



Mentoring Patterns and Perceptions among Nigerian Librarians

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Abstract

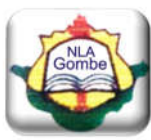
Mentoring addresses the disparities in professional competencies, experiences, qualifications, beliefs and perceptions between novices and experienced professionals. Mentoring has however been a neglected area in librarianship hence this study. The study set out to determine the socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions and mentoring patterns of Nigerian librarians and to identify existing inter relationships among study variables. The study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey involving 200 randomly selected librarians from 18 libraries spread across six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.84$) was the data collection instrument with 69.5% response rate. All data were analysed using SPSS version 17. The findings of the study revealed that majority (60.4%) of the respondents were in the middle age bracket (41-60). There was a greater preponderance of males. The findings of the study revealed that mentoring was perceived to be a development opportunity by the study respondents. Mentoring patterns identified included: helping mentees identify their strengths and weaknesses; sharing from personal experiences and providing tutelage. Significant relationships were identified between perceptions and patterns of mentoring and library type. Adoption of More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) theory. MKO approach to mentoring was recommended with regular feedback mechanism. The study concludes that most new librarians do not possess the necessary skills on employment, mentoring is a good way of helping new librarians in the profession irrespective of the type of library.

Keywords: mentors, mentoring patterns, mentoring perceptions, librarians, Nigeria.

Introduction

The mentoring concept has its origins in Greek mythology from the name of an old man in whose care Odysseus a Greek leader during the Trojan war left his son Telemachus. Mentor was said to have guided the boy Telemachus over a ten year period until he became a man (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Based on ancient Greek mythology, mentoring involves the provision of emotional support and guidance given to a younger individual (mentee) by a more mature, experienced and probably older person (mentor). It is well documented in literature in several disciplines which involves tutelage due to the application of practical skills (Nnaji, Nnaji, Shabi and Agu, 2013). From the librarianship perspective, mentoring is a process of learning and development which is based on a personal relationship wherein an experienced librarian (mentor) helps a new librarian (mentee) to develop professionally and achieve career goals (Idoko, Ugwuanyi & Osadebe, 2016). A distinguishing feature of a mentoring relationship is that it is embedded in a career context or professional development.

Librarianship is a knowledge based profession which deals with systematic collection, processing, organizing, evaluation and dissemination of information. Alluding to the practice of mentoring in the librarianship profession, Kenefick and Devito (2015) observed that as the mentoring experience evolved, it became difficult to distinguish between the mentor and the mentee because both librarians clearly understood that discussing common issues was mutually beneficial. Little wonder, Adekoya and Fasac (2021) opined that mentorship is crucial to the success and accomplishment of librarianship in the contemporary era. Concurring, Goldman (2011) stated that mentoring involved all activities and programs which supports the career growth and progression of the mentee by providing coaching, visibility, protection and



challenging assignments in addition to the provision of confirmation, counselling, and friendship. Idoko, Ugwuanyi and Osadebe (2016) summed up mentoring in the librarianship profession as a process of learning and development based on a personal relationship in which an experienced librarian called a mentor helps a new librarian or mentee to develop and achieve professional goals. Mentoring within this context is unlike any other because it is embedded and intertwined with career development and progression in librarianship.

Martin-Yeboah (2016) clearly delineated two major approaches to mentoring viz formal and informal approaches which are being adopted the world over in several other professions. In the same vein, Anozie and Ike (2017) indicated that although newer younger Nigerian librarians are a bit knowledgeable about the concept of mentoring, there is evidence of informal mentoring activities especially in the academic libraries. The submission was corroborated by Maleck and Bonanni (2020) who affirmed that mentor-mentee relationships can happen either informally and formally, within their home library or across the profession. The two approaches are being adopted the world over in several other professions and each has its own merits and demerits. A study by Nwankwo, Anozie and Ike (2017) suggests that although newer, younger Nigerian librarians are a bit knowledgeable about the concept of mentoring, there is evidence of informal mentoring activities especially in the academic libraries. They further stated categorically that Nigerian librarians are not so conversant with mentoring as a concept and are unaware of what mentoring programmes and practices are presently being carried out in the various libraries to ensure their upward mobility academically. It has been acknowledged that effective workplace mentoring can lead to improved capacity building for the newer librarians and subsequently, improved service delivery and performance quality. The mentoring process however has its own challenges because not all mentor-mentee relationships are effective and have positive outcomes.

In a study of the components of an effective mentoring relationship by Eller, Lev and Feurer (2015), mentees identified components of successful mentoring outcomes such as reciprocal relationships which borders on mutual respect and openness in communication, guidance and support in the role transition process and other planned mentoring activities. Similarly, mentoring activities also identified aspects of successful mentoring to involve communication and connectedness, planned activities, career development, shared authority and knowledge as with the mentee. Mentoring however, is not without its challenges. The most common challenges found in mentor-mentee relationships according to Eller, Lev and Feurer (2015) were availability of time and maintaining an egalitarian relationship which corroborated the findings of an earlier study by Robbeloth, Eng and Weiss (2013). Conversely, professional competence, knowledge and skills required for optimal performance are acquired on the job rather than in the classroom. During the period of academic training in library school, much head knowledge is gained but the actual requisite skills for daily routines carried out in the various types of libraries are gained during the brief period of industrial training and majorly through the mentoring process in a mentor-mentee relationship in the workplace.

Freedman (2009) asserted that effective mentoring is essential to the growth and success of the librarianship. It has been widely recognized as a way of facilitating workplace learning. The mentoring process encourages the use of guided learning to develop the requisite knowledge and skills for optimal job performance. Freeman (2009) further surmised that the impact of effective mentoring for librarians at the departmental level, institutional level and professional associations cannot be undermined because new librarians require assistance to navigate uncharted waters, moreso with new and evolving trends, emerging technologies and shifting paradigms in librarianship.



Mentoring is a deliberate nurturing process whereby the mentor focuses on the professional career development of the mentee to their full potential (Abamara & Anazodo, 2015). In the view of Idoko et al., (2016) when carefully and consciously carried out, mentoring sharpens the lives of the individuals in their formative years before they undertake any form of increased responsibility. It suggests that mentoring is a period of practical tutelage in various aspects of librarianship before a new librarianship is saddled with responsibilities.

Theoretical background of mentoring perceptions

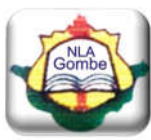
Mentoring programmes are broadly divided into two viz; formal and informal. The formal program is often a structured relationship between the mentor and the mentee involving an objective, continuous action plan with a specific time frame. (Afolabi et al., 2015). An informal mentoring programme on the other hand is a spontaneous relationship which has been formed over time. Buell (2004) as cited in Martin-Yeboah (2016) explained the mentoring process using four models, the four models are the Cloning, Nurturing, Friendship and Apprenticeship models. It is gratifying to note that irrespective of the type of mentoring programme whether formal or informal and the model applied, there exists three common components which are the Mentor, the Mentee and the Mentoring process itself. Vygotsky (1981) ushered in the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) theory. The basis is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. The MKO here refers to anyone who has a higher ability level or better understanding than the learner, in this case, the mentor and the mentee. In order to ensure effective outcomes of the mentoring process, mentees should be paired with highly motivated MKOs in order to elicit the desirable and acceptable professional behaviours. This study adapts the apprenticeship model of mentoring and is hinged upon the Vygotsky (1981) More Knowledgeable Other Theory (MKO). The theory explains that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. MKO signifies any individual who has a higher ability level or a better understanding than the learner. Applying the MKO theory to mentoring, the MKO is the mentor while the learner is the mentee. In order to ensure effective outcomes from the mentoring process, mentees should be paired with highly motivated MKO's in order to elicit positive, desirable and acceptable professional behaviours. Freedman (2009) suggested that librarians in need of mentoring may need to look outside their libraries in order to obtain full mentoring support and to avoid possible obstacles related to authority and dependency in a boss/subordinate relationship. Idoko et al. (2016) summarily stated that in librarianship, mentoring is a learning process based and a personal relationship where an experienced librarian (mentor) helps a new librarian (mentee) to develop and achieve professional goals. The process is intertwined with career development.

Librarianship is multifaceted and therefore to ensure a seamless adaptation, a new librarian needs a mentor so as to a gain a diverse knowledge portfolio in the shortest time. It has been acknowledged that effective workplace mentoring leads to improve capacity building and subsequent improved services and performance quality. There is a paucity of literature on perceptions of mentoring patterns which led to the conceptualization of the present study. The study therefore was embarked upon to identify the perceptions of mentoring and patterns of mentoring among practicing librarian in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

1. ascertain out the socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians.
2. determine the perceptions of Nigerian librarians on mentoring?
3. ascertain the relationship between socio-demographics (age, gender, qualification, professional status) and perceptions of mentoring.
4. identify the mentoring patterns among Nigerian librarians.



5. find out the relationship between mentoring patterns and socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians.

Research questions

Five research questions were answered by the study:

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians?
2. What are the perceptions of Nigerian librarians on mentoring?
3. Is there any relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians and their perceptions of mentoring?
4. What is the observed pattern of mentoring among Nigerian librarians?
5. Is there any relationship between mentoring patterns and socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians?

Methods and Study Design

The study was a descriptive, cross sectional survey involving all categories of librarians in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. All librarians in academic, school, and special libraries in Nigeria were involved in the study. Three libraries (North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-South South-East and South-West) an academic, a special and a school library) were randomly chosen from each of the six geopolitical zones of the country. Using the institutional databases of the libraries, 200 librarians were randomly selected from the 18 sampled libraries for the study. Data was collected using a validated and trial tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire which was developed by the researchers. The reliability coefficient (α) of the instrument was found to be 0.84 which was within the acceptable range. The questionnaire was in 3 segments. Section A elicited responses on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B elicited responses on the perceptions of mentoring activity being carried out in the various libraries while section C elicited responses on mentoring patterns.

Out of the 200 administered questionnaires only 139 were properly filled and returned giving a response rate of 69.5%. Ethical issues such as voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses and anonymity of respondents were duly ensured by the researchers. All data obtained were analysed using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) version 17. Data collected was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, means and percentages).

Limitations of the study

Respondents of the study were drawn from academic, school and special /research libraries. Public libraries were not included in the study which could have led to bias in the findings.

Findings

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

1. What is the socio-demographic characterization of Nigerian librarians?

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characterization of Nigerian Librarians. A look at Table 1 reveals that there is a wide spread of librarians in Nigeria as respondents were drawn from the six geographical zones of the country. However, more than half of the respondents were from the southwest (71- 51.1%). The majority (59.7%) were from the southern area while 40.3% were from the northern part of the country. Fifty three (38.1%) respondents were between the ages of 41-50. Only 4 (2.9%) were above 60 years while 15 (10.8%) were below 30 years. Seventy seven (55.4%) respondents were males. One hundred and ten (79%) respondents were from academic libraries. Only 5 (3.6%) were from school libraries. A little over half, 72 (51.8%) possessed a masters degree in librarianship. More than 60% of the respondents had been in the librarianship profession for more than ten years.

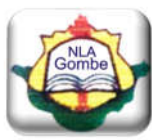
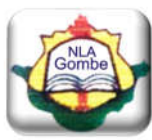


Table I. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentages %
Age		
< 30years	15	10.8
31- 40	36	25.9
41- 50	53	38.1
51- 60	31	22.3
> 60	4	2.9
Total	139	100.0
Gender		
Male	77	55.4
Female	62	44.6
Total	139	100.0
Marital status		
Married	119	85.6
Single	19	13.7
Divorced	1	0.7
Total	139	100.0
Type of library of practice		
Academic	110	79.1
Special	24	17.3
School	5	3.6
Total	139	100.0
Qualifications		
BLS	23	16.5
DIPLOMA	16	11.5
MLIS	72	51.8
Ph.D	28	20.1
Total	139	100.0
Years of practicing librarianship		
Less than 3 years	17	12.2
4-5 years	30	21.6
6-10 years	4	2.9
11-15 years	45	32.4
Above 16 years	43	30.9
Total	139	100.0
Section/Units		
Cataloguing	42	30.2
Circulation	28	20.1
Readers	3	2.2
Reference	16	11.5
Deputy	1	0.7
Serials	7	5.0
ICT	7	5.0
Library	8	5.8
Administration	9	6.5
Collecting/Documentation	3	2.2
Research/Bibliographic	1	0.7
Users Service	1	0.7



Acquisition	3	2.2
Automation	3	2.2
Classroom	1	0.7
Public Service	1	0.7
Virtual	1	0.7
Orders	2	1.4
Indexing	1	0.7
All	1	0.7
Total	139	100.0
Designation		
Librarian I	31	22.3
Librarian II	26	18.7
Senior Librarian	44	31.6
Principal Librarian	20	14.4
Deputy Univ. Lib.	11	7.9
University Librarian	7	5.0
Total	139	100.0
Geopolitical Zones		
North-Central	19	13.7
North-East	4	2.9
North-West	22	15.8
South-East	11	7.9
South-South	12	8.6
South-West	71	51.1
Total	139	100.0

Table 1 presents the socio- demographic characterization of Nigerian Librarians. A look at table 1 reveals that there is a wide spread of librarians in Nigeria as respondents were drawn from the six geographical zones of the country. However, more than half of the respondents were from the southwest 71 (51.1%). Majorly, the bulk of librarians are from the southern area (59.7%) while about (40.3%) are from the northern part of the country. Fifty three (53) (38.1%) respondents were between the ages of 41-50, only 4 (2.9%) were above 60 years while only 15 (10.8%) were below 30 years. Males made up a majority of the respondents, 77(55.4%) while an overwhelming 110 (79%) respondents were from academic libraries. Only 5 (3.6%) were from school libraries. A little over half, 72 (51.8%) possessed a masters degree in librarianship. More than 60% of respondents had been in the librarianship for more than ten years. The bulk of respondents are from academic libraries implying that this study will be more relevant to academic librarians who are involved in service and research activities.

What are the perceptions of Nigerian librarians on mentoring? Statements on mentoring were supplied which the respondents indicated their level of agreement with the responses on a 4 point Likert scale. Responses are shown in table II.

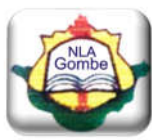


Table II. Perception of Mentoring among librarians

S/N	Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
1	Mentoring leads to increased development opportunities	2 1.4%	-	35 25.2%	102 74.4%	3.71	0.54
2	Mentoring is a good way of helping new librarians	2 1.4%	-	39 28.1%	98 70.5%	3.43	0.66
3	Mentoring needs to be introduced in librarianship	3 2.2%	4 2.9%	62 44.6%	70 50.4%	3.43	0.66
4	Mentoring is a useful way of building professional skills	7 5.0%	2 1.4%	57 41.0%	73 52.5%	3.43	0.66
5	Mentoring provides valuable support for new librarians.	7 5.0%	1 0.7%	66 47.5%	65 46.8%	3.36	0.74
6	New librarians generally learn most from observing other older colleagues at work.	5 3.6%	9 6.5%	79 56.8%	46 33.1%	3.19	0.71
7	Most new librarians already have the skills they need when they are newly employed.	22 15.8%	75 54.0%	31 22.3%	11 7.9%	2.22	0.81

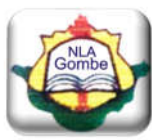
Grand Mean; 3.29.

Perceptions of Nigerian librarians on mentoring. A cursory look at table 2 revealed that in rank order, Nigerian librarians affirmed that mentoring leads to increased development opportunities, followed by mentoring is a good way of helping new librarians. It was disagreed that most new librarians already possess the necessary skills on employment and new librarians generally learn most through the mentoring process by being attached or assigned to an older, more knowledgeable senior colleague.

What are the existing mentoring patterns identified among Nigerian librarians? Statements on mentoring patterns were provided and respondents indicated responses on a 4 point Likert scale. Responses are shown in Table 3.

Table III: Pattern of Mentoring among librarians in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	SD
1	Help mentees to identify their strength and weaknesses	2 1.4%	2 1.4%	62 44.6%	73 52.5%	3.48	0.61
2	Share stories from their own experiences	2 1.4%	2 1.4%	71 51.1%	64 46.0%	3.42	0.60
3	Clarify mentees understanding of what their role entails	3 2.2%	2 1.4%	90 64.7%	44 31.7%	3.26	0.59



4	Provide ideas about how things are done elsewhere	5	10	69	55	3.25	0.74
		3.6%	7.2%	49.6%	39.6%		
5	Identify opportunities for mentees to meet significant people.	4	10	75	50	3.23	0.71
		2.9%	7.2%	54.0%	36.0%		
6	Let mentees know how they are performing relative to others.	6	12	85	36	3.09	0.72
		4.3%	8.6%	61.2%	25.9%		
7	Challenges mentees by asking incisive questions	7	19	69	44	3.08	0.81
		5.0%	13.7%	49.6%	31.7%		

Grand Mean=3.26

Results from Table 3 shows that the mentoring patterns in rank order identified among Nigerian librarians involve: Helping mentees to identify their strengths and weaknesses (3.48), share stories from their own experiences (3.42), and clarify mentees understanding of what their role entails (3.26). The least mentoring activities involved in were: ‘Challenging Mentees by asking incisive questions (3.08) and letting mentees know how they are performing in relation to others’ (3.09).

Is there any relationship between the socio demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians and their perceptions of mentoring?

Table IV: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between Socio -demographic characteristics and perceptions of mentoring among librarians

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x	S.D
1	1										23.17	3.20
2	-0.89 (.298)	1									18.59	5.35
3	0.010 (.909)	0.04 (.630)	1								42.91	11.59
4	-0.167 (.050)	0.05 (.559)	0.048 (.574)	1							1.45	0.50
5	-0.040 (.644)	0.12 (.147)	-0.212* (.012)	-0.014 (.870)	1						1.15	0.38
6	-0.476** (.000)	0.12 (.160)	-0.064 (.454)	-0.06 (.469)	0.108 (.207)	1					1.24	0.51
7	0.134 (.116)	-0.08 (.321)	0.293** (.000)	0.01 (.837)	-0.057 (.506)	-0.232* (.006)	1				2.76	0.96



8	0.140 (.101)	- 0.08 5 (.321)	0.623** * (.000)	0.03 2 (.712)	- 0.202 * (.017)	-0.064 (.457)	0.313** *	1 (0.000)		3.48	1.43	
9	0.129 (.131)	- 0.04 6 (.589)	0.052 (.543)	- 0.11 5 (.176)	-0.081 (.341)	-0.060 (.485)	-0.041 (0.630)	0.045 (0.603)	1	5.51	4.87	
10	-0.52 (.947)	- 0.00 6 (.947)	0.446** (.000)	0.03 5 (.681)	-0.151 (0.077)	-0.004 (0.959)	0.160 (0.060)	0.430* *	0.086 (0.312)	1	3.25	1.81

KEY: 1= Perception of mentoring, 2= States, 3= Age, 4= Gender, 5= Marital Status, 6= Type of library of practice, 7= Qualification, 8= Years of Practice, 9= Section/Unit, 10= Designation.

Table IV shows a negative significant relationship between perceptions of mentoring and socio-demographic characteristics (type of library of practice ($r = 0.476$, $p = 0.05$) but had no significant relationships with years of practice ($r = 0.140$, $p = 0.101 > 0.05$ and other socio-demographic characteristics.

Is there any relationship between pattern of mentoring and the socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians?

Table V: **Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between pattern of mentoring and Socio-demographic characteristics of Nigerian librarians**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	X	SD
1	1										23.15	3.51
2	-118 (.168)	1									18.59	5.35
3	-051 (.549)	.041 (.630)	1								42.91	11.59
4	-043 (.618)	.050 (.559)	.048 (.574)	1							1.45	0.50
5	-104 (.222)	.124 (.147)	-212* (.012)	-014 (.870)	1						1.15	0.38
6	-.516** (.000)	.120 (.160)	-.064 (.454)	-.062 (.469)	.108 (.207)	1					1.24	0.51
7	.116 (.174)	.131 (.124)	.293*** (.000)	.018 (.837)	-.057 (.506)	-.232 (.006)	1				2.76	0.96
8	.044 (.603)	-.085 (.321)	.623*** (.000)	.032 (.712)	-.202** (.017)	-.064 (.457)	.313** (.000)	1			3.48	1.43
9	.097 (.255)	-.046 (.589)	.052 (.543)	-.115 (.176)	-.081 (.341)	-.060 (.485)	.041 (.630)	.045 (.603)	1		5.51	4.87
10	.047 (.579)	-.006 (.947)	.446** (.000)	.035 (.681)	-.151 (.077)	-.004 (.959)	.160 (.060)	.430*** (.000)	.086 (.312)	1	3.25	1.81

KEY: 1= Pattern of mentoring, 2= States, 3= Age, 4= Gender, 5= Marital status, 6= Type of Library of practice, 7= Qualifications, 8= Years of Practice, 9= Section/Unit, 10= Designation.

A close look at table 5 shows that the only variable having a significant relationship with pattern of mentoring is the type of library of practice ($r = -0.516$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). All the other



variables like level of qualification and years of practice had no significant relationship with the pattern of mentoring.

Discussion

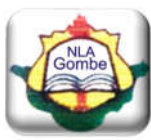
Mentoring is a topical but mostly ignored issue among Nigerian librarians which makes it an arguably neglected area in quality assurance in librarianship practice. Learning from the training programme of the library school and books is insufficient to keep abreast of required competencies in the fast paced work environment of the library in contemporary times. Mentoring can serve to bridge the gap in experiences, qualifications, years of practice and perceptions between experienced librarians and novices in the librarianship profession. This position is supported by Daloz (2006) who asserts that mentoring involves a more experienced and knowledgeable person providing knowledge, skills, support challenges and inspiration.

Findings of the present study revealed that the study respondents were mainly in the middle age bracket looking at age distribution, which suggests that not many young people are joining the librarianship profession. However, gender differences indicated a slightly higher number of males than females which is in contrast to the general opinion that librarianship is a female dominated profession (Beveridge, Weber & Beveridge, 2011).

There is a greater preponderance of academic libraries in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria which therefore require a correspondingly greater number of practicing librarians. This explains why the respondents are majorly drawn from academic libraries. The entry point for librarians in Nigeria is a master's degree in library and information science (MLIS) which probably accounts for the possession of MLIS by over half of the study respondents. Majority of the respondents have been in the librarianship profession for more than eleven years.

Study findings are indicative of the fact that Nigerian Librarians rightly perceived that mentoring leads to increased opportunities for the professional development and career advancement of new entries into the profession. They also perceived that mentoring is a good way of helping new librarians by supporting their career growth and progression. Supporting the findings of this study, Goldman (2011) reiterated that mentoring involves all activities and programmes which supports the career, growth and progression of the mentee by providing coaching, visibility, protection and challenging assignments in addition to the supervision of the mentee by providing coaching, visibility, protection and challenging assignments in addition to the provision of confirmation, counselling and friendship. The study finding leans towards the perception that mentoring activities are needful and beneficial to librarianship practice in Nigeria especially in academic libraries (Fajana, 2014).

Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between perception of mentoring and the type of library of practice. This is not unexpected because results of the study indicate that there are more academic libraries in Nigeria which employ a greater number of librarians than other types of libraries. The other types of librarians aside from research or special libraries are more involved in the provision of services while the librarians in the academic libraries in addition to providing services are involved in teaching and research activities for career progression. Mentoring serves the purpose of reducing the disparities in experiences and certification, beliefs and perceptions between newer librarians and their senior colleagues. In order to succeed, a new professional needs the support and guidance of a mentor or an older, more knowledgeable other (MKO) which result is in tandem with the MKO theory (Vygotsky, 1981). The MKO theory is grounded on the basis that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. The MKO in the library is represented by a senior



colleague with more experience and a higher ability level and better understanding than the learner, who in this case is the new librarian.

This study finding supports the MKO theory in the patterns of mentoring observed among the Nigerian librarians. Findings revealed that the mentoring patterns observed by Nigerian librarians which ranked highest was helping mentees to identify their strength and weaknesses which was closely followed by sharing stories by the mentor to the mentee from their own experiences as a more experienced and more knowledgeable person (MKO) in the mentor-mentee relationship. This finding supports the assertion of Gehrke (1988) as cited in Adeboye and Olasunkanmi (2014) perceived mentoring as a complex interactive process between individuals with different levels of experience and expertise on the job. Mentoring incorporates not only career development but psychosocial development and socialization. For example in some organizations, new comers to the organization are paired with more experienced peoples in order to obtain information, good examples and advice as they rise through the ranks. Respondents of this study were not favorably disposed to the idea of challenging mentees by asking incisive questions and letting mentees know how they are performing in relation to other colleagues. Probably because the mentee may consider incisive questions by a mentor a subtle form of assessment or performance evaluation.

Similarly, a mentor may not want to promote unhealthy rivalry in the libraries or create undue pressure in the workplace for the young librarian, (mentee) but rather provide an enabling, conducive work environment which leads to greater productivity and efficiency. Buttressing this view, Eller et al. (2015) in a study of key components of successful mentoring outcomes mentees identified components such as a reciprocal relationship bordering on mutual respect and openness in communication, guidance and support in the role transition process and other planned mentoring activities. Similarly, mentors also identified aspects of successful mentoring to involve communication and connectedness, planned activities, career development and shared authority and knowledge with the mentee.

The findings of the study indicate that there was a significant relationship between pattern of mentoring and type of library. This result is not unexpected because in academic libraries for instance, in addition to normal library routines as is obtained in other types of libraries, librarians are involved in academic activities such as training, research activities, academic paper publication, and conference paper presentation skills among others. In furtherance of support for this finding, Freedman (2009) affirmed that mentoring programmes in academic libraries are usually specific and closely tied to the librarian's career stage. Martin-Yeboah (2016) also pointed out that Librarianship is complex and multifaceted. It therefore stands to reason that in order to maintain professionalism, a network of mentors in the various types of libraries will ensure that new librarians will adapt to changes and work schedules and gain a diverse portfolio of knowledge quickly.

Conclusion

Although mentoring is not an entirely new concept among academics, it has not been well established among Nigerian librarians. This study has brought to limelight the fact that despite the absence of formal structured mentoring programmes among librarians in Nigerian libraries, some subtle, informal mentoring activities have been ongoing without having a name attached to the activities. From the study findings, Nigerian libraries are favorably disposed to mentoring programmes and activities in Nigerian libraries as evidenced by their affirmation that mentoring leads to increased career development opportunities. The study concluded most new



librarians do not possess the necessary skills on employment, mentoring is a good way of helping new librarians in the profession irrespective of the type of library.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffer.

1. The Nigerian Library Association should be at the core of mentoring programmes among Nigerian Librarians through advocacy especially during conferences and workshops where librarians with a broad range of age and experience meet.
2. Formal or informal mentoring models should be adopted in all libraries to enhance greater efficiency and productivity on the job.
3. In academic libraries, career progression should be directly linked to either formal or semi-formal mentoring programmes such that there is periodic evaluation to review the performance of mentor and mentee.
4. All Nigerian libraries should create an enabling environment for capacity building among new librarians by developing coherent training blueprints cognizant of available resources in a dwindling economy.
5. There should be regular assessment and feedback mechanism put in place to ensure that the goals of the mentoring programme are being achieved whether it is a formal or informal programme.

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