

## MENTORSHIP PRACTICES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined mentorship practices for professional development of librarians in selected universities in Anambra State. Six research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised fifty-two librarians from five university libraries in Anambra State. The entire population of fifty-two librarians was studied as the number was manageable. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The average internal consistency coefficient for the instrument was 0.80 which was considered high enough and reliable for the study. Data collected for the study was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that mentoring programmes practised in university libraries in Anambra State were traditional, individual, group, supervisory, situational, and e-mentoring. Furthermore, the findings showed that if mentoring is not in existence in these libraries or not properly executed, professional career development of librarians in university libraries will be greatly affected. It will also affect library services to the university community and users' needs will be poorly met. The study recommends that there should be adequate training for newly*

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*employed librarians to enable them gain confidence and skills that will help them succeed in their career development. It further recommends that mentors should engage all mentees to participate in the mentoring programmes in order to achieve the goals set for the mentoring programmes.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Mentorship Practices, Librarians, Professional Development, University Libraries, Anambra State.*

- Situational mentoring is done on a situational purpose, generally short-term discussion between mentors, on high impact issues, problems, challenges or opportunity.
- Supervisory mentoring is a process of helping mentees to reach the goals of the organization
- Individual mentoring is where a more experienced person guides the less experienced person.

The objectives of universities in Anambra State do not differ from those of other universities within Nigeria and even beyond. There is a total of five universities in Anambra State, two of which are public while three are privately-owned. Librarians in these universities and their counterparts in other institutions of higher learning need mentoring to progress in their career development. The researchers' goal in this paper is to establish mentorship practices in these libraries.

#### Statement of the Problem

After the theoretical knowledge gained in the university during professional training, there is need for proper guidance upon employment in the library as a librarian. This guidance helps in the workplace to inculcate ethics, discipline and pragmatic approach to the daily routine duties in the library and in career development. Librarians in university libraries may have challenges in getting to know their duties, expectations and organizational culture. These challenges could be as a result of inexperience, stress, lack of job satisfaction, or uncertainty about the future. They need assistance from the senior and more experienced professional colleagues to engender confidence in them. The extent to which this assistance is rendered determines their input in the realization of the university

goals and objectives.

Upon graduation from the university, other professional skills in librarianship can be learnt while on the job. Usually this can be achieved through mentoring which, once more, is considered a professional activity, a trusted relationship, and a meaningful commitment. Despite the inherent values and advantages that accrue from mentorship, it seems this does not exist for librarians in university libraries in Anambra State. This assumption however has no empirical evidence. This research is therefore carried out to find out the mentorship practices for professional development of librarians in university libraries in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine mentorship practices for professional development of librarians in universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether:

1. Traditional mentorship programme is practised in university libraries in Anambra State.
2. Individual mentoring programme is practised in university libraries in Anambra State.
3. Group mentoring programme is practised in university libraries in Anambra State.
4. Supervisory mentoring programme is practised by librarians in universities in Anambra State.
5. Situational mentoring programme is practised in university libraries in Anambra State.
6. E-mentoring programme is practised in university libraries in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What traditional mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?
2. What individual mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?
3. What group mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?
4. What supervisory mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

5. What situational mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?
6. What are the e-mentoring programmes that are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

### **Review of Literature Relevant to Mentorship Practices**

Mentorship is a professional practice among practising librarians in workplaces upon graduation from the university. According to Management Mentors (2018), mentoring occurs when an experienced person assists another in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth.

Mentoring is an important supplement to on-the-job training. There are two main views of a successful mentoring experience as observed by Spencer (2010). One view states that mentorship programmes are dynamic informal relationship while the other view states that a formally structured mentorship programme includes peer, group and electronic mentoring. Informal mentoring refers to one-on-one relationship where selection is dependent on the personal choice of the mentor or the mentee (Sodipe & Madukoma, 2013).

It happens spontaneously based on mutual respect and rapport. Mentoring programmes in university libraries are usually specific and closely tied to the librarian's career stage (Freedman, 2009). Librarians develop skills and research agenda to meet research requirements for their promotion and also explore issues regarding their development as librarians. Other mentoring programmes could be structured to assist new librarians to become familiar with and get involved in the library system. The underlying philosophy of any mentoring programme, according to Adeniji and Adeniji (2010), is to allow the mentees find the best in themselves, live up to their personal visions and enhance their potentialities and skills.

Mentorship programme is ideal for providing librarians with the required skills for research and publication needed for their promotion and career growth. According to Sodipe and Madukoma (2013), there are different forms of mentorship programmes such as transitional, group, and e-mentoring which focuses on building a relationship between the mentee and the mentor with whom they have personal connection or social network. Ozioko, Echezona and

Osadebe (2012) observed that in the library profession, there are varieties of mentorship programmes to assist practising librarians and new librarians in their professional growth and career advancement. These include individual, supervisory, and group mentorship. They help librarians find the best in themselves, live up to their personal visions and enhance their potentialities and skills.

Professional development, on the other hand, encompasses the skill and knowledge an employee acquires to optimize his personal and career development. Professional development, according to Spencer and Ard (2006), is the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge and skills that relate to one's profession, job responsibilities or work environment. Megginson ((2006) observed that it can take place through conference sessions, formal courses, web casts mentoring or networking. It is a lifetime learning process. Pan and Hovde (2010) also observed that it is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep pace 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.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 52 librarians in university libraries in Anambra State. The universities are Madonna University, Okija, Tansian University, Umunya, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli, Paul University, Awka, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The entire population of 52 librarians was studied as the number is manageable. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire has six sections designed to address the six research questions that guided the study. It contained thirty-seven items. All the items in the questionnaire were structured on four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Drafted copies of the questionnaire were validated by two lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Science, and one lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Their comments were used to improve the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty respondents in University of Uyo. The average internal consistency coefficient for the instrument was 0.80 which was considered high enough and reliable for the study. The questionnaires were personally administered to librarians in university libraries in the five libraries. A total of 52 questionnaires were distributed and the same number was collected back. This represents 100% of the number distributed. Data collected from the study was analyzed using descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was determined as benchmark for agree or disagree.

## Discussion of Results

**Research Question 1:** What traditional mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the traditional mentoring programmes practiced in university libraries.

| S/n               | Item description  | N=52 | Mean      | SD         | Remark       |
|-------------------|---|------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| 1                 | There is a face to face interaction between mentor and mentee |      | 3.31      | .73        | Agree        |
| 2                 | Mentor is older than mentee                                   |      | 3.10      | .64        | Agree        |
| 3                 | Mentee seeks guidance from experienced mentor or colleagues   |      | 3.38      | .57        | Agree        |
| 4                 | Mentoring exist outside the boundaries                        |      | 3.08      | .91        | Agree        |
| 5                 | There is matching of mentor and mentee                        |      | 3.13      | .95        | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |   |      | <b>16</b> | <b>3.8</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

The five items listed in Table 1 were positively rated as traditional mentorship practices in university libraries in Anambra State. From the analysis, mentees seek guidance from experienced mentors and face to face interactions were highly rated with mean scores of 3.38 and 3.31 respectively.

**Research Question 2:** What individual mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

**Table 2:** Mean responses on the individual mentoring programmes practiced in university libraries.

| S/n               | Item description  | N=52 | Mean         | SD          | Remark       |
|-------------------|---|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1                 | The mentor chooses mentee   |      | 3.06         | .87         | Agree        |
| 2                 | The mentor is always assumed all knowing  |      | 3.13         | .63         | Agree        |
| 3                 | Individual mentoring is hierarchical in nature, that is, mentor is higher than mentee |      | 3.31         | .67         | Agree        |
| 4                 | They discuss subjects that pertain to them at their level                             |      | 3.35         | .56         | Agree        |
| 5                 | Mentor is older than the mentee   |      | 3.00         | .84         | Agree        |
| 6                 | Mentor is more experienced than the mentee  |      | 3.42         | .64         | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |   |      | <b>19.27</b> | <b>4.21</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

In Table 2, respondents agree that the six items listed were individual mentoring programmes practised in the libraries studied. The item with mean score of 3.42 showed that the mentor is more experienced than the mentee. Another item that received significant rating of 3.3 is item 4 which indicated that the mentor and mentee discuss subjects that pertain to them. The table also showed that in individual mentoring (3.31), the mentor is higher than the mentee.

Research Question 3: What group mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

**Table 3:** Mean responses on the group mentoring programmes practised in university libraries.

| S/N               | Item description  | N=52 | Mean         | SD          | Remark       |
|-------------------|---|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1                 | Mentors engage all mentees in a conversation                        |      | 3.15         | .72         | Agree        |
| 2                 | A number of individuals under the guidance of one mentor            |      | 3.29         | .57         | Agree        |
| 3                 | Mentor and mentees are engaged to achieve specific learning goals   |      | 3.5          | .58         | Agree        |
| 4                 | Multiple mentees are trained on a particular topic or issue         |      | 3.19         | .67         | Agree        |
| 5                 | Mentee with similar learning needs form a supportive learning group |      | 3.31         | .73         | Agree        |
| 6                 | Matters discussed are patterned to suit                             |      | 3.37         | .56         | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |   |      | <b>19.81</b> | <b>3.83</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

The analysis in Table 3 showed that the respondents agree to the six items listed as group mentoring programmes practised in these libraries. They were all highly rated. Mentor and mentees engage in activities to achieve specific learning goal received the highest mean score of 3.5

Research Question 4: What supervisory mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

Table 4: Mean responses on the supervisory mentoring programmes practised in university libraries.

| S/N               | Item descriptions   | N=52 | Mean         | SD          | Remark       |
|-------------------|---|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1                 | Mentors give answer to many questions of mentees                        |      | 3.13         | .71         | Agree        |
| 2                 | There is a high level of performance and commitment in the organization |      | 3.58         | .54         | Agree        |
| 3                 | Mentors supervise mentees   |      | 3.48         | .61         | Agree        |
| 4                 | Discussions are based on career development and goals                   |      | 2.87         | .95         | Agree        |
| 5                 | Mentors take time to work on mentees                                    |      | 3.21         | .80         | Agree        |
| 6                 | It is day-to-day guidance about current job                             |      | 3.15         | .78         | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |   |      | <b>19.42</b> | <b>4.39</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

The analysis shown in Table 4 indicates that the respondents agree to the six items listed as the supervisory mentoring programmes practised in the libraries studied. The six items received mean score rating of 3.15 and above.

Research Question 5: What situational mentoring programmes are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

Table 5: Mean responses on the situational mentoring programmes practised in university libraries.

| S/n               | Item description                                   | N=52 | Mean         | SD          | Remark       |
|-------------------|--|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1                 | It is a short-term mentorship programme            |      | 2.83         | .90         | Agree        |
| 2                 | Mentor focuses on a specific need of mentee        |      | 3.23         | .73         | Agree        |
| 3                 | It is expert based                                 |      | 3.15         | .78         | Agree        |
| 4                 | The mentor is more experienced than the mentee     |      | 3.44         | .57         | Agree        |
| 5                 | Purpose of mentoring is to acquire specific skills |      | 3.38         | .53         | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |  |      | <b>16.03</b> | <b>3.51</b> | <b>Agree</b> |



Table 5 showed that the respondents agree that the five items listed were situational mentoring programmes practiced in these university libraries. The five items were positively rated above the criterion mean of 2.50. It showed that librarians agreed with the grand mean of 3.21 that the items listed were situational mentorship programmes practised in these libraries.

Research Question 6: What are the e-mentoring programmes that are practised in university libraries in Anambra State?

Table 6: Mean responses on the e-mentoring programmes practiced in university libraries.

| S/n               | Item description  | N=52 | Mean         | SD          | Remark       |
|-------------------|---|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1                 | Mentor and mentee exchange images with Instagram                      |      | 3.19         | .77         | Agree        |
| 2                 | Mentor and mentee use Facebook messenger to exchange messages         |      | 3.38         | .53         | Agree        |
| 3                 | Mentee learn from mentor through voice and video chat using YouTube   |      | 3.00         | .82         | Agree        |
| 4                 | Mentor and mentee use email to exchange ideas and knowledge           |      | 3.35         | .62         | Agree        |
| 5                 | Mentor communicates with mentee through Skype                         |      | 3.02         | .90         | Agree        |
| 6                 | Mentor and mentee exchange messages through LinkedIn                  |      | 3.02         | .92         | Agree        |
| 7                 | Mentor and mentee exchange text through WhatsApp                      |      | 3.44         | .57         | Agree        |
| 8                 | Mentor and mentee exchange photos, videos and messages using Facebook |      | 3.21         | .78         | Agree        |
| 9                 | Mentor and mentee post and interact with messages via Twitter         |      | 2.94         | .98         | Agree        |
| <b>Total Mean</b> |   |      | <b>28.55</b> | <b>6.89</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

Analysis in Table 6 showed that the respondents agreed to all the nine items listed as e-mentoring programmes practised in university libraries in Anambra State. They were all positively rated. It could be seen from

the table that mentor and mentee exchanging texts through WhatsApp was highly rated (3.44), while mentor and mentee posting and interacting with messages via twitter was the least scored (2.94). The e-mentoring was carried out through Facebook, email, YouTube, Skype, Intagram, WhattsApp, LinkedIn. Facebook, email, and WhatsApp being the most popular.

### **Discussion of Results**

From the analysis, the various mentorship practices in these libraries were traditional, individual, group, supervisory, situational and e-mentoring. Traditional mentorship is the most common type of mentorship programme. In each type of mentorship programme, the more experienced person mentors the less experienced colleague. The e-mentoring appears to be the trendiest because of the rapid technological advancement. However it requires IT skills, availability of the IT infrastructure, steady network connectivity and discipline on both the mentor and the mentee.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis and discussions of results, it could be concluded that traditional, individual, group, supervisory, situational and e-mentoring practices were the mentorship programmes practised in university libraries in Anambra State. These programmes were designed to foster professional development and services of librarians in university libraries in Anambra State.

### **Implications of the Findings**

The findings have some implications both for librarians and consumers of their services. Career development of librarians will be seriously hampered where both formal and informal mentorship practices are non-existent or not vigorously pursued. Consequently, knowledge and expertise gained from mentorship will elude non-participants and, by extension, affect the quality of service they render to users.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Mentoring is an ongoing process whose success depends on the mentees' initiative and willingness to seek guidance from experienced colleagues. The study recommends that there should be willingness and

availability of experienced librarians (mentors) to offer guidance and advice to the mentees.

2. Since the older librarians are more experienced than the newly employed librarians, the study recommends that there should be adequate training for the newly employed librarians to enable them to gain confidence and skills that will help them in their career development.

3. The study recommends that each university library should design appropriate mentorship programme that will foster professional development of librarians.

4. Mentorship programmes should be planned and executed according to laid down rules and regulations. Discipline and commitment should guide the relationship.

5. E-mentoring is another form of mentoring practice which enables librarians or mentors and mentees to communicate electronically. Acquisition of proper ICT skills, infrastructure and enabling environment is a sine qua non for effective e-mentoring programme in university libraries in Anambra State, more so now that the practice of librarianship is IT-driven.

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