

# IMPACT OF MENTORING ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT AMONG LIBRARIANS OF FEDERAL HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE

BY

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## ABSTRACT

*The study examined the impact of mentoring on career advancement among librarians of Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all librarians of Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Simple sampling technique was used to select ten (10) librarians from each of the chosen institutions to make a total of twenty (20) as sample of the study. Two research questions were used for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scale of Agree and Disagree. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that, mentoring is a tool in career development and advancement of librarians; it gives individuals the opportunity to be mentored in order to develop their career and makes them feel important by the organization. It is also beneficial to the library in fostering its image and objectives. Mentoring has the capacity of driving young librarians in discovering abilities and options they think they cannot. The adequately mentored young librarians contribute significantly to the decision making and provide better alternatives in fostering the aims and objectives of library. Therefore, Nigerian Library Association should continually remind members at annual conferences on the need for mentoring to improve the efficiency of the upcoming librarians. Mentoring programmes that are specific to the needs, especially to the career development needs should be put in place*

**Keywords:** *Mentoring, Career, Advancement, Librarians, Organization*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent time, mentoring has been an important tool for employee development in many organizations. A mentoring programme facilitates the relationship between mentor and mentee. The mentor supports the mentee's development needs by sharing his or her experience, and the mentee learns from the mentor's experience and plans his or her own personal development. Mentoring is usually part of corporate programmes such as career planning, talent management and succession planning. In the library profession, mentoring plays a key role in maintaining trained, informed and motivated employees. Pan and Hovde (2010) observe that mentoring is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and to maintain professionalism. Mentoring in librarianship is a process of learning and development based on a personal relationship in which an experienced librarian called a mentor helps a new young librarian called mentee to develop as a professional and achieve professional goals.

Chopra, Arora and Saint (2018) revealed that mentoring holds both the great potential for enhancing career success as well as the possibility of contributing to career blunders. Mentoring is focused primarily on the career development of someone less experience in field such as business and academic. Mentoring prospective young professional provides opportunity for both the young and the seasoned professionals to develop and refine the necessary skills to be successful in the diverse and rapidly evolving library and information science profession. Mentoring assist the young librarians put theoretical knowledge into practice, apply generalized concepts to specific responsibilities and become familiar with given job situations. Mentoring is also used as gimmicks for professional socialization, which encompasses processes and structures related to the workplace.

Edwards and Hunchliffe (2009) believe that, it is the process of internalizing the culture, values, beliefs, and norms of a profession and thereby becoming part of it. Mentoring relationships play a vital role in professional development. Nwabueze and Ozioko (2012) observe that no institution can exist without older and more experienced members passing on wisdom acquired over years to new members. Mentoring relationship is usually encouraged in order to provide a method of introducing and encouraging young librarians and other library personnel to work together. It also improves employee motivation, provides succession planning and enhances network and learning about the profession. The underlying philosophy of any mentoring programme is to allow the mentees find the best in themselves, live up to their personal visions and enhance their potentialities and skills. Mentoring would encompass a variety of activities, including advising, teaching, coaching, advocacy, sponsoring and role modeling as well as assistance with personal development and achieving a work life balance, (Geraci&Thypen 2017). In every career training, guidance and advice are integral part of professional and career development. Mentoring is one of the most effective strategies that is a standalone programme as part of an existing work force development programme.

Career advancement is characterized as a continuous process which is developed throughout an individual life. (Zanpantis et al 2017). It is therefore necessary for new intakes to receive mentoring in order to successfully cope with new challenges through career development. The transmission of

knowledge between mentors and mentees can be through both formal programme and informal relationship, which can foster the growth of staff to meet with current trends in librarianship. According to Sodipe and Madukoma (2013) formal and informal mentoring is one on one relationship where selection is dependent on personal choice of mentor or the mentee. It happens spontaneously based on mutual respect and rapport. Sometimes organization offer employees the opportunity to learn from another employee through the formal mentoring programme. Also employees choose their own mentor to counsel them and guide their career development process which creates an informal mentoring relationship.

Promoters and career success are related to mentoring, it helps individuals develop through a goal driven process in academic libraries. Mentors should ensure that they guide their mentees set and achieve their career goals in order to achieve career success. This motivates the mentee to achieve higher heights in the workforce. Several literatures have documented the benefits of mentorship, which include increased research productivity, faster academic promotion and career satisfaction (Tjan, 2017). In the process of mentoring the, mentee learns lessons that she/he can apply on their job in order to achieve career success. It is an experience that can lead to an emotion, which leads to self-transformation and development for both the mentor and the mentee (Allen & Eby 2011).

Mentorship has long played a critical role in training and career development of library staff. Mentoring programmes are emerging as tools for redefining professional values. Jonathan and Uwannah (2012) state that the role of mentoring helps in human resources development. These benefits have the potential to enhance productivity in academic libraries. Mentorship is essential to the success of every library. Mentoring helps to share knowledge vertically between individuals at all stages of their career. It can automatically reduce the learning curve and help revitalize the work force. The strongest mentoring programme have mentors who take their role seriously to serve as role model and instructor and they work side by side with the mentees which often goes hand-in-hand with an institutional attitude that holds mentor's position as a value and professional responsibility. A good mentor will both support and provide honest criticism to mentee in an effect to guide him/her from making unwise professional decisions. Mentoring helps in the transition of new library staff into the work of research and service.

Mentorship according to Okurame and Balogun(2005) is especially important in today's rapidly changing environment which has extended the period of learning and training across the career span of library staff. Mentorship is essential to the success of every library; it should therefore be elevated to the level of a major strategic priority. It will also capitalize on an institution's intellectual resources that seek to develop professionals. Successful mentoring nurture mentees who eventually develop into leaders and become mentors themselves. Mentoring can lead to increase job satisfaction in librarian's assigned duties and this will lead to the provision of better services to the library users, (Ramos & Green 2007). In concluding on what mentoring does to job duties, they stated that mentoring improves job satisfaction, career advancement and professionalism in the life of the librarian mentored (the mentee). Since mentoring have two types amongst others which is formal and informal

mentoring, job duties fall under formal mentoring which according to Tejup (2016), the mentor puts an eye on how the mentee will be trained, guiding, ensuring that the mentee gets all the moral support required and thus this gives the librarians (mentee) mentored assured confidence, skills and well-versed in library duties.

Mentoring according to Howland (2018) provides many benefits to the library, its librarians and users. Hence, he stated that “in almost all professions, and certainly librarianship, the formation of mentoring relationship has been shown to be one of the most significant factors in contributing to retention, promotion and long-term success which are perfected through mentoring on job duties. When the job performed by the librarians in the academic libraries is closely supervised by a supervisor to the subordinates the tendencies of having a smart result is high. Mentoring job duties however, is a very sensitive area to be hove in the daily activities of the librarian in academic library. Since it has been established from literature that mentoring is all about the transmission of knowledge and skills, especially the process that supports professional learning and skills development usually between more experienced individual who is willing to learn and share his professional and personal skills and experiences with a less experienced individual who is also willing to learn and grow in the same profession, and that mentoring relationship play a vital role in professional development, there is therefore need to determine the impact of mentoring on career advancement among librarians of Federal College of Education Abeokuta, Ogun State.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To identify the benefits of mentoring to librarians of both Federal College of Education (FCE), Abeokuta and Federal University of Agriculture (FUNAAB), Abeokuta.
- ii. To examine the mentoring strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians of Federal College of Education, Abeokuta and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the study, the research questions are;

- i. What are the benefits of mentoring to librarians of Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State?
- ii. What are the mentoring strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians of Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all librarians of Federal College of Education and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Simple sampling technique was used to select ten (10) librarians from each of the chosen institutions to make a total of

twenty (20) as sample for the study. Two research questions were raised and answered in this study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scales of Agreed and Disagreed. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage statistical tool.

**Results**

**Table 1:** What are the benefits of mentoring to librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State?

**Table 1: The benefits of Mentoring to Librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State**

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean (x̄)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Mentoring allows for the acquisition of professional librarianship skills which protégée can apply in diverse circumstances with fewer errors	15	75.0%	5	25.0%	3.20	1.078
2.	Mentoring fosters professional development, career growth and job satisfaction of both the mentors and the mentees	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	3.17	0.884
3.	Mentoring helps in the understanding of specific library culture and unspoken rule	14	70.0%	6	30.0%	2.98	1.012
4.	Mentoring promotes the image of librarianship profession	14	70.0%	6	30.0%	3.17	1.088
5.	Mentoring promotes sense of harmony and creates positive work environment in libraries	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	3.22	1.079
<b>Weighted Mean (x̄) = 3.148 and STD = 1.0282</b>							

Table 1 above, shows that mentoring allows for the acquisition of professional librarianship skills which protégée can apply in diverse circumstances with fewer errors ( $\bar{x} = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 1.078$ ), mentoring fosters professional development, career growth and job satisfaction of both the mentors and the mentees ( $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.884$ ), mentoring helps in the understanding of specific library culture and unspoken rule ( $\bar{x} = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.012$ ), mentoring promotes the image of librarianship profession ( $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.088$ ) and mentoring promotes sense of harmony and creates positive work environment in libraries ( $\bar{x} = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 0.841$ ). From table 1 above, research question 1 has a weighted mean of 3.148 while the bench mark is 2.50. It can be concluded that mentoring has great benefits among librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the mentoring strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State?

**Table 2: Mentoring Strategies that could be used for the Career Advancement of Librarians**

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Seminar and conferences	16	75.0%	4	25.0%	3.15	1.016
2.	Joining professional association	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	3.43	0.954
3.	Staff rotation among Library departments and sections	18	90.0%	2	10.0%	3.56	0.819
4.	One on one mentoring	17	85.0%	3	15.0%	3.11	1.058
5.	Orientation programmes	15	75.0%	5	25.0%	3.30	1.008
<b>Weighted Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) = 3.308 and STD = 0.971</b>							

Table 2 above, shows seminar and conferences as strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians ( $\bar{x} = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 1.016$ ), joining professional association ( $\bar{x} = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.954$ ), staff rotation among library departments and sections ( $\bar{x} = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.819$ ), one on one mentoring ( $\bar{x} = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.058$ ) and *orientation programmes* ( $\bar{x} = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.008$ ). From table 2 above, research question 2 has a weighted mean of 3.308 which is above the bench mark of 2.50. It can be concluded that there are mentoring strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 revealed the benefits of mentoring to librarians of FCE and FUNAAB, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Mentoring enhances professional skill acquisition, career growth, job satisfaction confidence building. It also equips new librarian for leadership positions, promotes the image of the library and the profession. It provides a powerful growth experience for both the mentor and mentees. These results are in acceptance to the findings of Okurame and Balogun (2015) where they assert that mentoring gives the transfer of skills that mentees can apply in different professional instances. Also, Jonathan and Uwannah (2012) posit that effective mentoring provides mentees with opportunity to meditate about career progress, promotes enthusiasm and increase quality of job performance. Munro (2009) opines that mentoring is a fast way of preparing new incumbents to ascend the professional and leadership ladder. Overall, the positive outcomes of mentoring are capable of fostering a satisfied and well-groomed professional workforce for leadership.

Table 2 above, shows seminar and conferences as strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians. The finding revealed seminar and conferences, joining professional association, staff rotation among library departments and sections, one on one mentoring and *orientation programmes* as mentoring strategies that could be used for the career advancement among librarians of Federal

College of Education Abeokuta, Ogun State. These findings echo that of Nsala (2013) who asserted that there are many methods of mentoring for competency and professional development of librarians. The most widely accepted are the one-on-one mentoring, attendance of seminars and conferences, joining the professional library associations, on the job training, in-service training, orientation programmes and staff rotation in the various department of the library. These methods can bring about effective results on building competency and career growth.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mentoring is a tool in career development and advancement of librarians. It gives individuals the opportunity to be mentored in order to develop their career and makes them feel like valuable by the organization. Mentoring is an effective tool for building the capability of mentors and the mentees. It is also beneficial to the library in fostering its image and objectives. Mentoring has the capacity of driving young librarians in discovering abilities and options they think they cannot. The adequately mentored young librarians contribute significantly to the decision making and provide better alternatives in fostering the aims and objectives of library. Therefore, in order to maximize the skills and library workplace competencies and efficiency, the older professionals must put mentoring programme to work in order to build strong relationship and help groom the future leaders in librarianship, foster professional development, and promote the image of the profession and to sustain competency, effectiveness and timely delivery of library services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Academic libraries should adopt mentoring programme for staff in order to increase their skills for greater productivity.
2. The Nigerian Library Association (NLA) should continually remind members at annual conferences on the need for mentoring to improve the efficiency of the upcoming librarians.
3. Mentors are encouraged to be patient with the mentees as positive changes may not show up for several months in them.
4. Mentors should be careful about the request they make from their mentees, since the mentees are inclined to please their mentors and may perceive a request as a demand.
5. Library management should educate both mentors and mentees on the benefits of mentoring to the profession.
6. Mentors and mentees should be given adequate training by the library management in order for them to know what is expected of them.
7. Mentoring programme that is specific to the needs, especially to the career development needs should be put in place.

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