

## MENTORING RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS AMONG CERTIFIED LIBRARIANS IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study summarizes a survey conducted to discover the mentoring relationship patterns used by certified librarians in Nigeria in their professional and official library institutions. The research method was a descriptive survey. The research instrument was distribution of questionnaires designed by hand. The population was participants at the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of certified Librarians, National Universities Commission, 18<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2014, Maitama, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The survey revealed that: almost all certified librarians (120 or 100%) in Nigeria have had some form of mentoring relationship; more certified librarians (90 or 75% ) use personal approach or contact to enter into mentoring relationship with their mentors; more certified librarians are satisfied with the mentoring method used by their mentors personal contact(75%), telephone (13.3%) email (11.7%) none by teleconference, and more certified librarians (100 or 83.3%)do not have mentoring programmes offered by their institution to staff. This paper recommend the Nigerian Library Association and the Committee of University Librarians to explore the possibilities and use of mentoring programmes for librarians in Nigerian universities and colleges as it would bring several professional and psychosocial benefits to certified librarians.*

**Key Words:** *Patterns, Mentoring, Relationship, Certified Librarians, Nigeria.*

### Background to Study

Individuals learn a great deal through their interactions with others, especially those with different backgrounds, expertise, and seniority in their organizations. One important way relationship can serve as a forum for personal learning is by using mentoring system (Allen & Poteet, 2011). The original meaning of the word, mentor, refers to a person who sponsors, guides and develops a younger or new person in an organization. Mentors do play a significant role in teaching, inducting and developing the skills and talents of others in their career.

Mentoring is an age long process where the more experienced takes the less experienced into his/her fold to infuse with knowledge and understanding over a period of apprenticeship. Mentoring is the process whereby a more knowledgeable person, usually a superior, takes a younger person in a career track to coach, instruct and transfer skill and expertise to the person over a period of time is not prescribed only voluntary. In Africa, this can be noticed in informal modes in the skill sector of master-learner in such areas as basket weaving, cloth weaving, blacksmiths, bronze sculpture and wood crafts which has kept these professions going. In Nigeria, the library profession is experiencing a challenge in skill and manpower development. Since the current number of world certified and acclaimed librarians are small, the need for mentoring relationships among librarians in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Most young and new qualified librarians for instance in cataloging wallow in the dark of the profession and stumble in discharging their duties due to inadequate mentoring relationships or programmes. This is because, there are no clear cut patterns of relationships geared towards the mentoring of the young and inexperienced librarians in Nigeria.

Mentoring creates rooms for capacity building, professional development and other psychosocial support forms which the young and upcoming librarians in Nigeria cannot adequately learn due to the almost nonexistent formal or structured relationships in most libraries. This thereby leaves the training of the beginner to informal patterns of inculcating with skill to become familiar with the

career to equip for professional life. Mentoring has become a key in professional and psychosocial support in several fields to build capacity and develop professionalism (Allen & Poteet, 2011; Bello & Mansor, 2011).

### **Literature Review**

Patterns of mentoring in various professions are well documented and viewed of immense significance. This is because the professional and psychosocial support mentoring provides both for the mentor and the mentee (Ekwelem, Okafor, Ukwoma, 2011; Atulomah, 2011; Asadu & Onyegiri, 2011; Zakar i& Okojie, 2011). Mentoring is a method of training and development program used to increase group and/or individuals' potentials to carry out particular duties and responsibilities, familiarize with new techniques, and care for all aspects of mentees life (Hanford & Ehrich, 2006). Mentoring patterns have been designed and administered based on differences and uniqueness of people involved and an organization in terms of beliefs, orientations, stresses, strengths and weaknesses (Aladejana, & Ehindero, 2006).

Bosch, Ramachandran, Luévano and Wakiji (2010) noted that formal mentoring also called structured mentoring is an assigned relationship by the work organization between a more experienced person and a less experienced person. Formal mentors focus on mentees short-term career goals. Formal mentoring is created and supervised as an organizational culture and principle of relationship and development of career goals (Chansrichawla, 2005; Salami, 2008). Formal mentoring program is often viewed as the structured and coordinated relationship between mentor and mentee, using standard norms, continuously action plans, time frame, and particular objectives (Ismail & KhianJui, 2009).

Golden (2012) observed that mentoring can be informal too. In informal mentoring, the relationship is unofficial and not backed up by any specific organisational culture or policy. It is a relationship of shared concern between two people due to the passion and interests they both share as individuals and professionals. Informal relationships are developed by mutual identification whereby mentors choose protégés whom they view as younger versions of themselves (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). Informal mentoring relationships usually focus on a protégés' long-term career goals and are voluntary, unstructured and often sparked by mutual attraction and probably personal approaches from either the mentor or mentee.

A new area within mentorship literature is e-mentoring (Stokes, Garrett-Harris, & Hunt, 2003; Akin & Hilbun, 2007; Gieskes, 2010). E-mentoring involves "...mentoring projects that use technology to facilitate and support mentor relationships" (Buchanan, et al, 2005). E-mentoring uses new technologies like video or telephone conferencing to instead of traditional person-to-person mentoring for and learning (Megginson, Clutterbuck, & Garvey, 2006).

Mavrinac (2005) mentioned peer mentoring as an example of a pattern of mentoring. Peer mentoring focuses on career advancement and can be initiated informally or formally by an organization. The following are necessities for peer mentoring: specified career-development goals that coincide with organizational development goals and culture, careful selection of volunteers to be mentors and protégés, careful matching of participants, training in skills needed to fulfill essential roles and functions, continuous monitoring of the mentoring process, and evaluation of results (Terrior & Leonard, 2007).

### **Hypothesis**

- (i) There is no significant relationship between the type of mentoring relationship used by certified librarians and the quality of their mentoring relationship

- (ii) There are no significant differences in the forms of mentoring methods preferred by certified librarians and the medium for entering into mentoring relationships

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Identify if mentoring relationships exists among certified librarians in Nigeria
- (ii) Identify the patterns of mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria, and
- (iii) Identify the methods of mentoring relationships certified librarians in Nigeria are most satisfied with.
- (iv) Identify institutions that offer mentoring programmes for their staff.

### **Justification of study**

Mentoring patterns of relationships are geared towards increased skill and professionalism of the mentee (Greiman (2007). Scandura and Williams (2004) noted that formal mentoring program increases leadership skill and organisational awareness. Freedman (2009) noted that effective mentoring among librarians is essential to the growth and success of librarianship in all types of library. Buchanan, Myers and Hardin (2005) averred that e-mentoring breaks the divide of time and increases the mentee in skills even beyond career.

It is in this vein that the purpose of this research is to examine the patterns of mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria with specific reference to its importance in learning and sharing of information for personal, academic and professional growth and library development of their institutions.

### **Methodology**

The research method was a descriptive survey designed to find out the patterns of mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria. The respondents were chosen randomly from participants at the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of certified Librarians, National Universities Commission, 18<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2014, Maitama, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The survey was also designed to find out certified librarians enter into mentoring relationships and how satisfied they are with the pattern of mentoring relationships. The research instruments used was distribution of questionnaires by hand. The questionnaires followed the Likert model. One hundred and thirty copies of the questionnaires (130) were administered and one hundred and twenty (120) were retrieved by the researcher. A breakdown of the research respondents include:

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>NO OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<i>University Librarian</i>	8	7 %
<i>Professor</i>	10	8%
<i>Deputy university librarian</i>	8	7 %
<i>Associate Professor</i>	10	8%
<i>Principal librarian</i>	5	10 %
<i>Reader</i>	6	5 %
<i>Senior librarian</i>	10	8%
<i>Senior lecturer</i>	12	10 %
<i>Lecturer 1</i>	8	7 %
<i>Librarian 1</i>	12	10 %
<i>Librarian 11</i>	16	13 %
<i>Assistant librarian/Graduate Assistant</i>	8	7 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	120	100 %

### Data analysis, presentation and discussion of results

Table 1. Mentoring relationships among certified librarians

Table 2. Patterns of mentoring relationships among certified librarians

#### Table 1 -Mentoring Relationships among Certified Librarians

Table 1 discusses mentoring relationships among certified librarians in Nigeria.

**Table 1.0.**

<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Answer</b>		
Mentoring is necessary in the library profession	Agree 98	Disagree 2	Undecided 20
Total			

Mentoring is practice of infusing the younger and inexperience with knowledge and expertise by the more experienced person. There is an overwhelming agreement that mentoring is necessary in the library profession with 98 respondents (81.7 %) while 2 disagree (1.7 %) and 20 (16.7 %) are undecided. A high number of respondents agree (98) because according to Hines (2007) mentoring is used to support new librarians. Mentoring thus is a professional activity within the library profession geared towards imparting the young librarian with technical, professional, social and organisational skills to enhance their personal and professional values (Bello & Mansor, 2013).

**Table1.1**

<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Answer</b>		
I have (had) professional mentoring relationships in the library profession	Agree 32	Disagree 20	Undecided 68
Total			

In table 1.1 several respondents have had or engaged in one form of mentoring relationship of another. 32 (26.7 %) have had mentoring for between 1-2 years, 20 (16.7 %) for 3-4 years and 68 (56.7 %) for 5 years and above. There is a greater number of respondents who have had mentoring relationships for over 5 years. This justifies the case that mentoring is necessary in the career profession of librarians. Asadu and Onyegiri (2011) noted that with the university library facing economic and staffing challenges, and demands for productivity and assessment measurements increasing, institutions and their libraries tend to invest more in staff training and mentoring so that

they can retain a productive, well-trained and multi-faceted staff. Thus, the most economical way to provide mentoring is using experienced senior in-house staff

**Table 1.2**

Question 3	Answer		
I am satisfied with the quality of my mentoring relationship	Agree 84	Disagree 20	Undecided 16
<b>Total</b>			

In table 1.2, 84 respondents (70 %) are satisfied with their mentoring relationships, 20(16.7 %) disagree and 16 (13.3 %) are undecided. There are more respondents satisfied with their mentoring relationships. A mentoring relationship that satisfies the mentee is one that increases professional competence, builds capacity and develops expertise. Satisfaction is predicated upon psychosocial and professional factors (Bello & Mansor, 2011; Zakari & Okojie, 2011).

**Table 2 – Patterns of mentoring Relationship**

Table 2 deals with patterns of mentoring relationship among certified librarians in Nigeria. The method used in mentoring relationships and the satisfaction of respondents are discussed.

**Table 2.1**

Question 4			
Personal contact is the best pattern of mentoring?	Agree 90	Disagree 14	Undecided 16

Table 2.1 deals personal contact as a mentoring pattern used by certified librarians in the mentoring relationship. To this 90 (75 %) agree as the best mentoring pattern.

**Table 2.2**

Question 5			
I receive mentoring through email and teleconference?	Agree 14	Disagree 90	Undecided 16

Table 2.2 identified email and teleconference as another mentoring pattern used by certified librarians in the mentoring relationship. While 14 (12 %) agree, a larger percentage of 75% disagree.

**Table 2.3**

Question 6			
Telephone is the best form of mentoring?	Agree 16	Disagree 90	Undecided 14

Table 2.3 mentioned telephone conversation as a mentoring pattern used by certified librarians in the mentoring relationship. On this, 16 (13 %) agree. While no obvious reason is adduced for personal contact, the psychosocial significance and cost effectiveness cannot be dismissed. The other patterns would accrue some cost. Personal contact (90) is Informal mentoring which is an ongoing process. In personal contact the library and teaching faculty are possible mentors. Its success is based on the mentee's initiative and willingness to seek guidance from colleagues and teaching faculty whom he/she works with and on the availability and willingness of senior library faculty to offer guidance and advice (Aladejana, Aladejana, & Ehindero, 2006).

**Table 2.4**

Question 7			
I am satisfied with the mentoring method of my mentor?	Agree 90	Disagree 16	Undecided 14

**Total**

The mentoring method that most mentors used in the mentoring relationship shown in table 2.2 is personal contact (90 respondents). Table 2.2 shows that most respondents, 90 (75 %) are satisfied with the use of this mentoring method but 16 (13 %) are not while 14 (12 %) are undecided. In certain traditional Nigerian culture, physical access to a relationship with a mentor is adjudged as special. This might play a role in the level of satisfaction too. The experienced mentor who has a broad knowledge of the profession and promotion process, can be helpful to the mentee in the following areas: setting goals; formulating a research agenda; providing guidance on effective teaching and professional activities, and on time management.

**Table 2.5**

Question 8			
My institution offer mentoring programs for its staff	Agree 18	Disagree 100	Undecided 2

Table 2.5 focuses on an institutions support of mentoring program for its staff. 100 (83.3 %) disagree that their institution support mentoring programs, 18 (15 %) agree and 2 (2 %) is undecided. The implication is that most institutions do not have in place a formal, structured mentoring program for their library staff. However, it is important to observe that of the 18 respondents that agree their institution offer a mentoring programme for its staff 10 (6 %) belong to the Polytechnic and college of education, 4 (22 %) are of university category and 4 (22 %) public library i.e public service. With this, the university sector needs to inculcate into her system a formal mentoring method of on the job training. According to **Popoola, Adesopo, and Ajayi (2013)** the university management in Nigeria, particularly the library has failed in its strategic planning by not putting in place processes that ensure transfer of relevant skills and knowledge, by a way of mentoring.

**Table 2.6**

Question 9			
Mentoring relationships began with a personal approach by the intending mentee?	Agree 70	Disagree 20	Undecided 30

In table 2.6 most mentoring relationships 70 (58 %) started through personal approach or contact by the mentee to the mentor. However, 20 (17 %) noted it was by the mentor, 18 (15 %) was official and 12 (10 %) accidental. This agrees with the finding in table 2.5 where 9 respondents agree that their institutions offer mentoring programs for their staff. The none-availability of an organisational culture of formal mentoring program in an institution explains the high pattern of personal contact between the mentor and the mentee shown in table 2.1 above. Personal contact agrees with Ozioko, Nwabueze and Igwesi (2014) who infer coaching as a pattern of mentoring relationship

**Table 2.6**

Question 8			
My work environment support mentoring relationships	Agree 59	Disagree 31	Undecided 30

In table 2.6 above, 59 (49.2 %) agree their work environment support mentoring relationships, 31 (25.8 %) disagree and 30 (25 %) are undecided. A work environment is a professional and social relationship environment which may not in essence be formal or prescribed. Thus the work environment comprises the people and the policies in place in an institution administrative system. The high number of those who agreed their work environment supports mentoring (59 or 49.2 %)

disagreed with Ozioko, Nwabueze and Igwesi (2014) who asserted that mentoring through on the job training is prevalent in university libraries work environment in Nigeria.

### **Findings**

This research has found the following:

- (i) That certified librarians agree that mentoring relationship is necessary in the library profession with 98 (81.7 %) respondents
- (ii) That certified librarians use personal contact more as a preferred pattern for mentoring relationships (90 or 75 % respondents) than email, telephone and teleconference.
- (iii) That more certified librarians are satisfied (90, 75% of respondents) with the use of personal contact as a mentoring pattern
- (iv) That more certified librarians made personal contact/approach (70, % of respondents) to the mentor as a medium for entering into their mentoring relationship and 20 (16.7%) was by the mentor, 18 (15% ) was official and 12 (10%) accidental
- (v) That more certified librarians ( 100 or 83.3 respondents) belong to institutions that do not offer mentoring programs for their staff with 2 (1.7%) undecided and 18 (15%) have the privilege of a mentoring program in their institutions

### **Conclusion**

The bottom-line of this study is to provide documentation that could lead to a more efficient way to use and integrate mentoring programs into library curriculum and professional librarian's training and development. Results indicate that certified librarians are using mentoring, but not as an official programme to train and retrain the professional librarian in the work place (Asadu & Onyegiri, 2011). Mentoring is open for better and improved use in this sector that is witnessing unprecedented change.

### **Recommendations**

- (i) The Certified Librarians Council of Nigeria should factor personal contact sessions into their conferences and make it mandatory for their members to implement through a system of reported supervision in her annual conferences.
- (ii) The Nigerian Library Association should educate members on the benefits of engaging in personal contact for mentoring in their short courses and seminars at her annual general meetings
- (iii) The Committee of Nigerian University librarians should make it mandatory for staff to use personal contact mentoring in their staff development and relationships
- (iv) Certified librarians should adopt the use of personal contact more in mentoring younger librarian's for career development and psychosocial relationships in their attempt to enrich the libraries and make trainings easier

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