators and experts in their field; they are sensitive to the needs of their people and are able to motivate them like transformational leaders to achieve a common goal. The strength of these leaders lies in their ability to make people in the

establishments they lead to act as an entity thus making it easy to achieve organizational goals. However, these leaders may become so arrogant that they may destroy their good deeds. Also, their establishments stand the risk of folding up if the leaders die or suddenly retire. Such leaders may commit financial fraud or other atrocities because they believe they are above the law (Spahr, 2016).

**Bureaucratic leaders-** These are leaders who work by 'book'. They always insist that rules and regulations must be followed strictly and precisely. These leaders excel in dangerous work environment where strict rules are needed for safety. These leaders will not be effective in settings where flexibility, creativity and innovation are required.

**Democratic leaders-** They are leaders who allow all members of their establishments to participate in the process of decision making. Ideas are exchanged and made to flow freely. At the end of this exchange of ideas, the leaders exercise their authority and control by choosing the best ideas that appeal to them. This leadership style provides self satisfaction to the members and this leads to increased productivity. The flaw is that both decision making process and implementation are delayed.

**Servant Leaders-** These are leaders who lead by example. These leaders are of high integrity and generous to a fault. They involve others in decision making and stay out of the limelight thus allowing the team to be accorded recognition for effective performance. These leaders may find it difficult to take quick decisions when such need arises or meet tight deadlines.

**Laissez-Faire Leaders-** These leaders use liberal style of leadership. They give ultimate freedom to their people to set goals and solve problems on their own when they arise. Such leaders always make provisions for materials needed to work with. These leaders achieve success when they have highly skilled and creative people to work with. However, the achievement of organizational goals suffers because the needed control and supervision are not provided. The next section examines mentoring.

Mentoring is not a new concept in human organizations and establishments. At one time or another, men, women, children and adults have benefited from the activities of people such as father, mother, teacher, religious leader etc The impact of mentoring has also been felt in the academic setting in other parts of the world, but in Nigeria, it is a tool that is yet to be fully explored (Okurame, 2008). It is apt to assert that scholars differ in their opinions on the effective usage of this important academic transition tool. While Okurame (2008) is of the opinion that mentoring is about to be revived in Nigerian universities, Megbo&Akor (2015) and Ekechukwu&Horsefall (2015) are of the opinion that it is still at the advocacy stage. A fact that emerges from these divergent opinions is that the many benefits of academic mentoring are yet to be fully explored in the Nigerian higher education environment. Some

of the benefits are:

- ✓ It enhances professional development of academics in their respective chosen disciplines thus promoting excellence in teaching and learning.
- ✓ It brings about higher career satisfaction of lecturers while it boosts both departmental and organizational morale.
- ✓ It encourages excellent contributions to knowledge through research and development and this enables the academic staff to be promoted at the appropriate time.
- ✓ It makes access to research grant less stressful.
- ✓ It helps the institution to retain and maintain quality academic staff (Haggard et al, (2012), Asuquo & Etukudo, (2015).

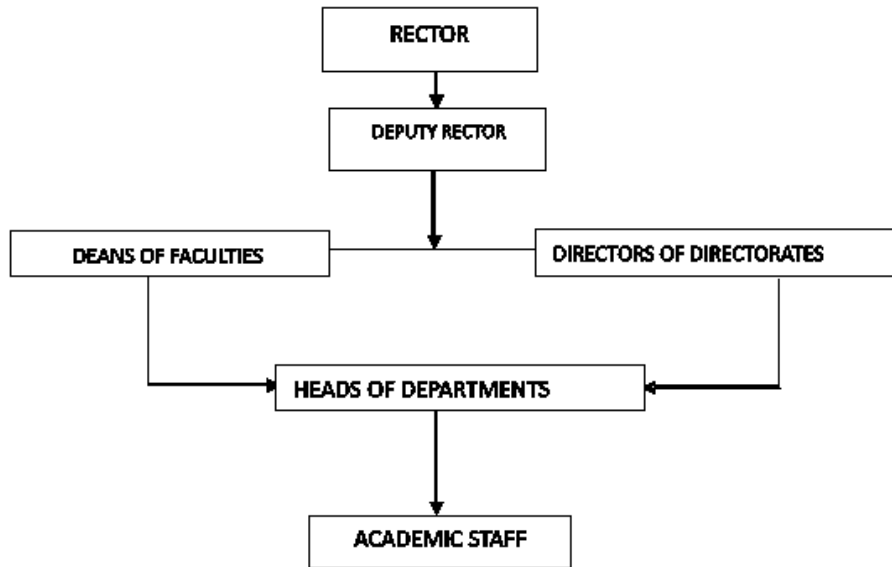
Another important fact that must be stated is that evidences abound that some formal academic mentoring programmes are already in existence in some Nigerian universities like Obafemi Awolowo University (Afolabi, Falaye & Aremu, 2015), University of Ibadan (Okurame, 2008), University of Calabar (Asuquo & Etukudo, 2015), University of Jos (Asuquo & Etukudo, 2015), such programmes are almost absent in the polytechnic arm of the tertiary education in Nigeria. However, this is not denying the existence of informal mentoring relationship among academic staff in these institutions. Such informal academic relationship develops naturally out of shared love and admiration of academic staff in a faculty or an institution. What is yet to be entrenched is a formal academic mentoring in which an institution provides specific guidelines and structure for such a relationship. This relationship may exist for a specific period of time and can also be maintained throughout life based on the needs and interest of the Mentor and the Mentee.

#### **ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING IN OSUN STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, ESA-OKE**

The Enabling Bill establishing the College was signed into law by the first Executive Governor of Osun State, His Excellency, Alhaji Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke on the 12th of October, 1992. By its establishment, the Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke rose from the ashes of the erstwhile Esa-Oke satellite campus of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, founded in 1981 to become an autonomous Institution. The main objective of the college is to provide for students, training and development of techniques in applied sciences, engineering, technology, environmental and management sciences as well as in other spheres of learning. The institution provides professional courses leading to National Diploma and Higher National Diploma in these fields and other awards and certificates at comparable levels on a full time, part-time and daily part-time basis (OSCOTECH Information booklet, 2005).

The College adopts the Faculty system of structuring the academic departments to make work co-ordination and management easy. At present, there are four faculties at the college namely: Engineering, Environmental Studies, Management Science and Applied Sciences.

The faculties are headed by Deans, while departments are headed by Heads of Departments or Acting Heads of Departments. The relational structure is presented in Fig.1.



**Fig.1 - Leadership Relational Chart**

The chart above confirms the existence of an effective leadership structure in the College. This implies that leadership roles such as guiding, directing, controlling and commanding are being performed. What is lacking is formal academic mentoring, and this is needed to ensure that there is smooth transition of viable academic traditions. The reason for this is that newly employed academic staff may not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and how they can actually achieve them. It is thus essential that a formal academic mentoring programme be put in place. This formal mentoring programme is facilitated by the institution and it is a process in which a senior member of the faculty or department will be selected as a Mentor for a newly appointed academic staff (the Mentee) based on share academic values and interests for a specific period of time. The relationship can be maintained for a longer time or till death based on the interest of the mentor and the Mentee. Same gender and cross gender mentoring are both desirable. This is especially essential in the College where there are very few, not just senior female academic staff, but female academic staff.

### **MENTOR'S EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

“A Mentor is a coach, guide, tutor, facilitator counsellor and trusted advisor. He is someone who is willing to spend his time and expertise to guide the development of another person (Mentor Scout). Since he is expected to help a less experienced person build a positive behaviour, he should possess the following qualities highlighted by Franchise Growth Partners (2011):

1. **Willingness to share skills, knowledge and expertise:** He should be willing and ready to share with his Mentee the knowledge, skills and expertise that he has acquired over the years, which will aid the professional development of his Mentee.
2. **Demonstrates a positive attitude and acts as a positive role model:** He should act and behave in such a way that the Mentee will grow up to become a productive and successful person.
3. **Takes a personal interest in the mentoring relationship:** The Mentor should cherish and show great delight in the mentoring relationship; thus making every contact a worthwhile experience that deserves to be repeated.
4. **Exhibits enthusiasm in the field:** This implies that the Mentor should show great delight in his chosen field. This will enable the Mentee to admit that he has made a good choice of career.
5. **Value learning and growth in his the field:** As an experienced professional, he should have access to new ideas, innovations, research findings etc in his field. He achieves this by attending seminars, conferences and workshops organised by his professional associations. He goes further by incorporating the skills acquired in his teaching and even sharing them with his colleagues.
6. **Provides guidance and constructive feedback:** The Mentor, at regular intervals, criticises his Mentee constructively. Such constructive criticism enables him to know his area of weaknesses and how to improve them.
7. **Respected by colleagues and employees in all levels of the organizations:** Mentors should be a man of dignity and integrity thus earning the respect of all members of the organization. This allows the Mentee to have a mind set of filling the mentor's position in future.
8. **Sets and meets ongoing personal and professional goals:** The Mentor is a dedicated and devotional professional, and such he is always setting goals which he accomplishes in good time. He is an achiever and not a loser.
9. **Values the opinion and initiatives of others:** He appreciates the contributions of other members of his team and places high value on their personality. He is a T-E-A-M person. T-E-A-M is an acronym which means:  
 T-Together  
 E-Everyone  
 A-Achieves  
 M-More

10. **Motivates others by setting a good example:** Since he is a good role model in all aspects of life -physically, academically, professionally, socially and morally, he serves as a good example to other people in his team or faculty.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the Mentor has many vital roles and responsibilities to play .Such roles and responsibilities include that of teacher and role model, agent, net worker and counsellor (National Institute on Drug Abuse). A Mentor may perform some or all of these roles. These roles are explained below:

**The Mentor as Teacher and role Model-** The Mentor helps the Mentee to plan his teaching and manage time effectively. He also encourages him to register for and participate actively in the programme and activities of their professional organizations .Finally, as a man of dignity and integrity; he encourages him to serve as a good example to colleagues in his department as well as faculty and people in the community.

**The Mentor as an Agent-**He performs this role by encouraging the Mentee to undertake viable research activity as well as paper writing and presentation under his supervision .He shows him how to access research grant and how to put such to good use. He also co-authors books and academic papers with him and links him with professional colleagues, if the need arises for him to change his job.

**The Mentor as a Net worker-** The Mentor provides unlimited opportunities for the Mentee to attend with him or to represent him at meetings, seminars and conferences .Also, he encourages him to participate actively in discussions at such gatherings

**The Mentor as a Counsellor-** The Mentor listens attentively to the challenges and concerns of the Mentee and provides useful pieces of advice by sharing his own personal and professional experiences. He protects his interest like parents and prevents him from making professional mistakes.

The Mentee too has to possess some qualities, be ready to perform some responsibilities to make the mentoring relationship beneficial. The next section examines this.

#### **MENTEE'S EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

"A Mentee is a student, protégé, apprentice and eager learner. He is someone who wants to learn from someone who knows and seeks their valuable advice in order to grow personally and /or professionally" (Mentor Scout). The Mentee benefits immensely from the mentoring relationship if he shows great commitment to the process and is ready to devote quality time and attention to the tasks and other duties that may emerge.

Openness is another quality that the Mentee is expected to possess. He should be ready to discuss freely his hopes and aspirations as well as his efforts to become an expert in his chosen field. Also, he should be open to constructive criticism anytime it comes up in the mentoring process.

Finally, the Mentee should be flexible and innovative in his plans and attempts to become an excellent professional. This he does by listening to and acting on the Mentor's suggestions, counsel and advice. This flexibility also assists him to seek other useful sources of



information from books, internet, professional organizations, corporate bodies etc.

The possession of these qualities will make it easy for the Mentee to perform the following responsibilities:

1. Making the interactive sessions interesting and successful. He does this by preparing ahead what to discuss, questions to ask and prompt presentation or submission of given duties.
2. Identification of skills as well as competencies needed to achieve set goals and the initiative to ask for guidance to achieve them.
3. Absorbing and using the skills and knowledge gained from the Mentor as he continues to practice his profession.
4. Demonstrating qualities of good mentorship in his interaction with people within and outside his work environment. This will in turn enable other people to embrace mentoring as a veritable tool, not just in academic circle, but in other human organizations as well.

#### **Recommendations**

In the light of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Formal Academic Mentoring programme should be initiated in all faculties and departments in the College.
2. The Mentoring programme should be reviewed every semester to assess the success or otherwise of the programme.
3. Informal mentoring programme such as "Lecturers Day Out" should be encouraged. The programme, which should be sponsored by the College or Corporate bodies and establishments within and outside the state, should feature talks on benefits of mentoring among academic staff. The facilitators should be drawn from Universities where mentoring programme is thriving.
4. Finally, to ensure the continuity of the programme, a Department of Leadership and Mentoring should be established in the existing Directorate of Academic Planning in the College. This Department should be saddled with the responsibility of organising interactive sessions such as seminars and workshops for both teaching and non teaching staff in the College.

#### **Conclusion**

Formal academic mentoring enhances smooth academic values which an institution is associated with, it is thus essential that this structure is put in place in the College. As such, the College Management is encouraged to explore all the above recommendations so that this useful academic programme can be established in the College.

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