PREDICTORS OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS OF CERTIFIED LIBRARIANS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper is a research survey conducted to discover the predictors of mentoring relationships of Certified Librarians in Nigeria. The survey revealed that: (1) mentor competence is a predictor of mentoring relationship for certified librarians in Nigeria with 90 (75%) respondents, (2) that cross gender in mentoring relationships is not a problem for certified librarians with 57 (47.5%) of respondents; (3) mentoring has helped more certified librarians to cope with the work environment with 87 (72.5%) respondents, and (4) more certified librarians 85 (70.8%) agree that professional development is their mentors greatest contribution to them. This paper urges the Nigerian Library Association and the Committee of University Librarians to explore and develop formal mentoring programmes for librarians in Nigerian universities and colleges as it would bring several professional and career benefits to certified librarians.

Key Words: Predictors, Mentoring, Certified Librarians, Nigeria.

Introduction

Mentoring is used is used in a wide variety of contexts to refer to coaching, counselling or advise. In today's ever expanding knowledge economy, knowledge and base are becoming competitive especially with specialised training required for job effectiveness. Mentoring has become a tool in professional organisations to develop and grow. Mentoring has it roots in ancient Greek mythology. Mentor, son of Alcumus was a friend to Odysseus. When Odysseus was to leave for Greece's war against Troy, he asked Mentor, a wise man to be in custody of his son Telemachus to guide and counsel him in his absence (Dean, 2009). A "mentor is that person who achieves a one-to-one developmental relationship with a learner; and one whom the learner identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place" (Cronwell-Ward, Bossons & Gover, 2004, p.26). Do younger librarians require the support of their senior professionals in order to assist and guide them in performing their jobs better? This is where mentoring takes centre stage in an ever changing like librarianship where certified librarians operate.

A certified Librarian is a professional that holds a recognized degree in library science from an accredited institution and becomes qualified to practice librarianship. Thus, a certified librarian is responsible in articulating policies and administers certain aspects of library services for effective delivery to patrons within an environment. Therefore, mentoring is important to train and generate knowledge among them so that they can perform better in their jobs.

Literature Review

It has been observed that mentoring may have a significant impact on individuals' career development within an organisation (Allen, Day, Lentz, 2005; Niehoff, 2006; Okurame &

Bologun, 2005). This is because, some scholars like Rajendran (2012) and Nifadkar and Dongre (2014) highlighted that career development is often viewed as helping individuals to acquire the skills and experiences needed to perform current and future jobs, give advice, increase the ability of individuals to positively influence others, and protect individuals' dignities from being affected by negative environments. According to Noe, Greenberger and Wang (2002), mentoring could provide career and psychosocial support to protégés. Psychosocial is a function often seen as helping individuals by building confidence, overcoming pressures and strains. It also includes assisting the personal life of mentees through opinions heard and valued, sharing dreams, providing feedback, awareness of contribution to relationship, and teaching with examples (Okunrame, 2009; Parker-Gibson, 2007). Thus, mentoring appears to offer benefits for both mentors and mentees (Weng, Huang, Tsai, Chang, Lin & Lee, 2010). For mentees, mentoring provide opportunities to develop competencies and technical skills, knowledge and thereby improve performance.

Wanberg, Welsh, and Hezlett (2003) succinctly noted that mentoring is a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievement and prestige, instruct, counsel, guide and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés. A protégé is in a sense a neophyte, learner or beginner in a career path. The mentees' benefits of mentoring include increased competence, increased confidence and a sense of security with decreased stress, leadership development and insight in times of uncertainty and expanded networks (Van Emmerik, H., Baugh, & Euwema, 2005). Other benefits for the mentee are increased job satisfaction, elevated promotions, pay (Starkey, 2011; Sugimoto, 2009), and organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviour (Smallwood, &Tolley-Stokes, 2011; Tella, Ayeni, & Popoola, 2007; Stueart & Sullivan, 2010). Research by Eby, Lockwood, Butts (2006) examined three categories of predictors: relational behaviours, motivational variables, and personality variables. Relational variables hinges on the ability of a protégé to maintain social connections with a mentor, which has a lot to do with attraction. Motivational variables indicate such things as job satisfaction, role model status and skilled level of the protégé to follow a mentor. Personality variable deals with the personality type of a perceived mentor, since each person brings his/her personality to bear in mentoring. Scandura and Williams (2004) pointed out that the perceived benefits to mentoring others by a mentor predict the relationship.

Two other studies by Curtis (2010) and Bosch, Ramachandran, Luévano, and Wakiji, (2010) have underscored the support from an organization has in mentoring others. However, inflexible organizational structures, undefined prospects, job pressures, and a competitive environment hinder the mentor's ability to mentor others. Ethnic and religious affiliation is also identified as a predictor of mentoring relationship among librarians in Nigeria (Salami, 2010).

Study Objectives
The objectives of this study are to:
(i)   To find out the predictors of mentoring relationship among certified librarians in Nigeria
(ii)   To find out if gender is a barrier in mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria, and
(iii)   To discover if mentoring enhances the professional development of certified librarians in Nigeria

Justification of Study

It is in this manner that the purpose of this research is to examine the predictors of mentoring relationships of certified librarians in Nigeria with specific references to its importance in professional development, job satisfaction and mentor competence for personal, career and professional growth of the certified librarian. Zakari and Okojie, (2011) and Parker-Gibson (2007) in their studies noted that attitudes of librarians towards mentoring can impact their jobs negatively or positively and what predicts mentoring rests with the mentor not necessarily the organisation.

Research Methodology

This research method was a descriptive survey. It was designed to find out the predictors of mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria. The survey was also designed to find out the personal and psychosocial factors that predict how and why mentoring relationships take place among certified librarians in Nigeria. The research population was certified librarians. The instrument used was distribution of questionnaires by hand. One hundred and thirty (130) questionnaires were administered and one hundred and twenty (120) collected by the researcher. The sample population were participants at the 1st Conference of certified Librarians, National Universities Commission, 18th – 23rd May, 2014, Maitama, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The respondents were chosen randomly. A breakdown of the research respondents include:

Position	No of Respondents	Percentage
University Librarian	8	6.7 %
Professor	10	8.3%
Deputy university librarian	8	6.7 %
Associate Professor	10	8.3%
Principal librarian	12	10 %
Reader	6	5 %
Senior librarian	10	8.3%
Senior lecturer	12	10 %
Lecturer 1	8	6.7 %
Librarian 1	12	10 %
Librarian 11	16	13.3 %
Assistant librarian/Graduate	8	6.7 %
Total	120	100 %

Results

Table 1 - Mentor Competence

This section examines and explores mentors' trait of competence as it predicts mentoring relationship of certified librarians.

Question 1	Answer		
My mentor demonstrated professional competence	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
	90	10	20
Question 2	Answer		
I am satisfied with the content expertise of my mentor	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
	75	16	29

In Table above, professional competence of a mentor is indicative of a predictor as 90 (75%) agree, with 20 (16.7%) undecided and 10 (8.3%) disagree. This agrees with Buchanan, Myers and Hardin (2005) and Moran, Solomon, Marshall and Rathbun-Grubb (2009) that possession of knowledge is a key component trait for a mentor in any mentoring relationship. Knowledge refers to possession information in a field of study. Possession of knowledge is a key component trait for a mentor (Buchanan, Myers & Hardin, 2005; Moran, Solomon, Marshall & Rathbun-Grubb, 2009).

Table shows that 75 (62.5%) are satisfied with the content expertise of their mentor, 29 (24.2%) are undecided and 16 (13.3%) disagree. Content expertise relate to the mentors' professional competence in the job, understanding of core values and knowledge of the profession. This is what bridges the labour gap in library profession. Neely and Peterson (2007) said the growing labour gap in librarianship is a result of an "increasing demand for library and information science professionals, and a declining supply of qualified individuals." A qualified personnel is a content expert necessary for mentoring and mentorship in the profession. Mentoring traits also include flexibility and personality, and not limited to competence. Wilson and Elman (1990) listed other mentors' traits as integrity, courage and care, while Darwin (1999) observed they are authenticity, nurturance, approachability, inspiration and conscientiousness. However, Smith, Howard and Harrington (2005) identified integrity and concern.

Table 2 – Career Development

This section discusses career development as a predictor of mentoring relationship of certified librarians with emphasis on motivation of mentors and mentees for the mentoring relationship.

Question 3	Answer		
What was the motivation of your mentor for the mentoring relationship?	Personal Growth	Career Development	Job Satisfaction
	22	73	25
Total			
Question 4		Answer	
What informed your need for a mentor?	Career Development	Paper publication /presentation	Skill Acquisition
	57	50	13
Question 5		Answer	
Mentoring has increased my career skills like administration, organisation, synergy etc	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
	75	22	23

In Table above, 73 (60.8%) agree career development as the motivation of the mentor for the mentoring relationship, while 25 (20.8%) indicate job satisfaction, and 22 (18.3%) as personal growth. Career development deals with a circumstance where the mentor instructs the protégé on the proper models of the discipline and prepares them for a career in the field as the mentor guides and provides opportunities for the career growth of protégée(s) by identifying situations and events, which contribute knowledge, experience and values to the life of the protégée.

Again, Career development predict the mentees need for mentoring with 57 (47.5%), while 50 (41.7%) for paper presentation and publication and 13 (10.8%) for skill acquisition. Thus, mentoring is a method of training and development used to increase group and/or individuals'

potentials to carry out particular duties and responsibilities, familiarize with new techniques, and care all aspects of mentees career (Hanford & Ehrich, 2006)

Furthermore, the Table show career skills, 75 (62.5%) dominate the benefit of mentoring to the mentee, but 22 (18.3%) disagree and 23 (19.2%) are undecided. Career skills like administration and general synergy at work can better improve the skill of the mentee for growth. This agrees with Kebede (2010) that mentoring/mentee roles influence professional direction and linked effective mentoring to library leadership as mentoring skills account for greater retention within the library profession.

Table 3 – Gender
This section explores and discusses gender as a part demographic factor in mentoring with regard to same or cross gender relationships. Demographic factors include: age, gender, academic qualification, status and tenure.

Question 6	Answer		
I will not enter into a mentoring relationship with a mentor who is not of the same gender	Agree 46	Disagree 27	Undecided 47
Question 7	Answer		
Cross gender is a barrier in mentoring relationship	Agree 20	Disagree 57	Undecided 43

Table 3 gender is not a factor in mentoring relationships. 46 (38.3%) will not engage in a mentor relationship with someone of another gender, 27 (22.5%) disagree, and 47 (39.2%) are undecided. The reason for this might be because; there is a greater likelihood in cross-gender mentoring relationships in professional contexts. This result disagrees with Chandler and Kram (2010) who affirm that it is easier for anxiety to develop regarding intimacy and physical attraction in cross-gender mentoring relationships, thus leading to negative consequences for both mentor and protege.

57 (47.5%) disagree, 43 (35.8%) are undecided, and 20 (16.7%) agree that cross gender is a barrier to mentoring. This seems to contradict the result of table 3.1 where more respondents will not engage in cross-gender mentoring relationships. Thus, there is no agreement with Chandler and Kram (2010) that cross-gender mentoring (e.g. female protege and male- mentor pair) is less likely to occur due to different expectations.

Table 4 - Professional Development
The tables in this section discuss professional development of the mentee as a predictor in mentoring relationship as professional development focuses on deficient areas amongst others.

Question 8	Answer		
Mentoring has increased my professional development in deficient areas of the library profession	Agree 85	Disagree 30	Undecided 5
Question 9	Answer		
My mentor's greatest contribution to my life is professional development	Agree 85	Disagree 30	Undecided 5
Question 10	Answer		
Mentoring has helped me with proficiency skills	Agree 78	Disagree 30	Undecided 12

In Table 4, 85 (70.8%) agree that mentoring increased professional development in deficient areas, with 30 (25%) disagreement and 5 (4.2%) undecided. Therefore, professional development is a function provided by the mentor as noted by Wijayasundara (2008).

Also, 85 (70.8%) agree that professional development is the mentors' greatest contribution. This is therefore a predictor of mentoring relationship for a mentee, while 30 (25 %) disagree and 5 (4.2%) were undecided. This result also agrees with the submission in table 4.1 above. Mosley (2005) observed that mentoring develops managerial skills among librarians as "Mentors stop rising stars from making stupid mistakes" (p. 189).

78 (65%) agree, 30 (25 %) disagree and 12 (10%) are undecided that mentoring has increased their proficiency skills. This is because, mentoring relationships develop pedagogical knowledge and professional development of librarians. This explains why some mentors and mentees may feel more comfortable to keep a professional relationship and develop a personal bond that may lead to improved mentees' advancement, especially career and psychosocial advancement in organizations (Okurame & Bologun, 2006; Niehoff, 2006).

Table 5- Job Satisfaction
Job satisfaction is the feeling or a general attitude of pleasure of employees in relation with their jobs and the job components such as the working environment, working conditions, equitable rewards, and communication with the colleagues.

Question 11	Answer		
Mentoring has helped me to cope with my work environment	Agree 87	Disagree 9	Undecided 24
Question 12	Answer		
Mentoring has increased my communication skills with colleagues	Agree 67	Disagree 21	Undecided 32

In Table 5, mentoring has helped more certified librarians to cope with the work environment with 87 (72.5%) in agreement, 24 (20%) undecided, and 9 (7.5%) disagree. The work environment also deals with physical relationships, organisational policies and welfare. In Librarianship, mentoring is a way to support new librarians (Hicks, 2012). This conclusion supports Bosch, Ramachandran, Luévano, & Wakiji (2010) who observed that mentoring is a service activity that librarians engage in to ensure a smooth integration of new library faculty.

Mentoring increased communication skills with 67 (55.8%) in agreement, 32 (26.7%) undecided, and 21 (17.5%) disagree. Communication is part of a work environment and can breed non-satisfaction with the job. According to Mullins, Allen and Hufford (2007), the foundational skills and competencies traditionally associated with general education— critical thinking and reasoning abilities, written and oral communication skills, and so forth are obvious mentor traits passed on to mentees.

Findings
This research has found the following:
(i)   That mentor competence is a predictor of mentoring relationship for certified librarians in Nigeria with 90 (75%) respondents in agreement.

(ii)   That mentoring has helped more certified librarians to cope with the work environment with 87 (72.5%) in agreement.

(iii)   That the use of cross gender in mentoring relationships is not a problem for certified librarians as 57 (47.5%) disagree, 43 (35.8%) were undecided and 20 (16.7%) agreed.

(iv)   That more certified librarians 85 (70.8%) agree that professional development is their mentors' greatest contribution to them.

Conclusion

The foundation of this study is to add to documentation that could lead to more efficient mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria. The aim is to engender personal learning which can also further personal development thus improving the human mind as well as the organisation in this case, the Nigerian libraries. Remarkable advantages can be gained from effective mentoring relationships. Results indicate that certified librarians go into mentoring more for professional development (Bello & Mansor, 2011). Mentoring relationships are predicated on several factors which are open for exploration.

Recommendations

(i)   The Nigerian Library Association should educate members on the benefits of mentoring through her annual conferences and specialized short courses

(ii)   The certified Librarian Council of Nigeria should make mentoring a mandatory supervisory programme for its members

(iii)   The Committee of Nigerian University librarians should make mentoring mandatory for staff to use mentoring in training of younger librarians in the profession

(iv)   Certified librarians should implement the use of mentoring to enrich their libraries and make jobs easier.

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