

Full Length Research

Mentoring as determinant of attitude to work and job productivity of Librarians in Academic Libraries in South-East Nigeria

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This study investigate mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. It adopted the survey research design and census method of sampling techniques to ensuring that every librarian studied was captured. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The findings showed that mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity has positive influence on librarians in academic libraries South-East, Nigeria ($X=3.04$). The study therefore recommended that mentoring programmes should be encouraged across the country as it provides training grounds for grooming future leaders as well as for providing for succession within the profession. Whereas, professional mentoring should focus on using instructions, demonstration and practice to pass on facts or theoretical knowledge, skills and competences from saddled individual to an individual or small group.

Key Words: Mentoring, Attitude, Job Productivity, Librarians and Academic Libraries

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Introduction

Mentoring is not a new concept in librarianship but has recently been emphasized in academic libraries as there is a growing need for high job performance standard and the desire for libraries in Nigeria to compete comparatively with other libraries in the world. One of the major ways to encourage and maintain positive work attitude is through mentoring a development relationship that enhances individual and professional growth. Gbaje and Ukachi (2011) assert that computer skills acquisition for librarians include skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to library information technology and communication that are relevant to the organizational job productivity.

Staff attitudes are made up of behavioural, cognitive as well as affective components. They are beliefs, feelings, perceptions, values and dispositions that can make one to act in certain ways. Attitudes influence the self-respect and self-perception of an individual and can affect how a worker performs his duties in the workplace as human behaviour is a large component of job productivity (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs, 2016). According to Wilson and Rosenfield (1990) employees' attitudes are correlates of efficiency and productivity for any organization. Therefore, a worker's attitude towards his workplace, duties, co-workers and supervisors influences his overall pattern of behaviour in the work environment and are clear pointers to his productivity quotient (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). An employee's attitude has great potentials in impacting his productivity at work and could also negatively influence his interactions with colleagues and the clientele of the organization (Bianca, 2011). As a result, workers who have positive

attitude to their place of work, official responsibilities and supervisors are more diligent in providing services as well as using time and resources effectively unlike employees who harbour bad feelings (Myers, 2016). This latter group is less motivated, more and easily prone to creation of friction which can progress into counterproductive work behaviour (Stecher and Rosse, 2005). The attitude to work of library professionals is considered to be important because they cannot provide efficient services to their clientele when morale is low as this affects job productivity and ultimately patronage of the institution. The supervision of these professionals is therefore crucial so as to remove any impediments for provision of efficient information services.

Productivity could be explained as a performance of individual worker. The difference between input and valuable output is what is called productivity. This could be high or low. When the output is less than the input, productivity is high. According to Mullins (2015), productivity is a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine or system in converting input into useful outputs. Attainment of high productivity is of primary concern to management and employees of most organizations including the university libraries. Johnson (2015) views productivity as reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources. Sheahan (2013) links productivity to employee morale. According to the, productivity increases when employees are happy at work and have more motivation; that poor morale causes employees to be disengaged. Productivity is the watch-word for every organization desirous of survival. In the views of Higuera (2016), attitudinal problems can seriously disrupt workplace productivity. Workers' effectively is, to some extent, also conditioned factors which can be intensified wither positively or negatively by management policies and practices. For an employee to consistently display good behaviour and the workplace, he/she must maintain a positive attitude towards his/her job. Negative feeling might trigger low productivity. Part of the leadership responsibility is to manage workers in order to enhance high productivity. According to Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007), high productivity remains dependent on the effective management of the workforce. Productivity at work is the effort made by an employee within an organization in order to achieve particular predetermined results through the use of available resources (Abdel-Razak, 2016). According to Robbins and Coulter (2013), productivity in the workplace is the accumulated results of activities that an employee performs. It comprises what an employee does in the workplace toward the achievement of organizational goals and the outcomes of his actions which are measurable (Viswesvaran, 2015). These activities and behaviours are assumed to be under the control of the employee and are acknowledged as the defining aspects of his job, which is what the employee's hired to do (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002). High productivity at work has been adjudged to be a determinant factor in the success and profitability of organizations (Dizgah, Chegini and Bisokhan, 2012). Causal relationships have been established between productivity and attitudes at the workplace (Meyer, Becker and Vanderberghe, 2004). According to Judge, Bono, Thoreson and Patton (2001) as well as Susanty, Miradipta and Jie (2013) when workers have positive attitudes in an organization their level of commitment is high and this invariably enhances their work productivity.

Reitz (2004) defines a librarian as a professionally trained person responsible for the care of a library and its contents, including the section, processing and organization of materials and the delivery of information, instruction and loan services to meet the needs of its users. Librarians are those professionals that are trained to carry out core duties of a library beyond the day-to-day routines of library officers and library attendants. These duties include cataloguing, classification indexing, collection development, serials management and readers' services (Ezeani, Eke and Ugwu, 2012). LRCN (2013) specifies that before a person becomes a librarian he must be a holder of a bachelor's degree in library and information science and must be certified by the Librarians Registrar a Council (LRCN). Being a librarian encompasses a wider range of areas technical skills, interpersonal skills, subject area knowledge, ICT skills, current awareness services or selective dissemination of information skills, and conservation and preservation skills. Being a librarian too represents adoption of distinct philosophical position.

Ezeani, Eke and Ugwu (2012:21), record that a librarian may provide other information services, including provision of computer services and training, coordination of public programmes, basic literacy education and help in funding and using community services. Ononogbo (2012) agrees but then argues that the changing role of libraries in general and the academic library in particular determines the nature of demands on the academic librarian. Today, the demands on the academic librarian have increased tremendously. This is because the traditional concept of a library has been redefined from a place to access paper records and books to one that also houses the most advanced electronic resources, including the Internet, digital libraries and remote access to a wide range of information services.

Consequently librarians often called information professionals increasingly combine traditional duties with tasks involving emerging technologies. New technologies have created a new service environment that has pushed conventional boundaries much further, with calculated risks and opportunities. In this new environment, academic librarians that can survive are those that can react proactively to a broad spectrum of contemporary challenge that focuses on speed, cost and quality (Ahmad and Yeseen, 2009). Moreover, academic librarians have professional obligations to contribute to knowledge in the field through research and creative activities. Such activities include not only doing original research and publishing in library journals, but also engaging with other professionals across in interdisciplinary activities and publishing or presenting research findings and best practice in widely read publications or

largely attended conferences (Hanseen, 2003). Academic libraries constitute a strand in a higher institution. It is the nucleus that revolves all academic activities of the institution. They are libraries housed in the Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education. They are the largest of all libraries both in function, scope of collection, staffing, user as well as the type of services rendered to it uses. According to Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004), academic library is a library established, maintained and administered by Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education to meet the information need of its students, faculty and staff in order to carry out their administrative and executive responsibilities. The academic libraries occupy the central and primary place because it serves all the function of the academic community such as teaching, learning, research and community services. Chernick (2002) states that academic library resources incorporate all types of media into their collections and programmes such as audio tapes, video tapes, microforms, Computer Assisted Instructors (CAI) and the internet. Unegbu and Nwali (2013) state that library resources are the totality of information materials that forms a library collection which include books and non-book material.

According to Olanlokun and Salisu (1993) one of the characteristics of an academic library is mainly concerned with providing materials to meet the curricula and research needs of their parent institutions. Academic library user structure is usually composed of undergraduate, Graduate, Academic and Non-teaching Staff and Researchers. Academic libraries are administered and managed by experienced librarians who possess both general and specialized training that are required in each area of services offered by the library; such specialties cut across various subject areas like language and communication Studies, information Technology, the Arts, Social Science and even in the Sciences (Oyelude, 2004). Today librarians in academic libraries are accorded academic status. Another characteristic of academic libraries is that they are organized departmentally. According to subject areas such as, Engineering, Medicine, law, Library Science, Science, etc. each has its own staff, collection, catalogue and services. It is also not out of place for academic libraries to have their special departments or sections that house special materials such as Government documents, Serials, Audio-visual material and Grey materials. Academic libraries play an indispensable role in the fulfillment of the functions of an academic community. In the light of the foregoing, this study therefore, seeks to investigate mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Question

Research question was posed to guide the study

- i. What is the influence of mentoring and coaching as determinant of attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Mentorship and professional coaching represent an increasing trend towards helping the individual take charge of his or her learning: the primary driver of acquisition of knowledge and skill becomes the employee; the coach or mentor is available to give guidance, insight and encouragement in learning process (Clutterbuck and Wynne, 1994). In contrast, mentoring functions can be performed by someone other than the immediate supervisor while coaching is a role filled by employee's immediate superior that requires direct extrinsic feedback (Torrington and Hall, 2015). Somers (2016) distinguishes mentoring from coaching in terms of mentoring as input and coaching as extraction. However the basic difference is that coaching is always about performance improvement (often over a short time) in a specific skill area with the goals or sub goals primarily belongs to the learner while the coach owns the process; mentoring is more holistic, about the whole individual relating primarily about the identification and nurturing of potentials for the whole person. Both are techniques for developing people but in practice, mentoring tends to be a longer relationship where the goals may change at always set by the learner. The learner owns both the goals and the process (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2015). Mentoring is defined as a process whereby an experienced senior staff member helps to develop technical, interpersonal and organizational skills of a less experienced junior staff member, who is called the protégé (Darwin and Palmer, 2009). It is the idea of an older manager choosing a younger manager for whom he will act as a coach, counselor sponsor (Kuyer-Rushing, 2013). Mentoring also is a personal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate that emphasizes on teaching and learning and facilitating improved performance and development (Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2008). Mentoring consists of the process of forming and maintaining intensive and lasting developmental relationships between a variety of developers (i.e. people who provide career and psychosocial support mentor) and a junior person (the protégé, if male; or protégée, if female (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007).

It is also managerial process or technique that aims at improving organizational working relationship, culture and philosophy (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2015). The purpose of mentoring programme should be to acquire skills that have been described as: understanding the underlying values, traditions and unwritten behaviour codes of academics; effectively managing a productive career in academics; establishing and maintaining a network of professional colleagues (Leslie, Lingard and Whyte, 2005). In work situations, a mentoring relationship brings about sponsorship, acceptance, exposure and visibility, work production, role modeling, challenging assignment, counseling, facilitating improved performance, learning or development and change (Mosey, 2005). This makes mentoring a strategy for socialization and acculturation, which aim to maintain the existing cultural values, norms and ethics and maintain the purpose of change (Johnson, 2016). Mentoring has four main applications: improving performances, career development (for mentor as well as mentee), advice, support and knowledge sharing (VanAvery, 1992). Lankua and Scandura (2014) enumerate the functions and roles that characterized mentoring to include that mentors provide career-enhancing functions such as sponsorship and coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility and offering challenging work or protection, all of which help the protégé to establish a role in the organization, learn the ropes and prepare for advancement in the modeling, counseling, confirmation and friendship, which help the protégé develop a sense of professional identity and competence. With the advent of technology in today's knowledge environment, more mentoring relationships are being provided by electronic format. Electronic mentoring (E-mentoring) has also been called online mentoring, virtual mentoring or tele-mentoring (Bernardin, 2016). It involves mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and protégé which occurs primarily through electronic means (e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms and social networking spaces) it can occur as part of formal or informal mentoring programmes (Bernardin, 2016). Although informal mentoring occurs daily in all types of organizations, higher educational institutions are making mentoring more comprehensive and reachable by introducing formal and group mentoring programmes (Darwin and Palmer, 2009).

According to Turban and Dougherty (1994) these developments have increased mentoring sustainability to being offered as part of structured programmes of continuing professional development. Successful formal mentoring is based on the fact that (i) mentor and protégé participation is voluntary (ii) mentors are chosen on the bases of their past record in developing employees, willingness to serve as a mentor and evidence of positive coaching communication and listening skills (iii) the purpose of the programme is clearly understood (iv) the length of the programme is specified (v) mentor and protégé are encouraged to pursue the relationship beyond the formal period (vi) a minimum level of contact between the mentor and protégé is specified (vii) protégés are encouraged to contact one another to discuss problems and share successes (viii) the mentor programme is evaluated (ix) employee development is rewarded, which shows managers that mentoring and other development activities are worth their time and effort. Whether mentoring is conceptualized as a process or set of activities, the overarching role is that it helps learners build wider networks, from which to learn and influence; it acts as counselor, advocator, emotional support and role model. Good work environment and productivity are built on human relationships and interactions. This explains Moemeka and Onyeagwu (2012) citing Bandura (1976) social learning theory which provides explanation for understanding social relationship in learning States that learning would be laborious if not hazardous, if people had to resolvedly on the effect of their own action to inform than what to do.

Moemeka and Onyeagwu (2012) maintain that most human behaviours are learned idea of how new behaviours are formed and on later occasions, it is coded. The social cognitive theory also acknowledged observation as an important modeling behaviour as that found between mentor and mentee. Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2008) have pointed out that for an employee to see and attract a mentor, he should possess certain characteristics namely emotional stability, ability to adapt their behaviour to the situation and high need for power and achievement. Mentoring programme can benefit both mentors and mentees. A mentor will receive extrinsic rewards such as "enhanced professional" recognition when mentees perform well, and for a mentee it provides a great opportunity for career support, networking, collaboration and interpersonal skills. Benefits of mentoring to the overall organizational growth include early identification of talent that might otherwise go unnoticed, changing employee attitudes and morale, and transmission informal organizational expectations (Higgins, 1996). Also Bryant and Terberg (2016) enumerates the advantages of mentoring to include increased success, increased retention, increased knowledge, creation and sharing, offers great commitment, increased publication rate, professional friendship and networking. There could be challenges when implementing mentoring programme. Such challenges according could be cross cultural issues, especially when the mentoring programme adopts a traditional approach. Also not everyone identified as a mentor is a competent mentor (Darwin and Palmer, 2009:126). However, Ike (2007) recommends that mentoring programmes should be encouraged across the country as it provides training grounds for grooming future leaders as well as for providing for succession within the profession. Whereas, professional mentoring is often concerned with using instructions, demonstration and practice to pass on facts or theoretical knowledge, skills and competences from saddled individual to an individual or small group (Flaherty, 2005). Bernadin (2016) summarizes mentoring as an ongoing process of helping employees enhance their work performance; analyze performance, provide reinforcement and feedback. Peer coaching is another

means to wide opportunities for staff to learn from each other. It is a confidential formative process that can aid librarians in fostering skills they need to perform their better (Levene and Frank, 1993). Benefits of organizations that provide of coaching are improved operational efficiency and employee productivity, development of soft skills, increased employee morale and motivation, better career progression and successive planning and creating a culture that promote loyalty (Woodruff, 2016). However, there is danger that the mentoring will neglect training responsibilities or pass on to the trainee inappropriate management practice, lack of time and interpersonal relationship (Zemke, 1996).

Methodology

In this study, the survey research design was adopted, using the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. This design enabled the researcher to gather information from librarians on mentoring as a determinant of attitude to work and job productivity. The survey design is the best method available in collecting original data for describing a population too large to be observed. The survey design was adopted in place of others because of some advantages; first, the survey design of investigation is very convenient and easy to use. Second, it is very reliable and provides unbiased result especially when questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire is titled "mentoring as determinant of attitude to work and job productivity of practicing librarians in academic libraries". The population of the study is 243 (Two Hundred and Forty-Three). This comprises all librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. A total of two hundred and forty-three (243) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to librarians in academic libraries in South-East Nigeria. Out of these, two hundred and seventeen (217) copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned for analysis giving a response rate of (89.3%). No sample size was drawn from the population. This is because the population of the study is accessible. The census method was used to ensuring that opinions of all librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria were captured.

Analysis

Research Question

What is the influence of mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity of practicing librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Responses on Mentoring as Determinant of Attitude and Job Productivity of Practicing Librarians in Academic Libraries in South-East, Nigeria

| S/N | Mentoring Determinant of Attitude and Job Productivity of Practicing Librarians in Academic Libraries | SA | A | D | SD | Total | Mean Value | Decision |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|-------|------------|-----------------|
| a. | Mentoring enhances my job potentials | 69 | 85 | 33 | 30 | 217 | 2.89 | Not Significant |
| b. | Mentoring makes me gain more clarity of job task | 96 | 71 | 32 | 18 | 217 | 3.13 | Significant |
| c. | Mentoring makes me improve networking and collaboration at work place | 95 | 72 | 31 | 19 | 217 | 3.11 | Significant |
| d. | Mentoring teaches me how to do library duties | 99 | 84 | 23 | 11 | 217 | 3.25 | Significant |
| e. | Mentoring makes me learn new skills and techniques on how to do my job | 69 | 74 | 44 | 30 | 217 | 2.84 | Not Significant |
| | Significant Mean Value= 3.04 | | | | | | | |

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Analysis

The Table above showed that the mean responses on mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria is greater than the significant mean value ($X=3.04$) in three main aspects. These are: mentoring makes me gain more clarity of job task ($X=3.13$), mentoring makes me improve networking and collaboration at work place ($X=3.11$), mentoring teaches me how to do library duties ($X=3.25$). The other two reasons namely; mentoring enhances my job potentials ($X=2.89$) and Mentoring makes me learn new skills and techniques on how to do my job ($X=2.84$) have less than the significant mean value ($X=3.04$). The significant mean value ($X=3.04$) showed that mentoring as determinant of attitude and job productivity has positive influence on librarians in academic libraries South-East, Nigeria.

Finding

The findings of the study revealed that mentoring determines attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. This implies that mentoring significantly determines attitude and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Bryant and Terberg (2016) who enumerates the advantages of mentoring to include increased success, increased retention, increased knowledge, creation and sharing, offers great commitment, increased publication rate, professional friendship and networking. The findings of Bernadin (2016) summarizes mentoring as an ongoing process of helping employees enhance their work performance; analyze performance, provide reinforcement and feedback. Peer coaching is another means to wide opportunities for staff to learn from each other.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Mentoring helps learners build wider networks, from which to learn and influence; it acts as counselor, advocator, emotional support and role model. Good work environment and productivity are built on human relationships and interactions. The study therefore recommends that mentoring programmes should be encouraged across the country as it provides training grounds for grooming future leaders as well as for providing for succession within the profession. Whereas, professional mentoring should focus on using instructions, demonstration and practice to pass on facts or theoretical knowledge, skills and competences from saddled individual to an individual or small group.

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