



Influence of career mentoring on career orientation and career engagement of rural secondary school librarians

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Abstract

As a career development tool, career mentoring is an important way to gain new skills, knowledge, competence, and other resources from an experienced colleague who is in the same profession. This study examined how career mentoring influences career orientation and career engagement among Nigerian rural secondary school librarians. This quantitative study gathered data from 42 librarians at selected rural secondary schools. Career mentoring significantly influences career orientation and career engagement of librarians, according to the results. A positive relationship was observed between career mentoring experience and career orientation and engagement as well as job skills among librarians. Additionally, career orientation and career engagement were shown to be significantly correlated with one another and with librarian job skills. Consequently, it is recommended that school librarians' career advancement be promoted through the development and implementation of a career mentoring program.

Keywords: Career Engagement, Career Mentoring, Career Orientation, Librarians

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Introduction

Mentoring allows staff to benefit from expert advice and guidance on their chosen career from an experienced colleague (David-West & Nmecha, 2019). During career mentoring, the experienced colleague who is providing the mentorship is referred to as the mentor while the employee who receives the mentorship is referred to as the mentee. Career mentoring is a very useful tool for developing additional job skills, knowledge, competence, and other career-enhancing skills from a competent colleague with extensive experience in one's own field or occupation. It can help both mentees and mentors improve their communication skills, broaden their perspectives, and think creatively about how to deal with situations and advance their careers (MindTools, 2020). Kram (1988) posited that mentorship relationships in the workplace can help a person develop throughout their careers. Career mentoring can be done either in-person or online. In the case of a group mentorship program, a mentorship workshop or seminar can be offered. The goal of mentoring can be achieved by joining new professional groups led by an expert who is the mentor for that group (Leong & Vaughan, 2010).

Career mentoring involves a series of phases. Mentoring has four phases, according to Metros and Yang (2006): preparation, negotiation, enabling growth, and closure. The first phase of the mentoring process (the preparation phase) outlines the need for mentees to establish their mentoring goals before contacting a mentor or starting the mentoring relationship. The second phase (the negotiating phase) emphasizes the importance of an initial meeting between mentees and mentors to set actual meeting dates and times and to clarify mentoring goals. By the third phase (enabling growth phase), which is the mid-stage of the mentoring relationship, the mentee is achieving one after another the mentoring goals with the mentor's support. The fourth phase (the closure phase) is the stage during which the mentorship comes to an end, and both mentees and mentors reflect on the mentorship experience and provide feedback to one another. Career mentoring is more likely to influence librarians' career orientations and career engagement if this proposition is accepted.

Career mentoring is a tool used by libraries and institutions to provide on-the-job training for staff as part of continuing professional development (Bello & Mansor, 2013). Organizations can use it to deal with the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and promoting of staff (Allen et al., 2006; Harrington & Marshall, 2014). The

guidance of a mentor can make any librarian a more effective service provider if they are very eager and disciplined about instructional improvement (Walter, 2006). It has been shown that mentoring can help minority librarians increase their career prospects (Bonnette, 2004). It can help increase librarian retention rates (Olivas & Ma, 2009) and overcome issues of diversity (Iuliano et al., 2012). The library profession remains one of the least studied groups in Nigerian secondary schools. The major purpose of this study is to determine whether career mentoring influences career orientation and work engagement of secondary school librarians in rural communities.

Career orientation describes the set of values, aptitudes, and motives that develop over time as a result of experiences (Sari et al., 2017). Staff members must be aware of their career orientation as this can contribute to feelings of success and well-being (Sari et al., 2017). The concept of career orientation in the school system pertains to the attitudes and beliefs of the school personnel regarding teaching, promotions, and their willingness to accept extra duties (Coldwell, 2016). Research on career orientation in schools has primarily focused on teaching training students (Algadheeb, 2015; Kamper & Steyn, 2012; Steyn & Kamper, 2015) and secondary school students (Suryadi et al., 2018). In addition, 984 vocational education teachers in the Netherlands were examined for career orientation (Kunst et al., 2018), 1159 general practitioners in China were examined for career orientation (Wang et al., 2019) and 164 teachers in the Netherlands were examined for career orientation (Kunst et al., 2018). Despite this, research examining whether school librarians' career orientation and work engagement can be influenced by career mentoring in Nigeria is scarce. Since career orientation appears to be associated with job satisfaction (Reyes, 1990), it has become essential to investigate and better understand the career orientation of school librarians. Poor job satisfaction may lead to diminishing career engagement and higher turnover intention, negatively impacting the rural secondary school workforce and its productivity.

The meaning of career engagement is synonymous with the meaning of work engagement, which consists of an optimistic, fulfilling, emotional, and stimulating status in regards to an individual's career-related well-being, manifested as enthusiasm, absorption, and dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigour is the capacity to work hard, the willingness to push further in one's work without being tired so easily, and the ability to persist in difficult situations. Absorption is a satisfying condition of being wholly immersed in one's work, a state that is typified by the rapid passage of time and the inability to experience job detachment. The term dedication describes a person's strong attachment to work, followed by feelings of passion and meaning (Bakker et al., 2008). People who are actively engaged at work are likely to have higher job satisfaction, become very resourceful and easily climb up management ranks (Martin, 2020).

Among 624 public university librarians in Southern Nigeria surveyed by Akinola (2020), there was a very high level of career engagement. Martin (2020) found an average level of career engagement (mean=4.25) among 1100 librarians. According to the study, work expectations, work fit, health, recognition, leadership, work load, meaning, culture, and environment are factors that influence career engagement of librarians (Martin, 2020). Based on a quantitative dataset, Albrow and McElfresh (2021) found that librarians' length of employment is associated with their level of workplace engagement. In the past few years, very few studies have explored career engagement among librarians. The current study, therefore, will add to the existing literature by examining career engagement among librarians undergoing career mentoring in their respective secondary schools located in rural areas. On that note, this study sought to determine the extent to which career mentoring influences career orientation and career engagement among librarians in Nigerian rural secondary schools.

Methods

Study sample and sampling procedure

Between May and July 2019, the study collected data from a sample of 42 librarians who were mentees at the time (currently receiving mentoring from a colleague or being a part of a mentorship group) and are employed in selected rural secondary schools in Southeast ($n=20$; 47.62%) and Southwest ($n=22$; 52.38%) Nigeria. Participants' sampling involved stratification based on sociodemographic characteristics of librarians, as well as systematic random sampling. A population proportion formula based on Epi Info software (Dean et al., 2011) using a 95% confidence interval and a 5% acceptable margin of error was employed to establish the sample size. The final sample size was derived using a sample correction formula that takes into account the possibility of 10% non-response.

Data Collection Instruments

Socio-demographic Profile of Librarians: A socio-demographic profile of librarians was collected, including age, gender, educational qualifications, years in service, type of school by ownership, type of school by gender, marital status, and length of time as a mentee (see Table 1).

Career Orientation of Librarians: The Career Orientations Inventory (COI-SF) (short form) (Igbaria & Baroudi, 1993) was used to assess librarians' career orientation. The COI-SF consists of 25 items derived from Schein's Career Anchor Inventory (Schein, 1985). COI-SF has a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5 and nine career orientation subscales: technical competence (3 items); managerial (3 items); autonomy (3 items); job security (2 items); geographic security (2 items); service (3 items); pure challenge (3 items), lifestyle (3 items), and entrepreneurship (3 items). According to Igbaria and Baroudi (1993), the COI-SF is a consistent and suitable self-report measure of career orientation.

Career Engagement of Librarians: The career engagement of librarians was evaluated using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The UWES consists of 17 items, which measure three key aspects of work satisfaction: vigor (VI), dedication (DE), and absorption (AB). The UWES is a questionnaire created on a scale of 0 to 6, with the response options of Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often, and Always. The UWES has been shown to be a reliable, consistent, and suitable tool for measuring work engagement in different settings (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Shimazu et al., 2008). In the present study, the coefficient alphas for the UWES subscales were: VI ($\alpha=0.86$), DE ($\alpha=0.83$), and AB ($\alpha=0.87$).

The Librarians' Skills: The librarians' skills were assessed using adapted items from the Typology of Library and Information Science (LIS) Professional Skills and Personal Competencies (Bronstein, 2015). Bronstein (2015) created a typology of 49 items divided into four broad skill areas: information services provision (8 items), information organization (7 items), technological skills (13 items), and personal competencies (21 items). These skills were rated by respondents according to their mentoring experience. Using a five-point Likert-type rating scale, responses ranged from 1 (do not possess skill) to 5 (highly possess skill). In the present research, the coefficient alphas for the four skill clusters in this questionnaire were as follows: information services provision ($\alpha=0.85$), information organization ($\alpha=0.76$), technological skills ($\alpha=0.78$), and personal competencies ($\alpha=0.82$).

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were delivered to the school librarians by four trained data collectors in person. Data collectors were trained by the investigator to understand how data are collected as well as sampling procedures. To participate in the study, all participating schools and librarians signed informed consent forms. Participants were encouraged to contact data collectors by telephone if any statement in the questionnaires needed additional explanation before responding to it. After distribution, completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher via the data collectors within four weeks. At the time of retrieval, the data collectors checked that the participating school librarians had filled out required fields in each questionnaire.

Ethical considerations

This study received ethics approval from the Departmental Committee (Educational Foundations) on Research Ethics (University of Nigeria). The librarians were informed that they could opt out of the study if they no longer felt disposed to participate. There was no obligation for librarians to answer any question they did not want to. In the questionnaires, there was no place for librarians to write their names in order to maintain the confidentiality of the librarians and their information.

Data Analyses

Sociodemographic data were presented based on the study variables and using descriptive statistics. The primary data were analyzed bivariately and multivariately at a probability level of 0.05. Through the analysis, the researcher was able to establish a relation between the independent and outcome variables. The bivariate and multivariate analyses were statistically significant at 0.05. The research data were cleaned using Epi Info (version 7) (Dean et al., 2011) and then analyzed with IBM SPSS (version 23) (IBM Corp., 2015).

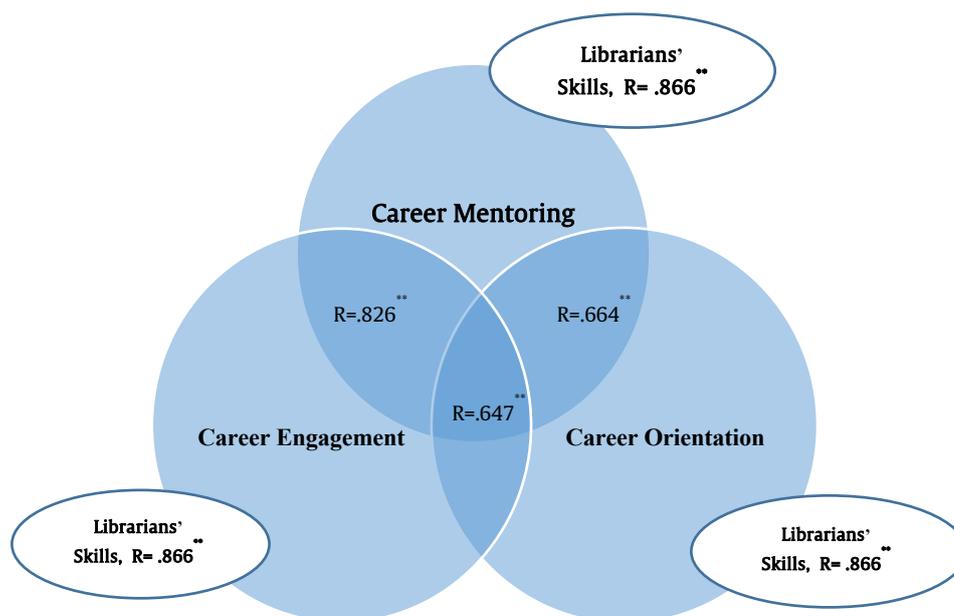
Result

Table 1 showed the sociodemographic profile of the librarians. The average career mentoring score of the librarians was $2.83 \pm .49$, their average career orientation score was $2.84 \pm .55$, average career engagement score was $2.95 \pm .64$, while the average career skills score was $2.70 \pm .68$. It can be seen from Figure 1, bivariate analysis reveal that librarians' career mentoring experience was positively associated with their career orientation, career engagement, and job skills (all p -values $< .001$). In addition, career orientation and career engagement demonstrated significant relationships with one another and with librarian job skills (all $ps < .001$).

Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of the respondents

Characteristics	n (%)
Qualification	
Bachelor's degree	33(78.57)
Master's degree	7(16.67)

Characteristics		n (%)
	Ph.D	2(4.76)
Age	≤39 years	30(71.43)
	≥40 years	12(28.57)
Marital status	Single	16(38.10)
	Married	20(47.62)
	Divorced/Separated	5(11.90)
	Widowed	1(2.38)
Number of years in service	1-10 years	13(30.95)
	11-20 years	21(50)
	Above 21 years	8(19.05)
Gender	Male	15(35.71)
	Female	27(64.29)
Length of time as a mentee	1-3 months	4(9.52)
	4-6 months	11(26.19)
	7-9 months	9(21.43)
	10-12 months	10(23.81)
	Above 12 months	8(19.05)
School type by ownership	Private	14(33.33)
	Public	22(52.38)
	Mission	6(14.29)
School type by gender	Male only	3(7.14)
	Female only	3(7.14)
	Co-educational	36(85.72)



Note: **Correlation is significant

Figure 1: Relationship of Career Mentorship with Career Engagement and Career Orientation of Librarians

Multivariate analysis showed a significant influence of career mentoring on the librarians' skills ($\beta=.803, p<.05$). Similarly, career mentoring significantly influenced librarians' career orientation ($\beta = .529, p<.05$) and their career engagement ($\beta = .656, p<.05$). In terms of the sociodemographic characteristics, qualification ($\beta = .803, p<.05$), school type by ownership ($\beta =.223, p<.05$), and school type by gender ($\beta = -.295, p<.05$) significantly influenced librarians' career engagement. However, gender ($\beta = .070, p=.062$), age ($\beta = -.194, p = .070$), marital status ($\beta = .053, p = .071$), and years in service ($\beta = -.027, p = .350$) did not significantly influence librarians' career engagement. On the other hand, qualification ($\beta = .146, p<.05$), gender ($\beta = .295, p<.05$), age ($\beta = -.196, p<.05$) and length of time as a mentee ($\beta = .166, p<.05$) significantly influenced librarians' career engagement. In addition, marital status ($\beta = .335, p=.143$), years of experience ($\beta = -.048, p = .095$), school type by ownership ($\beta = -.190, p = .075$), and school type by gender ($\beta = -.177, p = .065$) had no significant influences on librarians' career engagement. Finally, marital status ($\beta = -.059, p = .095$), years of experience ($\beta = .068, p = .059$), school type by ownership ($\beta = .122, p = .056$), school type by gender ($\beta = .070, p = .119$), qualification ($\beta = .200, p = .143$), gender ($\beta = -.045, p = .133$) and age ($\beta = -.088, p = .073$) had no significant influences on the librarians' skills

Discussions

This study was conducted to examine the influence of career mentoring on career orientation and career engagement of librarians in rural communities. The study found that career mentoring had a significant influence on career orientation and career engagement of librarians. Additionally, career mentoring had an important influence on librarians' skills. This study found that librarians' career mentoring experience was positively correlated with their career orientation, career engagement, and job skills. Additionally, career orientation and career engagement demonstrated significant relationships with each other as well as with librarians' job skills. Results of the study support the proposition by Kram (1988) regarding mentoring in the workplace as a means of facilitating an individual's career development. Career mentoring is a valuable process that librarians should be exposed to across their career years, but it may be relevant to address the unique career orientation and career engagement needs of individual staff by recognizing their skill and knowledge levels throughout the mentoring relationship since these variables are positively correlated. Career mentoring could be viewed in these respects as a tool for professional growth, a tool for personal growth, a tool for career guidance, a tool for skill evaluation, a tool for career maturity enhancement (MindTools, 2020).

Both a new librarian and an experienced librarian can benefit from career mentoring as they learn from one another's insights and perspectives (American Library Association, 2021). A librarian's performance can be improved through it (Njoku, 2017). Mentoring is extremely useful and required throughout one's career journey (Colosimo et al., 2017; Kram, 1988). Career mentoring has been shown to positively affect individual staff members' personal and professional development (Burke, 1984; Kram, 1988). Future studies examining the effects of librarian career mentoring programs are therefore needed. A program of career mentoring for librarians working in school libraries would facilitate the improvement of their careers. In order to improve and sustain the quality of school personnel including librarians, studies (e.g. Harahap, Roesminingsih & Mudjito, 2020) recommend the implementation of effective human resources development programs. Career mentoring could be an effective human resources development tool for improving school librarians' skill set, career orientation, and engagement. Consequently, it is recommended that school librarians' career advancement be promoted through the development and implementation of a career mentoring program

The first step in making educational games is to analyze the curriculum and needs that refer to the 2013 curriculum. The material used is related to character values. The next stage is compiling game content such as materials, audio and visual designs from educational games to increase the character values of early childhood. The next stage is to design audio-visual designs to be included in educational games and to design educational game guidebooks to increase the character values of early childhood in Kindergarten. To produce educational games to improve the character values of appropriate early childhood, a series of material expert validations, media expert validation, practicality tests, and effectiveness tests are carried out. The series is carried out to obtain educational games to increase the values of early childhood character values that are appropriate and useful for users. The following are the results of the validation, practicality, and effectiveness of educational games to improve the character values of early childhood in Kindergarten.

Conclusion

The influence of career mentoring on the degree of career orientation and career engagement of school librarians was significant. Additionally, career mentoring had a major impact on librarians' skills. In order to assist librarians in their career development, it is suggested that a career mentoring program for school library workers be created and implemented. The implication of this research is that career mentoring is of immense benefit to school librarians, and since it seems to affect their career orientation and engagement, more efforts

will be needed to expand career mentoring opportunities for school librarians in rural areas. Another implication is that it is important to address all possible personal factors that might impact the ability of school librarians to benefit from career mentorship holistically. In addition, schools must assist rural librarians to identify good mentors as well as benefit from current or future career mentoring programs. Considering that the study was limited to rural school librarians in Nigeria, it may not apply to librarians in more civilized school districts. Moreover, the issue of career orientation and engagement of librarians was addressed only quantitatively without taking the benefit of qualitative data into account. The scope of future research must be expanded to include school librarians in urban school districts. Additionally, the impact of career mentoring on librarians' career orientation and engagement could be examined by future research using interpretative phenomenological analysis. In future studies, interviews and focus group discussions may prove useful for gaining deeper insight into career mentoring and librarians' career orientation and engagement.

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