

# Mentoring and Protege Development among Cataloguers in Selected University Libraries in Nigeria

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**Abstract** - This study investigated the mentoring relationship among cataloguers in selected university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria. Data were collected via questionnaire from all the librarians working in cataloguing section of the selected university libraries. Results of the analysis showed that mentoring plays significant role in the protégé career development; there exist relationship between mentor and protégé attitude, between mentoring methods and perceived success. These finding were discussed with reference to relevant literature with their implications for both the mentors and protégé. The recommended that senior cataloguers need to put new and young cataloguers on the right path so that negative attitude, perception should be reduced, the mentee should understand that the mentoring relationship is about advancing his/her professional skills and knowledge, and meeting agreed upon professional goals, thus they should demonstrate commitment and both mentors and protégé need to work at the mentoring relationship and the mentoring process.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Protégé Development, Cataloguers, University Libraries, Nigeria

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has long been recognized as an effective process that assists young professionals to nurture, grow, and develop new skills and attitudes. Mentoring is performed in a wide range of professions including librarianship. In fact, mentoring young professionals, those who will inherit the changed and changing landscape of libraries is one of the values of librarianship (Chesler and Chesler, 2002).

Librarians as a group are well aware of the benefits of properly organized and codified information. The aim of codification is to put organizational knowledge into a form that makes it accessible to those who need it. Cataloguers

value the exchange of ideas and have a unique perspective because they understand the needs and behavioral patterns of their users and act as advocates for them. The mandate of academic librarians is to provide students with access to resources needed to empower themselves. Besides building a core collection of hard copies of books, librarians are building collections of online resources that include databases and online links (Brown, 2011).

In Librarianship, like any other service organization, the assigned tasks are accomplishable and professional in nature. Librarians require a knowledgeable command of numerous information sources to select material appropriate to user's needs; categorize, prepare and catalogue these materials (Ogunlana, 2007). A young cataloguer needs someone who is knowledgeable, committed, respectful of individuals and alternate lifestyles, good listeners; non-judgmental; sensitive to another person's struggle; stable and flexible; honest, patient and trustworthy, and maintains a balance between praise, criticism and advice.

Mentoring a new cataloguer is always a benefit to the library; it helps in learning the job quicker. Guidance from the mentor can alleviate stress that the young cataloguers might be feeling. Mentoring relationship means that friendship has been built between the mentor and mentee. Friendship among cataloguers leads to advice seeking or discussion regarding a work problem and problems can be solved faster.

Mentoring newly graduated librarians in the workplace is a way to enable individuals to gain valuable knowledge and to become a better librarian. Mentoring can be a valuable experience for both the mentor and mentee. Having a colleague or mentor at work that assists with overcoming

the job hazards can make coming to work worthwhile for the mentee or newly employed librarian. It is more than knowing that there is a need for continuing education and training in order to develop special skills in colleagues and in oneself. Mentoring represents an individual's commitment to seeking out, identifying, and developing in a variety of ways the leaders of the future. Mentor often requires courage to push, to support, and to encourage the younger generation to develop their leadership styles. Time spent mentoring allows others to grow while building relationships. Mentoring is an ongoing lifelong process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization (Golian-Lui, 2003).

The basic premise of participating in a mentoring relationship is a choice to engage in a specific form of developmental activity. Mentoring aids individuals entering a new occupation or movement into a different aspect of the same occupation. It provides the mentee with guidance and support, new knowledge and abilities, increased self-confidence, and enhanced employability. Mentoring relationships allow individuals to pass on knowledge gained from work experience that cannot be taught strictly through an academic program. Library school provides a foundation but on-the-job experience partnered with good mentoring will benefit new librarians considerably (Ogunlana, 2007).

This study set to examine the mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee development among cataloguers in some university libraries in Nigeria, investigate the challenges encountered in the mentoring relationship, find out the level of mentoring attitude among academic librarians in cataloguing section of the selected university libraries, find out if mentoring is the effective way to develop cataloguers' experience and career, and find out if mentoring always result into success and protégé career development.

#### **A. Research Questions**

1. Does mentoring play significant role in the protégé career development?
2. What challenges do mentee encountered in the process of mentorship?

3. Is there any significant relationship between mentee and mentors attitudes?
4. Is there a relationship between mentoring methods and perceived success of the mentoring relationship?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Zachary (2009) defines mentoring as a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals. It promotes both individual and organizational learning, growth, and development. Ultimately, a mentoring culture enriches the vibrancy and productivity of an organization and the people within it. It is a time-honored method of encouraging new talent, of sharing expertise and connections, and providing rapid, upward mobility.

Allen, Day and Lentz (2005) described mentoring relationship as a relationship that allows new people to observe departmental activities, divisional functions and goals under the supervision of an experienced professional, in addition to the policies and procedures of the organization, through consultation with the experienced professional.

Igbokwe (2006) opined that mentoring is an effective way to develop the potential of up and coming professionals, however it should never be regarded as an inexpensive form of staff development. Mentoring offers a very effective way of harnessing the experience and wisdom within to best advantage, but it is not resource free, and should never be seen as a cheap option for staff development.

Kuyper-Rushing (2001) pointed out that mentoring can be formal, informal, supervisory, and institutional; and involves a less experienced individual seeking guidance or support for a short period of time. Mentoring provides guidance, feedback, teaching and advocacy in a one-on-one relationship making it more effective than either coaching or training as the impact on behaviour, confidence levels and understanding of the workplace will be more intense, personal and more rapid.

According to Adeyemi (2000) cataloguing holds important pillars on which the practice of the library profession rests, thus the dexterity of the cataloguer is acquired by continuing

training and professionally supportive relationship between experienced, successful mid-career employee and a beginner.

According to Odusanya and Amusa (2006) the philosophy underlying any mentoring initiative is to allow people to find the best in them and live up to their personal vision and enhance their potentialities and skills. Mentoring has long been recognized as an effective process to train newly employ and young professionals to grow and develop new skills and attitudes. As such, young or newly recruited cataloguer aspiring to become successful must be willing to be mentored. Mentee must be adaptable and receptive to new ideas, committed, humble and have respect for the mentor for the relationship to be beneficial to both the protégé and mentor. Mentoring cataloguers in developing a dossier can make the process easier for those going up for promotion for the first time. Having a mentor to discuss the various aspects of the dossier can aid the mentee with peace of mind that it can be completed along with the normal work load.

Mentoring a cataloguer in the library has its main objective, which is growing young librarians towards achieving successful career pursuit and development in library and information profession. Mentoring provides the mentor a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in knowing that staff was being developed in a variety of ways for the future. With the aging of the cataloguers in the library, it is vital that the less experienced staff is prepared and provided training in the skills needed to take on new responsibilities. A good mentorship relationship often leads the mentee putting it forward to assist someone else along the way (Odusanya and Amusa, 2006).

According to Weafer (2006) the terms coaching, counseling and mentoring are used interchangeably. Coaching focuses on what is currently happening, It is the ongoing and continual development in the workplace, emphasizes planning for new skills and competencies (rather than enhancing a skill set that already exists) and is generally done by the manager or other appropriate member of staff or even a professional coach while mentoring relationship focuses on the future. Mentoring is for performers with high potential. The mentor provides insights, acts as a role model for action, behaviors and attitudes and is typically a more senior person, often removed from the immediate workplace. Career development functions are mentor activities

which facilitate protégé advancement in any organisation, while psychosocial functions are those which address the interpersonal and emotional aspects of the relationship. Typical career development functions include challenging work assignments, visibility to management and sponsorship, exposure and protection (Okurame, 2008).

Young cataloguers need mentoring for a number of reasons which include developing good time management skills, developing project management skills, having realistic expectations of what can be done/achieved, being flexible, actively seeking learning opportunities, being pro-active rather than reactive and maintaining awareness of current trends in cataloguing.

DeLong, Gabarro and Lees (2008) noted that mentor must be a credible personality whose integrity transcends the message; interacts in a way that makes mentee better; makes mentee feel secure enough to take risks; gives the confidence to rise above inner doubts and fears; supports attempts to set stretch goals; and presents opportunities and highlights some challenges in the profession.

Freedman (2001) emphasized that effective mentoring is essential to the growth and success of librarianship in all types of library, and Golian-Lui, (2003) asserted that effective mentoring has influence on professional direction, prepare librarians and help the mentee not only to navigate the maze of professional organizations and committees, but also to achieve a more global understanding of the platform of libraries without borders. It addresses the diminishing number of librarians and changing librarianship in the workforce as well as to support ongoing staff needs. It fosters rapid understanding among early career librarians, mid-career transitional librarians and non-professional library staff.

Domeyer (2006) suggested that a potential mentee should outline primary objective; for instance, receiving guidance that will help to position oneself for a promotion, and explain what would be involved serving as ones' mentor, including the desired type of assistance, frequency of interaction and other critical factors.

Today, (2008) viewed that the nature of mentoring is not the supervision of the protégé completed work, learning or

relearning but rather the establishment of close avenues for the exchange of specific information with the emphasis on the exchanged knowledge. Mentors keep a close watch, but protégé stay close for the purpose of having a sounding board for asking questions, clarifying instructions, getting reality checks, solving problems, and in general receiving non-judgmental and specifically non-supervisory feedback and assistance. In mentoring, according to Stoddard and Robert (2003), commitment often means time; to meet regularly, to answer questions, to allow a relationship to grow and flourish. Both the protégé and mentor need to respect the process and each other's time. Mentor's schedules are often difficult due to their current professional positions; protégé need to take the initiative to ask questions promptly and allow time for responses.

In appraising mentoring relationship Eby, Durley and Evans (2008) observed that negative experiences in mentoring are caused by protégé performance problems, that is, performing below expectations, unwillingness to learn; interpersonal problems that is conflict, submissiveness, relationship deterioration; and destructive relational patterns, breach of trust, exploitative behaviour, jealousy, competitiveness and harassment.

Despite the challenges, the benefits of mentoring are very clear. Holloway, (2001) and Odusanya and Amusa (2006) stated that mentoring has benefits for both the mentor and mentee. Some benefits for the mentee include support for professional growth and career development, and the realization of goals, higher salaries, promotions, and overall career satisfaction. Mentors often find a renewal of professional purpose, a sense of satisfaction that one has helped to influence the future of the profession and the ability to identify and advise future professionals.

Establishing mentoring relationships provides guidance for the new cataloguers seeking promotion, tenure status, or reappointment. It enables the new librarian to observe departmental activities, the goals, and procedures of the library. In the mentor role, the senior librarian can assist the new librarian to reach a stage of empowerment, by nurturing of skills, attitudes, and confidence concerning one's professional development and mentors can help young librarians find their research area, or help them become

involved in service, in other words, assist the librarian in opening new doors. Mentoring provides guidance, feedback, teaching and advocacy in a one-on-one relationship making it more effective than either coaching or training as the impact on behavior, confidence levels and understanding of the workplace will be more intense, personal and more rapid (Brogan, 2007).

### III. METHODOLOGY

Survey design was adopted for this study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. Three university libraries in South West Nigeria were selected for the study. The population of the study was the academic librarians working at the cataloguing section in the three selected University libraries.

The questionnaire has 3 sections. The first section was designed to collect demographic information of the respondents. The second section was designed along 15-item mentoring functions scale modified developed by Okurame (2002) which provides five responses of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Section 3 deals with questions on challenges with multiple responses. Though the author reported an alpha reliability of 0.89, a significant convergent ( $r = 0.69$ ;  $p < 01$ ) and divergent ( $r = -0.63$ ;  $p < 01$ ) validity for the scale, the questionnaire was also given to experts in research and statistical analysis to ascertain its face validity. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis. The instruments were directly administered to the targeted respondents by the researchers. The complete questionnaires were pooled and analyzed using the SPSS package. All the copies of the questionnaire administered were returned and found useful. Simple percentage mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were used to analyze the magnitude of response.

### IV. RESULT OF FINDINGS

From the Table I the results showed that there are 9 female librarians which constitutes 36% of the respondents while there are 16 male librarians that is, 64% of the population. The table revealed the evenly distribution of employment between male and female librarians.

**Research Questions 1:** Does mentoring play significant role in the protégés' career development?

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENT BY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

S. No.	University Library	Female	Male	Total
1	Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	4	6	10
2	Babcock University, Ilishan	2	5	7
3	Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, Ago Iwoye	3	5	8
Total		9	16	25

TABLE II MENTORING ROLE IN PROTÉGÉS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Group	Means	Standard Deviation	Df	t-cal	t-crit.	Remarks
Mentoring	25	14.3	24	6.13	1.68	0.05
Career Development	25	15.8				

It is observed from the table II above that the relationship between mentoring and protégés' career development is high and very significant. This is because the calculated r-value of 6.13 is higher than the critical r-value of 1.68. Thus there is strong relationship between mentoring and protégés' career

development. It appears that the benefits of mentoring are modest and effective to career development.

**Research Questions 2:** What challenges mentee encountered in the process of mentorship?

TABLE III CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING MENTORSHIP

S. No.	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unrealistic Expectations	19	24.4
2	Breaches of Confidentiality	11	14.1
3	Clarity of Purpose	9	11.5
4	Procedural Problems	15	19.2
5	Interpersonal Problems	17	21.8
6	Lack of initiative	7	8.9

From the above table, the respondents considered unrealistic expectations 19(24.4%) as the highest challenge followed by interpersonal problems 17(21.8%), procedural problems 15(19.2%), and breach of confidentiality 11(14.1%) while clarity of purpose 9(11.5%) and lack of initiative

7(8.9%) are the least important challenges facing mentoring relationship.

**Research Questions 3:** Is there any significant relationship between mentee and mentors attitudes?

TABLE IV COMPARISON OF MENTOR AND MENTEE ATTITUDE

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-cal	t-crit.	P
Mentor Attitude	16	3.0	2.12	24	2.24	1.68	0.05
Mentee Attitude	9	1.7	2.3				

From the table above, the means representing the mentor attitude and mentee (protégé) attitude are 3.0 and 1.7 respectively. However, the t-calculated value of 2.24 is higher than the t-critical of 1.68. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between the mentor attitude and

mentee (protégé) attitude. The standard deviation indicated that there is strong relationship.

**Research Questions 4:** Is there a relationship between mentoring methods and perceived success of the mentoring relationship?

TABLE V SHOWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTORING METHODS AND PERCEIVED SUCCESS

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	t-crit.	P
Mentoring method	25	3.6	1.2	24	3.14	1.68	0.05
Perceived Success	25	3.4	0.8				



From the table above, the means representing the mentoring method and perceived success are 3.6 and 3.4 respectively. However, the t-calculated value is higher than the t-critical of 1.68. Thus, this suggested that there is significant relationship between the mentoring method and perceived success.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the mentoring and protégé development among cataloguers in selected university libraries. The findings reveal the number of respondents obtained from each university library and their percentage contribution to the study. 10 (40%) of the respondents are from Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, while 7 (28%) and 8 (32%) are librarians working at the cataloguing section of Babcock University respectively and Olabisi Onabanjo University.

The data analyzed in Table II also show that mentoring has significant relationship with career development. Mentoring relationships provide resource and power for the protégé and this is reflected in career enhancing measures, and thus enhance both mentor and protégé work outcomes without necessarily improving their task performance. The finding that mentoring is considerably more important in a career development was demonstrated by Kammeyer-Mueller and Judge (2008) that mentors may serve important career functions for many protégés

The study also revealed that mentoring relationship face with challenges that leads to discouragement and rancor among rank and file involved in mentorship. This is corroborated by Daloz (2004).

While the result of the data analysis revealed on Table IV shows that there is no significant different between mentee and protégés attitude. And Table V is found to be explicable based on the study of Wanberg et al., (2003) which explains that mentoring status may be the result of variables that are well-known antecedents of positive career outcomes.

The findings of the study imply that mentoring relationship tend to influence mentee (protégé) career development, and mentoring methods possibly affects perceived success of mentoring relationship.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mentoring relationship has been found in some contexts to be valuable in improving self-esteem and reducing rates of risk-taking behaviors in young people. The skills and competencies that cataloguers needs are vital to organization of knowledge in the library. But, to take advantage of the possibilities mentoring relationship offers in relation to cataloguing, protégé must support within the vocational training process, which in turn could assist in increasing learning rates. Protégés attitude towards mentoring may reflect a lack of skills and understanding that needs to be addressed before they gain confidence to attempt information-related tasks.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are suggested:

1. What constitutes mentoring relationship in the cataloguing section must be spell out.
2. Mentoring relationship still poses great challenge to many stakeholders, thus senior librarians need to put new and young librarian on the right path so that negative attitude, perception should be reduced.
3. The mentee should understand that the mentoring relationship is about advancing his/her professional skills and knowledge, and meeting agreed upon professional goals, thus they should demonstrate commitment.
4. The mentee should always be responsible for his/her decisions and career progress.
5. Mentee should constantly look for what else they can do and learn along the way.
6. Both mentors and protégé need to work at the mentoring relationship and the mentoring process.

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