The Impact of Mentoring on Student Leadership Development at Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo

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THE IMPACT OF MENTORING ON STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

AT UNIVERSITE CHRETIENNE BILINGUE DU CONGO

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of mentoring process at the Christian Bilingual University of the Congo (UCBC) and see how mentoring impacts current students' life, alumni, staff, and faculty's life experiences. Does mentoring help students become successful in their careers, as well as their professional and personal development? The key research question was, "What is the impact of mentoring on student leadership development at UCBC?" A qualitative methodology with a phenomenological case design allowed for interviewing four mixed focus groups of current students as well as two groups of alumni. Additional one-on-one interviews were held with three faculty members as well as the primary administrator of UCBC.

Based on our key research question, responses were transcribed, coded, and analyzed resulting in three themes which corresponded with subthemes. The first main theme is Teaching for Holistic Transformation with two subthemes: Modeling Positive Character Traits, and Servant Leadership and Accountability. The second theme is Fostering and Encouraging Students' Growth with two subthemes: Strengthening the Mentoring Relationship, and Mentoring Ownership and Students' Support. The third theme is Obstacles in Establishing Mentoring Relationship with two subthemes: Cultural Obstacles, and Academic Obstacles. This study will help UCBC to identify the next steps to help students to act responsibly, and confidently, and will help teachers to transmit a holistic character to their students.

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Researcher Disclosures: My Relationship to UCBC

I have been working at UCBC since 2009 as a full-time staff, where I assumed responsibilities in the administration. In charge of public relations, my job description was to meet with the community, to visit churches, schools, and assemblies to talk about the mission, visions, and values of UCBC, and to invite them to join the vision of UCBC. For students who are still in secondary school, I invited them to enroll once they graduated.

For 12 years, I have been part of the mentoring team and I have not only learned from students, but also I have shared my experience with them as one of the UCBC mentors. In 2018, I was assigned as the Student Affairs Officer, then worked with the student body committee. As any staff at UCBC is chosen to mentor a few students, my role as a mentor with a group of students ensured that UCBC helped them to grow. These twelve years helped me to experience and understand how many struggles UCBC students go through as mentees. Yet mentors also have their own challenges.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Mary Henton, a wise partner of Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo

(UCBC), mentioned John Maxwell's quote, "People don't care how much you know until

they know how much you care." Started in 2007, UCBC is a fifteen-year-old college in

the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and is working on building a strong academic

program in the midst of political challenges and instability. Located in the city of Beni,

its education program is centered on students' holistic transformation, focusing on ethics,

integrity, empowering students, equipping them and investing to develop grassroots

initiatives for peace, justice, transformation of lives, and a flourishing Democratic

Republic of Congo.

There are many ways to engage with a student in order to know him or her well

and help discover personality, talent, capacity for reflection, worries, and sense of

responsibility. Mentoring provides one way for embedding impactful professional

development. Centered on the individual student, mentoring has emerged as a means to

cultivate the leadership skills of potential future leaders and to achieve "the mission of

developing college students as effective leaders involves multiple dimensions" (Shalka et

al., 2019, p. 100).

It is essential to pay attention to leadership in this highly complex era. A central

mission of UCBC is to bring hope to the new generation by transforming their

perspectives, capacities, and competencies. Student leadership development is a vital

subject because training tomorrow's political, social, economic, cultural, scientific, and technological leaders is done in higher education. According to Darko (2009), "Nelson Mandela, Albert Schweitzer, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, and Jesus Christ could not be called great leaders because of having power, but because of caring and serving" (p. 11). To educate someone and bring them to produce an expected result takes a lot of energy and requires mentoring, follow-up, orientation, advice, and assimilation. Ultimately, the goal of UCBC is to train transformed agents in the model of Jesus Christ's disciples, who will then become transformers of their society.

Statement of the Problem

The Christian Bilingual University of the Congo has experience in mentoring students and letting them assume responsibilities. However, mentoring at UCBC has faced challenges. For example, sometimes those who should be involved are busy. They do not have time to focus on mentoring because they have other tasks to accomplish. On the other hand, mentoring may not be well structured, with the theme to be discussed, because nothing is planned. Ultimately, it is a challenge to know the impact of mentoring on students at UCBC.

Conceptual Difficulty

A student in Congolese society is considered as a child. Students receive little respect because they are considered to have no experience. Reicher et al. (2007) argue that "effective leaders must work to understand the values and opinions of their followers—rather than assuming absolute authority—to enable a productive dialogue with followers about what the group embodies and stands for and thus how it should act" (p. 24). In Congolese society this can lead to unemployed people with diplomas. When

students come straight from their studies with no experience, those who have already worked will be hired.

At UCBC every teacher is considered as a mentor. However, not every teacher has the ability to be a mentor. Furthermore, some teachers are not motivated to be part of the mentoring team. However, it is important to remember that "mentors are not born, but developed through conscious, deliberate, ongoing learning" (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 3). Consequently, UCBC organizes few general mentoring training sessions to help equip mentors.

Mentoring and Relationship Between Student Leadership Development

Mentoring is the process where someone facilitates and assists another's development by providing knowledge, advice, counsel, and support. Bowyer-Johnson (2001) defines mentoring as "a relationship that is established between two people to allow a process of learning and guidance to occur" (p. 22). It is not possible to talk about mentoring without a mentor, mentee, and mentoring program. Additionally, student leadership is a core developmental outcome of many universities' curriculum and college experiences. With this perspective, administrators, faculty, staff, and students should understand and begin to foster the core themes of leadership programs. These themes broadly used and applied will lead to a greater understanding of the development of student leadership.

Denney (2013) reports "three core themes of student leadership…[which include] awareness of self and behavior, modeling the example to inspire change, and collaborative movement" (p. 8). Student leadership development is a process that stimulates the growth of students and helps in developing their talents. It is also an

opportunity to enable students to apply their learning to confront the challenges of society. Training students in leadership skills leads to more effective communication, competencies reinforcement, and interpersonal communication progression with various cultures and individuals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the importance of mentoring as a mechanism where UCBC faculty will foster students' leadership capacities. This study will help UCBC to identify next steps to help students to act responsibly, and confidently, and will help teachers to transmit a holistic character to their students. Mentoring will help to raise the reputation of the institution in the community and raise parents' confidence and trust of the institution. Higher education in DRC is exposed to the complexities, challenges, and changes of the third millennium.

To have impactful student leadership development depends on the kind of mentoring the college develops. Congolese's future needs leaders that advance society in the midst of worldwide challenges and changes. Summarizing Lavelle and Rickford (1999), Amirianzadeh (2012) reports, "one of the unique challenges of university authorities is to train a generation of students in order to be able to live in environments with different values, fa[s]t changes of technology and complex cultural and social changes" (p. 333). Mentoring is necessary for UCBC to equip the students in order to succeed in the complex world.

Research Question

This study investigates the interaction between mentoring process and successful student leadership development. The specific question framing this investigation is: *What*

is the impact of mentoring on student leadership development at UCBC? To measure this impact on student leadership development, qualitative research was conducted through interviews, including focus groups. Future student leadership development was evaluated through monthly implementation forms, poster presentations, and creation of leadership platforms. The research also included the capacity to interact and collaborate with others, participation in work program activities, women's voices, alumni office, and service learning for those who are still students. A particular method will be applied for those who are already working to know whether UCBC in its way of mentoring was helpful.

Conclusion

The UCBC aspires to a student success model which provides students with a way to understand who they are as learners and the ways in which they have developed their ability to integrate their learning experiences for use in their personal, professional, and civic life. Furthermore, UCBC invests in developing the next transformational leaders who will be taught, mentored, and equipped to identify, own, and shape a new narrative for the twenty-first century in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Regardless of who provides mentoring support to students or how many individuals (on- or off-campus) contribute to different aspects of the mentoring experience, mentoring implementation at UCBC will help promote a sense of responsibility, trust, honesty, and freedom for impacting others in a positive way. "The validation of mentoring as an integral part of the theoretical framework on student persistence adds an important dimension to existing theory in explaining the college experiences…" (Crisp, 2010, p. 52).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

"The term mentoring describes a range of faculty–student, staff–student, or student–student relationships" (Lunsford et al., 2017, p. 316). Furthermore, "scholars report benefits of mentoring for those who participate in it. These outcomes relate to specific academic or job needs, depending on the population participating in mentoring" (Lunsford et al., 2017, p. 328). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the weak education system does not meet the market needs. Few perspectives, especially on the political spectrum, have the courage to change the system. The Christian Bilingual University of the Congo (UCBC) proceeds with its new system of education called Licence-Maitrise-Doctorat and its mission of transforming the new generation. We consider the purposes, types, and outcomes of mentoring in each context. According to Lunsford et al. (2017), "the informal focus on mentoring has given way to a proliferation of formal mentoring programs at universities around the world" (p. 316).

The approach of the current study is to focus on research from the past five years (2015–2020) about mentoring that provided evidence regarded efficacity and positive results. When the school opened in 2007, UCBC started an education built on practices and methodologies. Knowing that, mentoring started at the beginning with less than fifty students, and every student was involved. Staff and faculty were so committed and follow-up with students was made regularly. Because of a low enrollment, with few

faculty and staff members, it was easier to take care of each one of the students. However, once the number of students started to increase, mentoring became so complicated, especially as UCBC was constrained by the state educational requirements.

The UCBC is more concerned to mentor staff and undergraduate students. Several types of mentoring are developed to strengthen the system of education. However, for the purpose of this current study, we will develop the most common types of mentoring. Based on this current study, it is hopeful that a specific instructional strategy in leadership education might be implemented at UCBC. Another reason for this research is due to the goal to assess the effectiveness of student leadership development, an academic-year–long, co-curricular approach to developing leadership skills. Campbell et al. (2012) report "that in the psychosocial mentoring process, the mentor serves as a counselor, friend, and advocate, providing guidance, role modeling, and acceptance for the mentee" (p. 597). The review of the literature explores a variety of ideas from authors' approaches to mentoring including but not limited to: the definitions and origin of mentoring, purposes and outcomes, types of mentoring, characteristics of a good mentor, benefits of mentoring, and also Christian perspectives of mentoring.

Origins, Purpose, and Meaning of Mentoring

The term "mentor" generally refers to someone who acts as a teacher, guide, sponsor, patron, or adviser. Mentor comes from the *Odyssey* in Greek mythology. Wong and Waniganayake (2013) noted that "mentoring is classically defined as a relationship between two individuals where the older, more competent, and experienced individual plays a nurturing, intentional, instructive, and supportive role in shaping and developing the younger, less experienced individual" (p. 165).

Mentoring Defined

Mentoring definitions vary and are expanding, opening up possibilities for new life experiences. According to Collier (2015) in his book *Developing Effective Student Peer Mentoring Programs*:

Mentoring seems to mean one thing to businesspeople, another to developmental psychologists, and something else to academics. Although in higher education there is no universal agreement on a single definition of *mentoring*, this book [referring to Collier's book] uses a definition from the National Academy of Sciences: "Mentoring occurs when a senior person or mentor provides information, advice and emotional support to a junior person or student over a period." (p. 8)

Furthermore, Bowyer-Johnson (2001) defines mentoring as "a relationship that is established between two people to allow a process of learning and guidance to occur" (p. 22, as cited in Yordy, 2009, p. 11).

As we consider the relationship between student leadership and mentoring, it is helpful to note the following:

[Mentoring is] a personal and reciprocal relationship in which a more experienced (usually older) faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) student or faculty member to whom he provides knowledge, advice, counsel, challenge, and support. (Johnson, 2015, p. 23)

Primary Approaches of Leadership Development

Jenkins (2013) summarizes approaches to leadership development that may be manifest to someone who is proving their leadership skills. These include skill building, personal growth, and conceptual understanding.

Skill Building

Here "students practice leadership in a context where there is less pressure and a lower cost of failure" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 50). This approach offers students an experience that "has significant psychological and social as well as intellectual dimensions" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 50).

Personal Growth

This approach "increase students' self-awareness and emphasizes self-exploration (Allen & Hartman, 2008). "Instructional strategies that emphasize the personal growth approach include individual and group reflection, service learning, self-development through activities like individual leadership development plans, and in-class short writing" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 50).

Conceptual Understanding

This "focuses on improving students' knowledge through exposure to the topic of leadership (Conger, 1992).… [These activities] usually offer broad coverage of leadership topics to better improve participants' understanding (Allen & Hartman, 2009)" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 50).

Student Leadership Development and Mentoring

According to Kuh (1995), "the more time and energy students expend in educationally purposeful activities, the more they benefit" (p. 125). As we consider the relationship between student leadership and mentoring, it is helpful to note the following:

> [Mentoring is] a personal and reciprocal relationship in which a more experienced (usually older) faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) student or faculty member to whom he provides knowledge, advice, counsel, challenge, and support. (Johnson, 2015, p. 23)

The mentoring role is necessary for helping the student to become more professional and to grow as a student and as people. Therefore, mentoring can play a good role in student leadership development. According to Deal and Yarborough (2020):

> Formal leadership development programs enhance what students learn in class by giving them powerful tools for personal and professional success…. Leadership development helps students strengthen their communication and collaboration skills, develop resilience become more adaptable, and prepare for a world in which students will be agile and innovative. (p. 4)

Consequently, one of the most effective ways to help students grow in their leadership is for them to be mentored.

Types of Mentoring

Multiple articles are published about different types of mentoring, but the current study focuses on the academic aspect, providing different approaches that mentors and mentees can utilize in higher education. Mentoring relationships work best when

participants are flexible. Below are ten types of mentoring from which the mentor and mentee can use whichever approach is most convenient while supporting the goals of participants. These are excerpts and summarized from the Department of Defense Mentoring Resource Portal (n.d.) and seem to fit well in higher education.

1. **Information mentoring.** This is where the focus is primarily on the mentee and her or his goals. This is a natural process. The mentor and mentee often pair together by their own internal forces such as mutual respect, shared experiences, and common interest creating the relationship. (p. 3)

2. **Formal mentoring.** Known as planned or structured mentoring, this type of mentoring focuses on organizational goals and how mentee's goals fit into the organization. It increases productivity but not social interaction. The mentor and mentee do not see each other outside the office in a "formal business relationship." (p. 3)

3. **Situational mentoring.** This happens for a specific purpose such as preparing for a board meeting or a new assignment. (p. 4)

4. **Supervisory mentoring.** This is an inherent responsibility of leadership. A leader gives and outlines expectations for supervisory coaching and feedback. (p. 4)

5. **Online mentoring.** This affords an opportunity to establish and engage in a mentoring relationship that does not depend on the individuals meeting in person. It uses videoconferencing, Internet, and email to mentor individuals. This is usually less expensive compared to face-to-face mentoring. (p. 4)

6. **Collaborative mentoring.** This encompasses more than just one on one relationships. It can include any number of mentors and mentees. Virtual tools can support the creation of engagement based on career progression, specific topics, or situations. There is a collaborative space where knowledge and experience can be shared with a group. (p. 4)

7. **Speed mentoring.** This mentoring approach is to receive information from one or more mentors in a time-controlled environment. (p. 5)

8. **Flash mentoring.** This is a new concept in mentoring which is growing in popularity. Flash mentoring is defined as a one-time meeting or discussion that enables an individual to learn and seek guidance from a more experienced person who can pass on relevant knowledge and experience. (p. 5)

9. **Peer mentoring.** This mentoring approach is usually a relationship within the same organization. The purpose of peer mentoring is to support colleagues in their professional development and growth and to facilitate mutual learning and build a sense of community. (p. 5)

10. **Reverse mentoring.** This is for a senior person (in terms of age, experience, or position) by a junior (in terms of age, experience, or position) individual. Reverse mentoring aims to help older, more senior people learn from the knowledge of younger people, usually in the field of information technology, computing, and internet communication. (p. 5)

In addition to these ten types of mentoring, Long et al. (2010) placed mentoring in three categories:

Academic mentoring focuses on academic adjustment, retention, and overall educational success.

Youth mentoring focuses on highlighting a relationship with youth at risk, and can include attempting to deter risky youth behavior.

Employee mentoring focuses on facilitating career development and assisting new entrants into the workplace. (p. 14)

Long et al. indicate "of all three types of mentoring, academic mentoring produced the strongest positive outcomes" (p. 14).

Characteristics of Mentoring

Research has identified key characteristics of successful mentoring relationships including enduring relationships between mentor and mentee, consistent, reliable contact between mentor and mentee, strong emotional connections, and feelings of closeness between mentor and mentee and mentors who are genuine, understanding, affectionate, and supportive, and who challenge their mentees. For mentoring to be a success, it is important to ask, What makes for a good mentor? To respond to this question, Oglethorpe (2020) suggests 7 characteristics of highly effective mentors, which include:

1. **They are good listeners.** "The most mentioned and appreciated characteristic of highly effective mentors is that they are good listeners…. [They listen] because they want to learn from what their mentee has to say… they ask open questions to encourage their mentee to think, talk and discover solutions for themselves." (Oglethorpe, 2020). In addition, Augustine-Shaw and Reilly (2017) report "improving as a listener might be the most important skill a leader can ever have and always improve on" (p. 55).

2. **They are committed to the mentoring relationship.** Mentoring "requires dedication and commitment… . Unless both parties are committed to making it work, the relationship will not grow and develop into full fruition" (Oglethorpe, 2020).

3. **They are generous.** "A person's decision to be a mentor needs to come from a place of generosity" and this includes such things as time, attention, praise, and through making connections with resources (Oglethorpe, 2020). Chandrashekhar and Narula (2014) also note that good mentors are "unsparingly generous with their time" (p. 435).

4. **They share knowledge and experience.** "Good mentors share their knowledge and experience so their mentees might learn from them. And they share willingly and with enthusiasm (Oglethorpe, 2020). Furthermore, according to Guillot (2014), the transfer of knowledge is the very definition of mentoring.

5. **They are trustworthy.** Trust "can make or break a mentoring relationship…. Trust is about loyalty… openness, mutual sharing, and respect, as well as the willingness to be vulnerable…. [Furthermore] a good mentor will keep their promises, especially in relation to confidentiality" (Oglethorpe, 2020).

6. **They are honest.** "Good mentors will be honest with their mentees… [and] they do it in a way that provides useful, honest guidance while ensuring their mentee takes ownership of their decisions and actions" (Oglethorpe, 2020). In addition, "What we believe as teachers does make a difference in the lives of those with whom we interact" (Rosebrough, 2002, p. 297).

7. **They earn respect.** "A good mentor treats people with respect and is interested in building relationships… not on personal gain" (Oglethorpe, 2020). Akin and Hilbun (2007) noted that "trust and respect are definitely key elements of the relationship. This type of mentoring would not work with someone you feel would be judgmental or disparaging."

Mentoring Relationships

According to McClinton et al. (2018), a "mentoring relationship is a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person has served as a model, teacher, sponsor, encourager, or counselor, and has befriended a less skilled or less experienced person" (p. 155). Furthermore, there are benefits to a mentoring relationship. The faculty–student relationship is a win–win advantage because both sides are gaining something from one another. They exchange ideas, knowledge, and experience, and it is about reciprocity and being called to support one another. It is not a mentoring that comes and goes but it is constant.

Mentor Benefits and Outcomes

Meltzer (2021) describes some benefits for mentors and mentees.

A mentor:

- Improves communication and interpersonal skills.

- Develops leadership and management skills.

- Reinforces knowledge of subjects and provides a different perspective.

- Promotes self-reflection.

- Enhances and expands professional network.

- Advocates for others.

- Increases empathy.

- Reduces bias.

- Helps build confidence.

Mentee benefits:

- Receives guidance and support.

- Gains professional development opportunities.

- Increases confidence.

- Gives awareness of other approaches.

- Develops a professional network and meaningful connection.

- Gains the skills and confidence necessary to excel while building a relationship that will inspire, encourage, and support the future.

- Connects with real-world experience to academics.

Mentoring From a Christian Perspective

Because UCBC is committed to the ideals of a Christian higher education institution, it is important to consider mentoring within the biblical context. The mission of UCBC is to create and to develop an authentic community of followers of Christ to transform society. The UCBC offers opportunities for sharing spiritual experiences and practices and promotes spiritual formation characterized by mentoring, discipleship, and a biblical perspective with eloquent examples of what Paul did with his followers.

There is support for the seven general characteristics of a good mentor within Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Thessalonians, as included by Krallmann (2014) in his book *Mentoring for Mission* (p. 115). Table 1 provides examples as Paul follows the example of Jesus Christ his mentor.

Table 1

Paul Encouraging Others to Follow His Example

Letter	Message	Reference
Corinthians	Therefore, I urge you to imitate me	1 Cor. 4:16
Galatians	I plead with you, brothers, to become like me	Gal. 4:12
Philippians	Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you	Phil. 3:17
	Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice	Phil. 4:9
Thessalonians	You became imitators of us	1 Thes. 1:6
	For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example	2 Thes. 3:7
	We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.	2 Thes. 3:9
Timothy	What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching	2 Tim. 1:13

Conclusion

This chapter provides different perspectives on mentoring from a variety of authors. I believe in the adage, often attributed to Vince Lombardi: *Great leaders are not born but made*. Warren Bennis, well known expert in leadership, also embraced this as well. Bennis believed that "the process of becoming a leader is similar, if not identical, to becoming a fully integrated human being" (Rifkin, 2014, para 7). Furthermore, Bennis wrote in his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, "a successful leader must first have a guiding vision of the task or mission to be accomplished and the strength to persist in the face of

setbacks, even failure…. The leader who communicates passion gives hope and inspiration to other people" (Rifkin, 2014, para 7).

The developing of people, including students, is important, especially for producing good leadership development. The quality of higher education and student development is dependent on good mentoring. To achieve this, mentoring and programs for mentoring are necessary for higher education institutions.

Chapter 3

Methodology

A qualitative methodology with a phenomenological case design guides this research. Phenomenology research is the most appropriate approach for this case study because it is a bound, closed system, unique and specific research to UCBC (Creswell, 2013). The researcher has a posture of "eyes wide open" to better understand the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2013). What makes this a case study is the role that UCBC plays in the mentoring program. This case study helps a researcher to interact with students and get to understand how they can evaluate the impact of the mentoring program.

Context

In the midst of a challenging context, UCBC, located in the eastern of the Democratic Republic of Congo, North Kivu Province, in Beni city, has as mission to educate and equip change-makers and model transformation by holistically renewing communities and promoting systemic justice. This university is developing and nurturing a redemptive community of passionate young men and women. It equips these women and men through professional and formative education at the highest level.

Our research evaluates and analyzes the effectiveness of mentoring as an impact of education through UCBC. At the beginning, UCBC mentoring groups focused on student needs and met regularly, often one time per week for an hour. Mentoring occurred through sharing and discussion related to some selected topics and considered in

the agenda of the day. Each student belonged to one mentoring group where the student is appointed by the leadership. The participation in the mentoring group was mandatory and repeated absences were considered during evaluation at the end of the semester.

Conversely, peer groups were held every Friday from 10:00 to 10:50 a.m. Unlike mentoring groups, peer groups were special meetings amongst the students only, without staff or faculty. During that gathering, according to the student manual, peers discussed freely their concerns and shared them later with their mentor who reported to the administration as necessary. Because the number of UCBC students increased, mentoring seemed to disappear, and lecturers no longer had time for mentoring.

Participants

Participants were selected through purposeful sampling. We relied on the Director of the Mentoring Program at UCBC to identify students who are able to thoughtfully and honestly communicate the positives and negatives of the mentoring program at UCBC. Focus groups of five persons each were interviewed. Four focus group consisted of students (juniors and seniors, the ones who spent more time in the program) and two focus group consisted of alumni. Among the administrators, a one-on-one interview with the Rector and with the Director of Mentoring provided information about mentoring at UCBC. A one-on-one meeting with a sample of faculty helped us hear more about the effectiveness of mentoring at UCBC because of the faculty's role to implement mentoring.

Procedure and Interview Protocol

Following the IRB approval, we started by having contact with the Rector of the university where we conducted our research. An email was be sent to him from Taylor

University asking for permission and presenting him with a research letter. He was the

first participant, and we had a one-on-one interview with him. Then we contacted the

person in charge of mentoring at UCBC to facilitate the contact with students. After this,

the Director of Mentoring helped us to select and establish student focus groups.

Freshman students were not included because they did not have any experience with

mentoring. We gathered a focus group of alumni in a place where they felt comfortable to

give us enough information about the impact of mentoring.

Data Analysis

A questionnaire with eight semi-structured questions was used. Interviews were

recorded during one-on-one interviews and focus groups to allow us to transcribe data. A

printed questionnaire was given to those who participating in order to have an idea about

our questions before responding and being interviewed. As a standard practice, a digital

recorder was the device used for the one-on-one and different focus groups (Creswell,

2012, p. 17). These were then transcribed, coded and themed to generate the results.

Benefits

Mentoring is a potentially powerful way of education practitioners' sense-making

and can lead to starting new insights into the uniquely complex process of learning,

teaching, and educational managing; and it can lead to a new perspective at UCBC. This

research will help UCBC and other researchers to have a special lens on how to mentor

students in order to impact their future.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

This chapter outlines the results and themes generated from the interviews that were conducted with UCBC faculty, students, and alumni. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of mentoring on student leadership development. Based on participants' responses, this section presents findings from different focus groups surveyed of current UCBC students. There were thirty persons male and female represented in student focus groups. Four interviews with faculty and staff were held with the primary administrator of UCBC. The research involved extensive travel to interview UCBC alumni. Our research extended 2937 km within the DRC and paid a special attention to a focus group of alumni who live outside of Beni, where UCBC is located. An additional focus group of alumni included individuals who are currently working and have positions in the DRC government. They expressed their thoughts on how they experienced the impact of mentoring within their workplaces.

At the time research was conducted, and even before that time, mentoring was not stable, as faculty and students could not expect a mentoring program. At its inception, mentoring started and then stopped. After few years, UCBC leadership changed the format of the mentoring program. In 2018, UCBC returned to the previous format but just for one year. Then the Ebola crisis threatened the community and mentoring was halted. Most of the academic programs were progressing except the mentoring program.

Consequently, UCBC adjusted and reduced the timing of courses and allowed students to return home early. The institution was required to make difficult choices and chose priorities which eliminated mentoring program.

Mentoring cannot be separated from whole person education. Mentoring is an integral part of Christian higher education. Based on the instability within UCBC curriculum, a significant question emerged in which to focus our research: *What is the impact of mentoring on student leadership development at UCBC?* Three major themes with corresponding sub-themes resulted from the data analysis (Table 2).

Table 2

Results From the Interview and Focus Groups

Main Theme	Subthemes
Teaching for holistic transformation	Modeling positive character traits
	Servant leadership accountability
Fostering and encouraging students' growth	Strengthening the mentoring relationship
	Mentoring ownership and student support
Obstacles in establishing mentoring relationships	Cultural obstacles
	Academic status obstacles

Theme 1: Teaching for Holistic Transformation

What is meant by holistic transformation? Holistic transformation involves mentoring that goes beyond the classroom, beyond a one-on-one connection with the mentee, beyond research, and beyond course grades to encompass the whole person in all dimensions: academic, social, and spiritual. Mentoring relationships within the UCBC community should involve faculty, staff, administrators, and students. This transformation is relational, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, professional, and social.

This transformation demonstrates care for persons, within all sectors of society and within the communities in which they live. Each of the above aspects needs to be addressed not just to help students survive but also to thrive and succeed in life.

One hundred percent of our participants agreed that holistic transformation helped them grow in every aspect of life. An alumni who is now UCBC staff said: "So all of the domains of our life were growing, and we did it spiritually, professionally, and academically. So, it includes really so many values."

Subtheme: Modeling Positive Character Traits

Teaching for holistic transformation requires the mentor to model specific characteristics. Most of our participants defined these positive character traits to be:

- Demonstrates humbleness

- Gives guidance

- Listens

- Motivates

- Serves

- Solves problems

- Cares about others

One of our interviewees said of his mentor: "He has been an example for me, because when I reached UCBC, he was not only a teacher for me, but he was the one who was implicated in even my life at home." He said again that "It was a surprise for me to see a teacher who is integrated into the life of student until at their home." Successful learning of holistic transformation results in the mentee demonstrating specific characteristics.

One hundred percent of our participants mentioned positive traits that helped them to maintain their jobs or get good positions.

> One alumni said:
>
> Professionally, mentoring helped me become more open-minded and willing to learn more…. For instance, when I started working at the National Assembly, I was recognized by the leaders because of my humility, something that my mentor taught me. Until now, learning the value of respect and humility has helped me get a better job.

In addition, he declared that mentoring helped him to feel integrated in the community. He said: "Everywhere I go now, I believe I can integrate easily". Not only does teaching for holistic transformation impact the mentors and the mentees, it requires servant leadership.

Subtheme: Servant Leadership and Accountability

One interviewee said: "A servant leader is someone who rather than telling someone what to do will demonstrate by example." Another said: "Serving always includes relationships, the servant respects those served because of their God-given dignity and the persons served feel empowered." A common thought from alumni mentioned that no matter your position, a good mentor is someone who does not react as a boss but as one who serves others in humility. Additionally, one UCBC staff member said:

> I want to be a role model, to serve my students so that they would learn from my experience without my telling them what they need to do. I want them to copy my life by what they have seen me doing while we are together."

Participants in our interviews revealed that servant leadership happens not only from the mentor's side but also from the mentee's side. Each mentee needs to be receptive, flexible, and courageous in an accountable relationship.

In summary, the first theme generated from research at UCBC was teaching for holistic transformation. This teaching requires the modeling of positive character traits and also involves servant leadership. When examining the relationship of Christian character to a good mentee, it is essential to apply the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).

Theme 2: Fostering and Encouraging Students' Growth

Fostering and encouraging students' growth means helping and enabling students to believe in themselves until they will be able to overcome challenging situations through motivation, hard work, and handling all the issues that can appear in their life. It involves advising them to be positive in their actions, helping them fight their difficulties, striving to learn, and telling them to not be scared or discouraged by failure.

A major responsibility and benefit of a good mentor is to help his or her mentee grow. The mentor must be clear in identifying the target growth. The mentor initiates and develops a process that will allow his or her mentee to grow by providing support, skills, and help to them to remain focused on their studies and develop aptitudes that may help them to build a better future and to do the same for others. Thus, the mentor helps his or her mentee to develop confidence. One participant said: "Here at UCBC they give you time to listen to you and to tell you some important things that you need to consider as

you grow in your studies." One hundred percent of our interviewees agreed that a mentor is a key for the mentee's growth. The way a mentor treats mentees helps their growth.

Subtheme: Strengthening the Mentoring Relationship

By strengthening the mentoring relationship, we mean reinforcing and enhancing contact with the mentee by providing a comfortable environment in which the mentee will feel loved, cared for, and supported. The mentoring relationship can be strengthened while students are enrolled in classes. Knowing that students are at the center of education at UCBC, nine percent of the participants realized that the more a mentor develops and fosters a deeper relationship with their mentee, the more the relationship becomes stronger. Synthesizing their responses suggests having a better relationship might include one or more of the following:

- Having a conversation over coffee

- Sharing prayer request

- Reading books together

- Equalizing the power difference

- Experiencing mission trips or services together

- Playing games together

Mentoring relationships exist to give the mentor an opportunity to share his or her experiences, knowledge base, and spiritual insights with the mentee. Multiple interviews said that the benefits to enrolled students include producing higher performance, offering leadership opportunities, and building the mentee's morale.

The mentoring relationship can be strengthened after students graduate. Mentoring relationships can thrive after graduation so that a mentee will become

successful in future lifelong relationships. An alumni said: "UCBC needs to develop a system where alumni can return to campus to share the experiences of the real world in their workplaces." This would be meaningful, allowing mentors to develop long-term contacts with UCBC. He continued saying that

> personally, I think UCBC could stay connected with the alumni. When you finish with UCBC, the connections are sometimes lost. Since we have been part of UCBC and know its vision and now we are professionals in the world, there are things that we learn that could help enhance or strengthen the vision of UCBC or the experience current students.

He continued: "for instance, we could also organize sessions for alumni to share with students." Multiple people who were interviewed resonated with this as a way UCBC could strengthen mentoring relationships. Not only does fostering and encouraging students' growth rely on strengthening the mentoring relationships, it also requires both the mentor owning the process and the student supporting it.

Subtheme: Mentoring Ownership and Students' Support

Ownership in this setting means that mentoring belongs to me, I am the owner of that process, and I take it as one of my responsibilities. Ownership means possession with the right or permission to transfer to others. Three out of four UCBC staff members interviewed said that mentoring should be considered a calling from God to maintain and consider how to best support the mentee. One hundred percent of staff members expressed that there needs to be ownership of the mentoring process. This sense of ownership will help a mentor and mentee maximize their time when they are together and upon reflection be glad to see positive results. One participant said:

There is still a lot to do, a lot of effort to put, the biggest effort is in terms of first,

ownership and then understanding what mentoring is, and why it is needed…

adding because mentoring is something that is done in the African context it is

done in an informal way, in a diffused way. Mentoring itself sounds like it is new

in the African context yet it is not.

In summary, from the first theme, teaching for holistic transformation requires the

modeling of positive character traits and also involves servant leadership. This also

requires some practices which would foster and encourage students' growth. Strong

relationships between mentor and mentee and mentoring ownership are significant

elements in fostering and encouraging students' growth.

Theme 3: Obstacles to Mentoring Implementation

What is meant by obstacles to mentoring implementation? For mentoring to work

for every student in UCBC throughout their academic career, conditions that inspire and

motivate students are needed to support the process of mentoring. Even the best structure

comes up against obstacles that hinder successful implementation of good ideas.

Commonly expressed barriers according to our interviewees were:

- Lacking of resources

- Mismatching of expectations

- Cultural obstacles

- Lacking of ownership

- Lack of collaboration

- Academic status obstacles

- Legacy from the past

- Challenges in meeting the needs of diverse learners

- Poor resources, materials, and classroom conditions

Multiple participants had significant responses to these two specific obstacles: cultural and academic status.

Subtheme: Cultural Obstacles

Cultural obstacles are issues arising from a misunderstanding or inaccurate adaptation of something caused by cultural differences between people who are living or studying in the same area. There are many aspects that create obstacles to the student's growth to consider. For example, a cultural divide is a common phenomenon within the African context. Cultural divide is defined as a boundary within society that separates communities whose social, economic, and religious values differ and do not allow for open relationships. Obstacles caused by cultural differences may hinder interactions between a mentor and a mentee. For example, in African culture, it is disrespectful to develop close relationships with older persons. Relationships tend to be formed with people who are similar in age and gender. Conceiving culture in an educational environment is like going backward as said by one student.

According to those interviewed, in the DRC, possible barriers to the implementation of mentoring relationships:

- Power differential between students and faculty

- Lack of consideration and of valuing women in society

- Biases and assumptions. For example, clothing may also be an obstacle, especially for Muslims, Church leaders, and Christian colleges. For women, a

special case is that women cannot get access to the UCBC campus wearing

pants or short clothes.

- Cultural stereotypes and lack of support prevent central African women from advancing in higher education. One staff member said "we feel uncomfortable when we are forbidden to wear pants at UCBC."

Obstacles to mentoring implementation include cultural obstacles, but many interviewers found that academic status was equally important.

Subtheme: Academic Status Obstacles

Academic status obstacles are when the faculty members are not approachable. Our participants, faculty, alumni, and students offered deeper insight into understanding the importance of mentoring in a Congolese setting. One common concept that participants mentioned is the status between the teacher and the students. One hundred percent of our interviewees agreed that this idea has been handed down through the ages. Classes are fully under the control of the teacher. A student is the receiver and often feels like he or she has nothing to give. People interviewed suggested that this gap in status between teacher and student often affects the mentoring relationship. Yet a mentor is the one who creates initiatives that can empower students, by giving them increased opportunities to utilize and improve their academic skills. Four out of five in focus groups supported the idea that culture is a big barrier to implementing mentoring at UCBC.

Conclusion

Interviews enlightened the result of our research and helped to understand deeply how teaching and learning are happened at UCBC. As teaching for holistic

transformation is the UCBC target, one hundred percent of our participants presented the need to encourage and support students' growth and presented some barriers that do not allow UCBC staff and students to establish good relationship. In the following chapter, our discussion will focus on giving implications found important for future research and some limitations faced during this research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

This research study is practical and intentional for those who have the call to be an educator. Within the African context, mentoring at UCBC could be a daily lifestyle and exercise. A lot of implications occur for making a whole education system affect or impact beneficiaries' life. In the pursuit of its vision, UCBC is facing significant issues because of the condition of higher education within Congolese politics and culture.

This research study is specific to UCBC. It is a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological case design utilized in order to understand the role of UCBC staff, administrators, and teachers in the mentoring program. The study attempts to analyze the effectiveness of mentoring process at UCBC and see how it impacts current students' lives and alumni, staff, and faculty's life experiences in ways that can help them become successful in their careers, as well as their professional and personal development.

Our central research question for this study asked: What is the impact of mentoring on student leadership development? The results of our research showed that mentoring had impacted students and continues to impact in a positive way students at UCBC. Our participants showed that success in their workplace is a result of their mentoring process at UCBC.

Freshman students coming straight from secondary school frequently have held the concept of a large status gap between teacher and student prior to being exposed to

university life. They are frequently surprised to see the relationship between teachers and students at UCBC. This idea of teacher–student mentoring seemed strange to students at first as they previously believed faculty to be unapproachable.

The goal of the holistic transformation of UCBC mentorship is to develop an ethic of life-long leaders. Our study encompassed recent graduates who have reflected upon the mentoring process and subsequently demonstrated leadership within their career choice.

Discussion and Findings

Participants pointed out that mentoring in their university experience must begin with orientation as new students, especially when someone is unfamiliar with academic life and doesn't know to interact within a new environment. One faculty said:

> I have been mentored at UCBC in different levels. From the beginning, coming from high school, we did not understand what mentoring means, but with time and seeing what was happening in these sessions, we really felt guided, accompanied, supported, and felt free to express all our thoughts. We talk about holistic transformation as a whole person concept and the inner outer spheres of one's life blend together. The mentor aspires to have that kind of integrated life and model it.

In the aspect of leadership, as mentioned by Amirianzadeh (2012), an alumni member of our focus group said that mentoring has enabled him and gave him potentials to lead teams and departments. Furthermore, he is a reference to all his colleagues, and he knows now to confront the challenges of the society. Mentoring has a significant impact on student leadership development because it helps faculty to increase student success and

self-confidence. In addition, mentoring helps discover students' skills and talents and how they can be useful within Congolese society. Our findings established a direct positive impact of mentoring on students' ability to integrate both academically and socially. Our participants agreed that mentoring has played a huge role at UCBC and has a significant value added to higher education. Our participants emphasized which characteristics of a good mentor made the most impact. This aspect seems to be significant because it depended on how each person considers his or her role. This means that the mentor is called to assume his or her specific responsibilities and the mentee to allow the mentor to play his or her role for the good of both.

As mentioned in our literature review, Oglethorpe (2020) states seven characteristics of a good mentor. Attributes are: "Being a good listener, committed to the mentoring relationship, generous, sharing knowledge and experience, trustworthy, honest and earning respect" (p. 16). In addition to these traits, our participants highlighted these attributes:

- To be a role model

- To maintain appropriate boundaries

- To show patience and tolerance

- To show enthusiasm

- To provide constructive feedback

Furthermore, participants mentioned many other ideas that could further strengthen the UCBC mentoring program. Ownership of the mentoring process emerged as a crucial idea because it requires a committed community of staff and students. If there is a high value within UCBC of the idea or concept of mentoring they will institutionalize

the mentoring program in the curriculum. There is a relationship between staff and students. It needs to be improved in a way that it might have a visible impact on student development and affect society.

Through our discussions with our participants, we found some ideas that were supported by Johnson (2015) in our literature review and realized that it happens at UCBC. Similar to what Johnson found, we also realized that mentoring is a personal and reciprocal relationship in which a more experienced person or faculty member—older or not than the mentee—acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced student or faculty member to whom he provides knowledge, advice, counsel, challenge, and support. Similar to Darko (2009), our participants noted that mentoring time at UCBC helped them to rebuild their relationships with teachers and classmates.

Faculty should be humble enough to allow students to feel accessible. The administration should develop trust and give students access to some leadership responsibilities and then evaluate its impact. This could be a life-long relationship, which continues even after the student graduates.

Implications for Practice

This section aims to provide some significant suggestions to UCBC based on what we heard from different focus groups that would help UCBC to implement mentoring. There are many ways to be explored in the future that would strengthen the mentoring program at UCBC.

1. Faculty, staff, and students should take ownership of the mentoring process and have both the same understanding and consideration to it.

2. They should also be intentional in the implementation of mentoring process in order to value it.

3. As the goal is a holistic transformation, student development should be a curricular priority. Referring to Glanzer et al. (2017), "the key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities, both in and outside the classroom." (p. 157)

4. UCBC's co-curricular, class design, and programs should integrate a consistent mentoring process and not take it as extra. All class activities and co-curricular activities should take in account mentoring process.

5. Staff and faculty should initiate a significant follow-up to ensure a good quality of training and learning toward their students as well as the impact of their mentoring process in their respective societies.

6. Cultural shifts should be important to help UCBC students and staff learn from any context that can allow them to develop to broad learning environment and get adapted easily whenever they have opportunity.

7. UCBC staff and faculty need to develop strong relationships in order to bring the mentee close to his mentor and then create a solid partnership.

Implications for Future Research

In the midst of conflict, poverty, and unstable context that affect higher education, researchers have many scientific options that would be important to be developed at UCBC. Responding to the need of community is the crucial reason of higher education.

Some research sectors are still open in order to have a great result on student leadership development. As UCBC is located in a place where students are the victims of a variety of challenges—such as militias' presence, kidnapping, rapes, and other kinds of violence—this opens doors for further research. Since UCBC is a place where many people have experienced trauma, numerous questions emerge. Consequently, future research can include:

1. What is the impact of trauma on mentoring relationships?

2. How are UCBC staff prepared to handle trauma?

3. How do we support females in mentoring process in a context where culture has challenges especially based on stereotypes?

4. What could UCBC accomplish with fewer faculty members mentoring a larger number of students?

Limitations

While research can use data collection methods that are trustworthy, every research study is constrained by its limitations, and this research is not an exception. First, this research is limited to the existing Congolese education system (banking-type education). This case study focuses on one institution, which limits the research field. Second, this research study is bounded on UCBC. It is limited and does not allow exploration of experiences from other institutions. The third and highly significant limitation is that the interviews were done in a secondary language in which most of the participants struggled to express their ideas in English. A final limitation is that eastern Congo is an area that is not safe in many ways because trauma has affected people's social interactions as mentioned previously.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was to determine the effectiveness and impact of mentoring on student leadership development at UCBC. We developed theories on how the relationship between a mentor and mentee affects the mentee's growth holistically. We determined mentorship works better if the mentor helps the mentee to achieve a goal. It impacts UCBC as an institution in terms of its leadership.

A qualitative methodology and phenomenology case study helped us to interview four UCBC faculty members and four focus groups composed by mixed students from different levels except freshmen. We also met with alumni who are now in stable life-long settings and using what they learned from the mentoring process. To discover the central themes which constituted the response to our research question, we transcribed all the responses from the interviewees, and they were coded and analyzed. As determined by our responses, alumni mentorship has a long-term impact and affects Congolese society.

One of the main themes was teaching for holistic transformation. Participants revealed that holistic transformation involves mentoring that goes beyond the classroom, beyond one-on-one relationships, and beyond courses grades. It touches the whole person's core, transforming all aspects of life and one's spiritual dimension. This transformation is relational, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, professional, and social. Another important theme is modeling positive character traits. Participants mentioned important characteristics of a positive mentor, revealing that our actions as a mentor are meaningful and impactful. Servant leadership and accountability, fostering student growth, and strengthening mentoring relationships were also mentioned to make sure that

a mentor plays an important role in the life of the mentee, but also that the mentor learns from the mentee. The last theme listed some obstacles in establishing a mentoring relationship. These obstacles are barriers to mentoring implementations, things that do not allow mentoring to happen efficiently either from the mentor's side or on the mentee's side. Common barriers were given in our focus group and one-on-one with staff, faculty, and administrators. Two specific barriers were presented as cultural and academic barriers. Cultural obstacles are the ones that come from a misunderstanding or inaccurate adaptation of something caused by cultural differences between people who are living or studying in the same area, while academic obstacles occur when faculty members are not approachable and when there is not a good and strong relationship between mentor and mentee.

Mentoring is a process that helps two people to build good relationship in order to facilitate learning and a holistic transformation. Mentoring is an exchange and transfer of knowledge, a relationship that provides support, guidance, counsel, skills, aptitudes, and character that bring the less experienced person to a level in which he becomes mature and important toward himself, acts responsibly, develops and positively impacts his life, career, and his community, and brings hope to his future.

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