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Benefits of Mentoring Practices for Professional Development of Librarians in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Helen Famaren Tor-Akwer
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi, famarentor@gmail.com

Dominic Aondohemba Ihongo
dominic.ihongo@uam.edu.ng

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BY

TOR-AKWER HELEN FAMAREN Ph.D

FSI Library, Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State.

Email: famarentor@gmail.com

GSM: 07031272604 and 09074440716

ABSTRACT

This study examined the benefits of mentoring practices for professional development by librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria. The study utilized four research questions and one hypothesis. It adopted the descriptive research design. The entire population of 257 librarians was studied because they were accessible and manageable, made up of both federal, state and private universities. A structured questionnaire titled "Awareness and Adoption of Mentoring Practices for Professional Development of Librarians in University Libraries in North Central Nigeria (AAMPPDL)" and interview schedule were used to collect the required information from the respondents. The responses were coded in a 4-point rating scale. The result of the trial test for internal consistency of the instrument gave a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.89. The Findings revealed that areas of professional development of librarians that require mentoring are in areas like appraising of librarians, library management making available all the needful as it relates to mentoring. It was revealed that level of awareness of mentoring practices are for professional development of librarians in areas like evaluation, publications and it creates unity within the workforce, as well as create a friendly relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The study recommended areas such as

appraising of librarians, librarians attending professional Association meetings such as workshops, conferences and seminars., making e-mentoring facilities available for librarians by library managements and guidelines and procedures given to participate to guide their conduct.

Key words: Benefits, Mentoring Pratices, Professional development, Librarians, University Libraries.

Introduction

Universities are vital tools for improving instructional learning. This could be achieved through competent manpower development for public sector management. A university is an institution at the highest level of education where one can study for a degree or do research (Hornby,2000). The aims of universities are to develop academic programmes at all levels of university education; helps men and women enjoy richer, more meaningful lives; prepare many people for professional careers as doctors, engineers, librarians or teachers, etc. In doing so, a university education enables individuals to participate with greater understanding in community affairs. However, universities cannot achieve these functions if they are not supported by functional libraries. Israel (2011) supported this position when he noted that a university library is a part of a university system which aims at the advancement of the functions of its parent body.

Insala (2013) identified the main purpose of a university library as to support the university in areas of effective learning, teaching and research. Based on the above objective, Fabunmi (2004) identified the main function of the university library as to support the teaching- learning process and research need of the faculty and graduate students. Attama and Ezema cited by Sambe (2008) outline the functions of academic library which university libraries are part of as to

provide information needs of the community, provide reference materials for all levels of readers, to provide lending services appropriate to different types of users and to provide adequate reading environment for recreation reading and reading for self-development.

University libraries all over the world are established to support their parent institutions in actualizing their objectives of teaching, learning and research in different formats. University libraries are thus the treasure trove of knowledge which cater for the needs of scholars, scientists, technocrats, researchers, students and others who are directly associated with the mainstream of higher education.

University libraries are established to help their communities in teaching, learning, research and entertainment activities. They are repositories of information and knowledge from all fields of learning relevant to the academic community which they serve. Due to their exalted position as the citadels of research and teaching, volumes of information generated and processed on daily basis are enormous (Ugwuanyi , 2011). Therefore, there is need for librarians in these libraries to continue to acquire knowledge and competencies that would enable them perform their functions effectively.

Librarians in University libraries have academic status just like their counterparts in the faculty. Adeniji and Adeniji (2010) observe that librarians in Nigerian universities have enjoyed academic status since the days of John Harris, when the University College (now University of Ibadan) was set up in 1948. According to Edwards and Hinchcliff (2009) and Adeniji and Adeniji (2010), librarians as academics have major responsibilities that border on the following areas: Organization of recorded knowledge and information, Research and publication, Teaching and instructional duties, Reference and user services and Information resources. Professional development is a life time learning

process which is universal or individualized. Pan and Hovde (2010) observe that it is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and to maintain professionalism. It is also individualized experience because it varies with the needs of specific duties as well as resources available around one's working, social and academic environments. There is a variety of approaches to professional development. These include consultation, coaching, and communication of practice, technical assistance, reflective supervision and mentoring (Ritchie &Genoni 2008).

Professional development is the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge and skills that relate to one's profession, job responsibilities or work environment (Spencer and Ard, 2006). It plays a key role in maintaining trained, informed and motivated employees regardless of job classification. Pan and Hovde (2010) also observe that it is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and to maintain professionalism. There are varieties of approaches to professional development as reported by (Richie & Genoni, 2008), however this present study focused only on mentoring activities.

Objective of the study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the benefits of mentoring practices for professional development of librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the benefit of mentoring practices by librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

2. Identify areas of mentoring benefited by librarians for professional development in university libraries.

3. Establish mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria

4. Determine extent of utilizing the mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries.

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits mentoring practices of by librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria?

2. What are the areas of mentoring benefited by librarians for professional development in university libraries in North Central Nigeria?

3. What are the mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries?

4. What is the extent of utilizing the mentoring activities in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance;

Ho1: The is no significant difference in benefits of mentoring practices among librarians based on school ownership in North Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research can either be qualitative or quantitative. The study was conducted in North-Central Nigeria which comprises of the

following states; Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, plateau and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. There are several universities- federal, state and private in the zone were used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all the 257 respondents comprising of all categories of librarians in all the federal state and private universities were used for the study. There was no need for sampling since the population size is not large and could be properly managed. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data in the research. The research was closed and open ended. The data collected was studied from as any angles as possible such as mean and standard deviation to explore the new facts. The quantitative data collected from questionnaire was coded and summarized using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). The researcher utilized descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation with midpoint of mean of 2.50, analyze and interpret data collected for the questionnaire and ANOVA to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Question 1: What are the benefits of mentoring practices by librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of benefits of mentoring practices by librarians in university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

sn		Ownership						Overall		R	D
		Federal		State		Private					
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Appraising of librarians	2.48	.99	2.68	.99	3.29	.87	3.38	.88	1st	A
2	Library management	2.06	.93	2.48	1.11	3.20	.90	3.22	.79	2nd	A

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3	Librarians attend professional Association meetings such as workshops, conference and seminars	2.83	.97	2.93	.98	3.10	1.16	3.12	.83	3rd A
4	The mentor and the mentee sharing of information	2.58	.91	3.13	.91	3.73	.67	2.96	1.05	4th A
5	Library management gives participant procedure and guidelines with which to conduct their relationship	2.38	1.00	2.87	1.06	3.17	1.02	2.91	.90	4th A
6	Participation without fear of failure in any assignment.	3.16	.77	3.28	.67	3.56	.59	2.81	.96	6th A

7	Mentees be encouraged by way of delegating to them certain assignments by mentors	2.68	.93	3.11	.83	3.29	.78	2.79	1.03	7th	A
8	Professional independence of mentees.	2.84	.98	3.07	.95	3.22	.85	2.49	1.08	8th	D
9	Library management making available means of having E-mentoring by librarians.	2.05	.99	2.73	1.18	3.61	.63	2.47	1.09	9th	D
	Cluster Mean	**2.56**	**.94**	**2.92**	**.96**	**3.35**	**.83**	**2.91**	**.97**		**A**

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that, the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the nine (9) identified areas of professional development of librarians that require mentoring practices had mean values ranging from 3.38 to 2.47 which indicates that only seven (7) item were above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a 4 point rating scale. The above findings indicated that the respondents agreed these items which includes appraising of librarians (mean=3.38); Library management making available all the needful as it relate mentoring. and professional development (mean=3.32); Librarians attend professional Association meetings (mean=3.12);The mentor and the mentee sharing of information (mean=2.96); Library management gives participant procedure and guidelines with which to conduct their relationship

(mean=2.91); Participation without fear of failure in any assignment (mean=2.81) and Mentees be encouraged by way of delegating to them certain assignments by mentors (mean=2.79) were areas of professional development of librarians that require mentoring practices

Research question 2: What are the areas of mentoring benefited by librarians for professional development in university libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings the areas of mentoring practices benefited by librarians for professional development in university libraries.

sn								Overall		R	D
		Ownership									
		Federal		State		Private					
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Help in evaluation of mentoring practices	3.08	.84	3.09	.79	3.34	.69	3.13	.80		**HE**
2	Help in the quality of librarians publications and appraisal	3.02	.92	3.12	.84	3.22	.96	3.09	.90		**HE**
3	Create unity within the work force	2.93	1.00	3.12	.88	3.29	.90	3.05	.95		**HE**
4	Gives a better understanding of librarianship	2.94	.85	3.07	.78	3.27	.81	3.03	.83		**HE**
5	Create efficiency	2.76	.94	3.17	.70	3.29	.98	2.98	.91		**HE**
6	Enhance productivity	2.73	.95	2.95	.94	3.66	.69	2.95	.96		**HE**

sn		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	R D
7	Establishes friendly relationship between mentor and mentee	2.88	.98	2.96	.80	3.12	.81	2.94	.90	HE
8	Professional issues like agenda, sharing information are easily handled	2.90	.95	2.87	.89	3.15	.94	2.93	.93	HE
9	Gives satisfaction on the job	2.74	.94	2.99	.85	3.24	.86	2.90	.92	HE
	Cluster Mean	**2.89**	**.93**	**3.04**	**.83**	**3.29**	**.85**	**3.00**	**.90**	**HE**

The respondents were asked to indicate their awareness of uses of mentoring practices for professional development among librarians, using the principle of real limit of numbers responses to Table 3 revealed that the respondents indicated that to a high extent it help in evaluation of mentoring practices(mean=3.13); help in the quality of librarians publications and appraisal (mean=3.09); it create between mentor and mentee (mean=2.94); Professional issues like agenda, sharing information are easily handled (mean=2.93) and it gives satisfaction on the job(mean=2.90).

Research question 3: What are the mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria

Table 3: Mean Ratings of uses of mentoring practices for professional development among librarians in university libraries

sn		Overall	R D

		Ownership								
		Federal		**State**		**Private**				
		Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	
1	Help in evaluation of mentoring practices	3.08	.84	3.09	.79	3.34	.69	3.13	.80	**HE**
2	Help in the quality of librarians publications and appraisal	3.02	.92	3.12	.84	3.22	.96	3.09	.90	**HE**
3	Create unity within the work force	2.93	1.00	3.12	.88	3.29	.90	3.05	.95	**HE**
4	Gives a better understanding of librarianship	2.94	.85	3.07	.78	3.27	.81	3.03	.83	**HE**
5	Create efficiency	2.76	.94	3.17	.70	3.29	.98	2.98	.91	**HE**
6	Enhance productivity	2.73	.95	2.95	.94	3.66	.69	2.95	.96	**HE**
7	Establishes friendly relationship between mentor and mentee	2.88	.98	2.96	.80	3.12	.81	2.94	.90	**HE**
8	Professional issues like agenda, sharing information are easily handled	2.90	.95	2.87	.89	3.15	.94	2.93	.93	**HE**
9	Gives satisfaction on the	2.74	.94	2.99	.85	3.24	.86	2.90	.92	**HE**

job								
Cluster Mean	**2.89**	**.93**	**3.04**	**.83**	**3.29**	**.85**	**3.00**	**.90**	**HE**

The respondents were asked to indicate their awareness of uses of mentoring practices for professional development among librarians, using the principle of real limit of numbers responses to Table 3 revealed that the respondents indicated that to a high extent it help in evaluation of mentoring practices(mean=3.13); help in the quality of librarians publications and appraisal (mean=3.09); it create unity within the work force (mean=3.05); it gives a better understanding of librarianship (mean=3.03); it create efficiency (mean=2.98); it enhance productivity (mean=2.95); it establishes friendly relationship between mentor and mentee (mean=2.94); Professional issues like agenda, sharing information are easily handled (mean=2.93) and it gives satisfaction on the job(mean=2.90).

Looking at the three types of school ownership in the study, it is observed that private institution have the greatest mean of ($\bar{x}$=3.29) as against the state school with ($\bar{x}$=3.04) and that federal ($\bar{x}$ =2.89), indicating that private school have greater view of uses of mentoring practices for professional development among librarians in university libraries

The standard deviation values for the nine items ranged from 0.80 to .95 which implied that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses and that their responses were not far from mean.

Research Question 4: What is the extent of utilizing the mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians in federal university libraries?

Table 5: Mean Ratings of extent of utilizing the mentoring practices used by librarians for their professional development.

sn		Ownership						Overall		R	D
		Federal		State		Private					
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Accelerates career advancement in librarianship.	3.28	.81	3.16	.81	2.56	.84	3.12	.85		HE
2	Contributes to the quality of their publications.	3.19	.78	3.05	.80	2.73	.87	3.07	.81		HE
3	Reduces communication barrier	2.91	.94	3.11	.97	2.80	.84	2.95	.93		HE
4	Enhance learning culture in the library.	2.86	.81	2.76	.93	3.27	.78	2.90	.86		HE
5	Creates efficiency.	3.12	.76	3.08	.87	1.85	.94	2.89	.95		HE
6	Develop the habit of confidentiality.	2.95	.88	2.75	.97	2.83	.95	2.87	.92		HE
7	Develop the habit of trust in the library	2.83	.98	2.67	1.02	2.73	.92	2.76	.98		HE
8	Develop the habit of confidentiality.	2.28	.97	2.33	1.04	2.66	.99	2.36	1.00		LE
9	Reduces communication	1.93	1.04	2.65	1.13	2.80	1.03	2.30	1.13		LE

Cluster Mean	**2.82**	**.89**	**2.84**	**.95**	**2.69**	**.91**	**2.80**	**.94**	**HE**

The respondents were asked to indicate extent mentoring practices used by librarians contribute to their professional development, using the principle of real limit of numbers responses to Table 5 revealed that the respondents indicated that mentoring practices used by librarians contribute to a high extent to professional development in the areas of acceleration of career advancement in librarianship (mean=3.12); Contributes to the quality of their publications (mean=3.07); barrier Improve team work (mean=2.95);Enhance learning culture in the library (mean=2.90); Creates efficiency (mean=2.89); Increase job satisfaction. (mean=2.87) and Develop the habit of trust in the library (mean=2.76), while to low extent in the areas of Develop the habit of confidentiality. (mean=2.36) and Reduces communication barrier (mean=2.30)

Looking at the three types of school ownership in the study, it is observed that state institution have the greatest mean of ($\bar{x}$=2.84) as against the federal school with ($\bar{x}$=2.82) and that private ($\bar{x}$=2.69), indicating that state school have greater view of extent mentoring practices used by librarians contribute to their professional development.

The standard deviation values for the nine items ranged from 0.81 to 1.13 which implied that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses and that their responses were not far from the mean.

Finally the overall mean score of 2.80 shows that librarians are to high extent believe that mentoring practices used by librarians contribute to their professional development.

Discussion of findings

Benefits mentoring practices of by librarians in university libraries

Research question 1 on the benefits of mentoring practices revealed that respondents have benefited from mentoring practices such as: less experienced willingly seek advice and guidance

from experience librarians at any time and experienced librarians collaborate on professional issues like agenda, share information on conferences, seminars and workshops, while on items such as less experienced librarians are paired with experienced librarians for professional development, librarians belong to online forums such as linked-in which help them to share ideas. Mortorana (2004) gave the notion that Continuing Professional Development (CDP) models are workshops, seminars, conferences, professional institutes, one-on-one training, job exchange, coaching, mentoring and self-direct study.

Areas of mentoring benefited by librarians for professional development

Professional development of Librarian can be visible through mentoring in areas like Appraising of librarians, Library management making available all the needful as it relate mentoring. and professional development, Librarians attend   professional Association meetings such as workshops, conference and seminars, The mentor and the mentee sharing of information, Library management gives   participant procedure and guidelines with which to conduct their relationship, Participation without fear of failure in any assignment and Mentees be encouraged by way of delegating to them certain assignments by mentors.

Mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians

Research question 3 was on mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians, through the results of the study, it is strongly agreed that all the items such as: create efficiency, enhance productivity, give satisfaction on the job, gives a better understanding of librarianship, help in evaluation of mentoring practices, professional issues like agenda, sharing information are easily handled, create unity within the work force, help in the quality of librarians publications and appraisal, establishes friendly relationship between mentor and mentee are benefits of mentoring activities to professional development of librarians.

Extent of utilizing the mentoring practices in use for professional development of librarians.

Research question 4 was on extent of utilizing mentoring practices by librarian for their professional development in areas such as improved The extent of use of team work, accelerated career advancement among librarians as well as developing confidentiality among librarians. The findings revealed that mentoring practices used by librarians contribute to their profession development at a very high extent when the methods are practiced, it further shows that it Improves team work, Enhance learning culture in the library, Accelerates career advancement in librarianship, Contributes to the quality of their publications, Creates efficiency, Reduces communication barrier, Increase job satisfaction, Develop the habit of trust in the library, Develop the habit of confidentiality**.**

Conclusions

Librarianship in Nigeria, as in the rest of the world is a strategic field. It has different roles and opportunities for essential development of the nation. Findings of the study indicate that librarians have benefited mostly on the in mentoring practice for their professional development. This shows the areas and extent of mentoring practices in these universities libraries by librarians.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the study There is need to encourage the act and principle of mentoring in university library so as to actualize University vision or goals. The University library authority should ensure awareness by both mentors and mentees, so that those who have been mentored

early in their careers may in turn serves as mentor to others in the future thus, in order to make mentoring activity a self-perpetuating phenomenon that ensures maintenance of professional standards, achievement of excellence and integration of knowledge within the career.

Librarians should be encouraged to have mentoring practices that will not discriminate but that will offer the right approach to learning and acquisition of skills necessary. The University library authority should ensure that librarians share time, knowledge, skill and competencies beyond administrative and supervisor supervisee relationship

There is need for library management to actively promote the mentoring practices and give it the deserved concern so as to enable the library to perform its role as the heart of its parent institution.

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