

Influence of Mentoring Practices on Job Performance of Medical Librarians in Health Institutions in Southern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mentoring has long been recognized as an important strategy for improving job performance. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how mentoring practices influence the job performance of medical librarians in Nigeria, despite reports that their performance remains suboptimal. This study investigated the influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria.

Method: The study adopted a survey design. The population of the study comprised all two hundred and forty-eight (248) medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: The findings revealed that the level of mentoring practices for medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria was generally high, with role modelling support being the most prevalent form. However, psychosocial support was the least provided form of mentoring. The findings also indicated that mentoring practices had a significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria.

Conclusion: Based on the study outcome, it was concluded that mentoring practices are key factors in enhancing the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. Given the findings of the study, it was recommended that the library management adopt a more balanced mentoring approach that prioritises the psychological well-being of medical librarians. This can be accomplished by ensuring mentors are trained to offer a wide range of support, fostering more effective and holistic mentoring relationships, while also providing emotional and mental health support.

Keywords: Mentoring practices, job performance, health institutions, medical librarians, Southern Nigeria.

Introduction

Job performance is vital for driving organizational growth, productivity, and competitiveness. It goes beyond merely completing tasks; it requires consistently exceeding basic expectations. To perform effectively, employees are expected to possess a certain level of professional skill and be well mentored. Job performance is defined as an individual's accomplishment of specific tasks and functions that align with and facilitate the attainment of organisation's objectives. It is a level of accomplishment that ultimately enhances the organisation's overall effectiveness and success. It is often linked to the goals and mission of the organisation (Muchinsky & Culbertson, 2013).

Job performance is a critical factor in repositioning any organisation that is determined to achieve its goals, and medical libraries are no exception. Alijanzadeh and Limooni (2020) described job performance as an action performed on purpose for a job or as the outcome of the activity. Therefore, job performance can be conceptualised as the deliberate actions and behaviours exhibited by an individual in the course of their job, or the resultant outcomes and accomplishments that arise from these actions. Job performance of library professionals, especially in medical libraries, is pivotal to the success of healthcare organisations in ensuring the accessibility and effective utilisation of information resources to support patient care, research, and public education, particularly amid a rapidly changing technological landscape (Quadri, Obaseki & Bakare, 2023).

The evolving nature of medical librarians' roles amidst evolving technological advancements, knowledge and skills acquisition has become

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essential for achieving success in current and future tasks. By possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, medical librarians can navigate the complexities of their role, adapt to changing circumstances, and deliver high-quality services that support the needs of healthcare professionals and patients. One effective strategy for fostering professional growth and expertise among medical librarians, and ultimately contributing to organisational goals, is mentoring practices (Moyosore et al., 2020).

Mentoring is a personal developmental connection in which a more experienced mentor directs and encourages a less experienced protégé. According to Geraci and Thigpen (2017), mentoring entails a variety of actions or relationships, including teaching, advising, and advocacy, role modelling, coaching, sponsoring, and helping the mentee with personal growth, all of which can aid in establishing work-life balance. Mentoring practice is a form of social learning relationship involving communication between two individuals, a “mentor” and a “mentee”, whereby the mentor, as an experienced person, shares his knowledge, experience, and advises the less experienced person or mentee. Mentoring practice usually helps to influence both the personal and professional growth of the mentee, as it tends to focus on the future and broader skills that will enhance the individual.

Mentoring for professional development in librarianship involves an established relationship, whether formal or informal, between experienced librarians and inexperienced librarians or those seeking career advancement. Mentorship can have a notable consequence on the development and transformation of librarians throughout their careers, as it can help them to find more fulfilment in their jobs. According to Adetayo et al. (2023), the benefits of mentoring in librarianship include the creation of learning opportunities, self-confidence and readiness to take risks, the ability to accept criticism, and the acceleration of professional development. For continued upgrades, mentoring practice is vital for the betterment of library services. Hence, it provides support and influences

professional growth in librarianship, as well as allowing working collaborations with community members.

Effective mentoring hinges on a multifaceted and intertwined approach that encompasses psychosocial support, career development, and role-modelling. These elements are not isolated; instead, they form an interrelated framework that helps nurture the growth and competence of librarians (Unegbu & Ajala, 2022). Psychosocial support, acting as the bedrock, fosters a sense of belonging and well-being. Mentors who provide emotional encouragement, address anxieties, and offer a safe space for open communication enable mentees to navigate the inherent pressures of their roles. Career support is a form of mentoring relationship that stimulates the career advancement of employees. It focuses on the mentee’s career by developing the skills and competencies required in the fulfilment of his present and future tasks (Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015). While role modelling is a vital aspect of mentoring practices, the mentor serves as an exemplary figure for the mentee. Through observation and imitation, mentees learn valuable skills and behaviours by watching and practising alongside their mentor. Effective mentors embody the specific traits and professional skills that mentees aspire to acquire, inspiring them to accelerate their career advancement, emulate successful behaviours, and achieve growth and professional development (Aboyade et al., 2022).

Mentoring practices applied in medical librarianship help to concentrate on challenges specific to the profession and on the roles and knowledge required for librarians working in healthcare settings, with related solutions. It also aids in the development of specialised skills and expertise needed in the field of medical librarianship, especially in medical terminology, in managing health-related databases, in conducting systematic reviews, and in keeping up-to-date on medical research trends, which are rarely taught in many library schools. So, mentoring practices can support the professional growth of librarians in medical libraries through the encouragement and

support provided by mentors in boosting the confidence of their mentees, as well as helping them to overcome obstacles (Adewuyi & Makinde, 2018).

Meanwhile, Popoola et al. (2020) revealed that Nigerian medical librarians primarily rely on foundational knowledge, indicating that their services are in a developmental stage. The study of Urhefe-Okotie and Ojeabulu (2023) and Solanke et al. (2023) revealed that the extent of job performance of librarians is considerably low. The perceived suboptimal job performance of librarians in Nigerian libraries may be attributed to a persistent reliance on traditional service delivery methods, the absence of adequate infrastructure, inadequate professional competence, and poor mentoring practices, which have often raised critical concerns. Mentoring practices are crucial for augmenting the job performance of librarians. However, this has not been adequately investigated among medical librarians in Southern Nigeria. In Southern Nigeria, where healthcare challenges are significant, the need for skilled medical librarians who can bridge the gap between healthcare professionals and information resources cannot be overstressed. While mentoring is acknowledged as a valuable tool for professional growth and job performance, a comprehensive evaluation of its practices and influences within medical libraries in Southern Nigerian health institutions is still lacking (Oyewole & Popoola, 2013).

The potential deficiencies in psychosocial support, career guidance, and role-modelling within existing mentoring relationships may be hindering the optimal development of mentees. Consequently, this may be hampering the medical librarians from fully developing their skills and contributing effectively to the healthcare sector, potentially impacting the quality of information services and evidence-based practice within health institutions (Popoola et al., 2020). Without doubt, the absence of a well-established mentoring culture would certainly leave many medical librarians without adequate guidance on advancing their careers, improving their specific tasks and skills, or developing the leadership capabilities necessary to

thrive in health institutions. It is against this background that this study investigated the influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question was addressed in the study:

1. What is the level of mentoring practices of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated at 0.05 level of significance

H01: Mentoring practices have no significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Job Performance

Generally, job performance is seen as the extent to which an employee contributes to the accomplishment of the goals of an organization. It involves actions and behaviors put up by individual employees in an organization towards its success. It has also been stated that job performance comprises a set of objectives and observable and measurable actions under the control of the worker, whose purposes are shared with the demands of the organization (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012). Pandey (2019) sees job performance as an important variable that mainly affects three measures of outcomes: at the micro level (which is the individual), the meso level (i.e. the group), and the macro level (i.e., the organization). Consequently, job performance can be defined as an individual's support of the general success of an organization

Job performance, whether executed individually or collectively, is the tangible manifestation of individuals and groups discharging their respective organisational responsibilities (Octaria et al., 2021). Employees are firm assets responsible for

completing the organization's tasks, and the performance of such personnel is comparable to the organization's performance (López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). As such, job performance can be seen as the way and manner in which tasks and responsibilities related to a particular job are accomplished. Hence, it is measured in terms of worth and the individual contribution of a staff member on the job. This clearly indicates that not all job performance is valued by an organisation, but there are jobs that are measurable and highly productive.

Campbell et al. (1993) conceptualized job performance as measurable behaviors that are relevant to the achievement of organisational goals. Muchinsky and Culbertson (2013) considered job performance as a set of workers' behaviors that can be measured, monitored and assessed as an achievement at the individual level. In a similar vein, Adedayo et al. (2022) considered job performance as behavior and outcomes that employees undertake to contribute their quota to the organisational goals. Hence, it includes every necessary effort and time put into action for valuable results. Consequently, job performance can be seen as an output of a staff on the job and the accompanying responsibilities, beyond what is operative or actual, to achieve an expected value.

In terms of process and outcome, the concept of job performance can also be said to be how employee realizes their various tasks assigned to them by their organization. Campbell et al. (1993) proposed an eight-factor model of performance dimensions that are relevant to various categories of job performance in all professions. These are job-specific task proficiency, non-job-specific task proficiency, communication, demonstrating effort, personal discipline, peer/team performance, supervision/leadership, and management /administration. In a medical library setting, task performance involves well-defined job tasks and objectives. Referring to the core tasks and duties of library professionals that are clearly stated in a job description, such as the specific technical or functional aspects of the job that directly contribute to the library's goals, which can be

evaluated. This "in role" behavior is an essential part of the employee's job description. In other words, it includes tasks that employees are actually paid for (Chatterjee et al., 2021). This also includes the ability of the library staff's specific technical skills and expertise to function accordingly. The skill and expertise of librarians in the medical library basically include creating and managing user-centred information services for their community.

Therefore, the job performance of librarians in medical libraries typically involves the provision and access to health information, collaboration and partnership with health workers and medical practitioners to organize health talks and seminars, health literacy services, search strategies, digital literacy, and proficiency in the use of terminology in medical fields. The routine job involves the selection, acquisition, organization, and dissemination of information related to medical research, patient care, and healthcare initiatives. Medical librarians' expertise enables evidence-based practice, research collaboration, patient education, and clinical decision support (Nwafor-Orizu, 2020). Their job performance is mostly determined by how efficiently they can search and deliver timely and relevant information for the delivery of quality care by healthcare professionals.

Concept of mentoring practices

Mentoring practices are indeed essential in librarianship as they facilitate knowledge sharing, skill development, and professional growth. The usefulness of the concept cuts across every profession and career. Mentoring in librarianship can be referred to as a viable means of employee development and management for skill development and enhancing productivity on the job. Modern-day job practice demands reskilling and retooling. The dominance of technology and the need for competence and excellence have added to the growing need for mentoring (Adetayo et al., 2023). Library administrators understand that, unlike machines, human beings cannot function optimally unless they are seen, heard, taught, challenged, and valued. Therefore, the need to support mentoring programs as part of job enrichment efforts so as to minimise job and career

barriers (Burke & Tumbleson, 2019). Librarians require mentoring practices for their personal and professional sustenance, as well as for improved job performance.

The subject of mentoring can be traced back to old traditional norms in which an experienced expert is committed to assisting the professional development of a newbie in the area. Yon et al. (2023) opined that mentoring is a well-established professional development activity. However, there has been a lack of clarity regarding what mentorship implies in the published literature, since prior researchers attempted to characterise mentoring as it relates to each case and variation, resulting in various definitions that are ambiguous and difficult to use. Accordingly, they added that all the actors profit from the learning interactions formed during mentoring. They also stated that a good mentorship program creates an inclusive environment of support and assistance, reducing feelings of isolation that employees may have when adjusting to fresh organisation.

As a result, complicated notions like mentorship may lack a clear and universally acknowledged meaning. Williams (2019) confirmed that the concept of mentorship dates back thousands of years. Likewise, Ojie et al. (2019) had it that mentoring has long been used to develop and retain positive skills, characters, and behaviours for professional and career growth, and it also increases job satisfaction in both the mentor and the mentee, giving them a sense of accomplishment and confidence in their chosen field. Ross (2015) alluded to the fact that mentoring discourse has long centred on the norms of the classic dyad, where one experienced professional is tasked to lead the professional growth of one beginner entering the field. Mentoring, as recorded by Johnson (2016), is a personal and mutual relationship in which a more experienced person acts as a mentor, role model, instructor, and supporter for someone who is less knowledgeable.

According to Burke and Tumbleson (2019), mentoring is mainly about listening and empathy, carefully matching an experienced, qualified mentor with a teachable mentee, and maintaining

confidentiality. Mentoring focuses on the other person and considers their best interests. Mentoring should ideally be a rewarding, mutually beneficial experience that enriches the professional community. Mentoring, they remarked, fulfils the underlying human desire for connection, belief in one's own worth, and willingness to participate in one's professional development. When done well, mentorship energises both the individual and the organisation. Similarly, Ekechukwu and Horsfall (2015) also defined mentoring as the formal or informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development, which energises an individual and an organisation.

Straightly put, a mentor can be someone who is experienced, a high-ranking member of the profession, a reliable counsellor or friend, an advocate, a confidant, or a listener, who promotes intentional learning and developing people's capabilities through instructing, coaching, and role modelling; a patron, a sponsor that offers support and guidance to another or is committed to facilitating the career of a less experienced person. It involves two characters: a younger colleague, a less experience mentee (protégé) and an older colleague (mentor) with far more experienced and knowledge, guiding a less experienced and professional colleague in gaining full involvement in a profession (Nwosu et al., 2020).

Onuoha et al. (2017) identified the necessity for effective mentoring in libraries. They agreed that the transmission of knowledge and skills would suffer if mentoring did not exist or if it existed but contributed little or nothing to organisational growth. To be useful, every employee must not only be provided with the necessary work gear, but also with the knowledge to accomplish the job. Mentoring practice can assist the new librarian in putting theoretical knowledge into practice, applying generalised concepts to specific responsibilities, and becoming acquainted with specific job settings. Mentoring practice is sometimes used as a metaphor for professional

socialisation, which includes workplace practices and institutions (Nwankwo et al., 2017).

According to Burke and Tumbleson (2019), mentoring meets the requirement for relationship-building within library organisations while also allowing individuals to reflect, regroup, be challenged, and develop. Libraries and professional organisations that offer mentorship opportunities distinguish themselves as appealing environments to join. Librarians should seriously consider pursuing mentoring throughout their careers. A mentoring relationship is typically a valued type that can last for a very long period of time, even beyond the mentoring period. Ojie et al. (2019) observed that a successful mentoring relationship includes a mentor who is available for consultation, may encourage and invite a mentee to professional organization meetings and activities, and can introduce them to fellow librarians. They can also offer possibilities to work in high-profile libraries during industrial training periods for professional librarians who have advanced their education in the sector. Mentoring practice has been considered an important concept for libraries.

The above was rightly observed by Zubairu et al. (2021), who reported that work tasks cannot be adequately executed if less experienced staff members are entrusted to undertake library activities without the supervision of more experienced people. They also stated that productivity can only be accomplished by using certain procedures, such as mentorship techniques that allow them to learn relevant skills in delivering adequate information resources to satisfy the increasing expectations of their clients. In librarianship, it is a learning process that leads to development, based on a personal relationship in which an experienced librarian acts as a mentor and assists a new librarian (mentee) in developing as a professional librarian in order to attain professional goals (Udo-Anyanwu, 2022). Mentoring functions include psychosocial support, career support, and modelling (Unegbu & Ajala, 2022). Mentoring has received a lot of attention from researchers over the years because of the complexity in its definition and forms.

For the purpose of this study, the indicators to measure the form of mentoring would be limited to psychosocial support, career support, and role modelling. Psychosocial support includes mental, social, and emotional support for the mentee through acceptance, counselling, and friendship. Psychosocial function provides plain and couched lessons about professional development and work-life balance. Psychosocial support helps the mentee maintain psychological stability. Psychosocial activities address the mentee's personal needs by offering psychological or social support. In some cases, psychosocial mentoring is linked to the mentor-protégé interpersonal relationship and includes role modelling, acceptance, confirmation, counselling, and friendship. Mentoring Psychosocial functions centre around a relationship that enhances competency, identity, and the qualifications required for the job. (Ossai-Ugbah & Akporhonor, 2023; Unegbu & Ajala, 2022).

Edna (2022) emphasised some of the benefits of mentoring support, such as reciprocal learning and progress for both the mentee and the mentor, as well as the mentor providing emotional security for the mentee. Motivation is also regarded as a critical component of psychological empowerment that comes with mentorship. Career functions relate to the relationship that promotes learning in both the workplace and organisations. Career mentoring can be considered as a tool for professional, personal, and career assistance, skill evaluation, and a tool for career maturity enhancement (MindTools, 2020). However, Adetayo et al. (2023) emphasised the necessity of career assistance when offering career-related services to improve skills and professionalism. They stressed that job-related mentorship roles include time management, teaching and research responsibilities, and establishing major goals for the mentee's professional future.

Ross (2018) regards career coaching as beneficial to the protégé and feels that mentoring also boosts self-esteem and confidence in newly employed librarians, emphasising benefits such as retention, succession planning, and acclimation to a library's organisational culture. Role modelling - the

mentors have specific traits and skills that mentees look up to and imitate so as to develop on the job. Hence, they were furnished with the required knowledge and transferred skills needed to meet up with enabling challenges in order to carry out tasks efficiently. In a mentoring relationship, the mentor serves as a role model for the mentee by showing good examples and teaching best practices towards achieving desired success. The mentor impacts the mentee by way of pulling them up their career ladder as a teacher of professional skills. Being an effective role model and mentor necessitates a distinct set of attributes and practices. Regular presence, active listening, flexibility, relatability, and curiosity all help to promote excellent mentoring practices.

In a nutshell, mentoring is an important idea for libraries since work functions cannot be done successfully if less experienced staff members are permitted to undertake library activities without the supervision of more experienced individuals. Mentoring practices in libraries through psychosocial support, career support, and role modelling can be seen as a worthwhile tool for effective management of competencies, enhancement of skills for training new and naïve librarians for future leadership roles. The practice can help empower library personnel in modern librarianship to become more productive in their jobs, with positive attitudes, and provide quality services (Zubairu et al., 2021).

Empirical Review of Mentoring Practices and Job Performance among Librarians

Nwankwo, Ike, and Anozie (2017) investigated the concepts of mentoring young librarians in South-Eastern Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design, and the population comprised a total of one hundred and thirty-five librarians. The findings of the study showed that young librarians were a bit knowledgeable and conversant about the term “mentoring”; they were not equitable when compared to other higher-level librarians in terms of scholarly publication. The survey also found indications of informal mentoring in place in these libraries to help librarians improve their research skills. Idoko et al. (2016) studied mentoring

strategies in use for the professional development of librarians in federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. The findings of the study proved that mentoring is beneficial to the mentee, mentor, and organisation, as it improves teamwork and cooperation in the library and accelerates career advancement in librarians. The findings also showed that there were many challenges to mentoring.

Spears-Frontin et al. (2024) conducted a comparative study of mentoring in Trinidad and Tobago and Botswana for members of the library associations. The population of the study comprised library professionals. The outcome of the study revealed that the librarians in both countries understudied were not conversant with the concept of mentoring and mentoring programmes that boost library professionals. This indicates a need for mentoring in the information profession in both countries. On the other hand, Fasola and Mamudu (2020) investigated how mentoring can be used for capacity building of librarians in private universities in Nigeria. Individual mentoring and role modelling were found to be two of the most common mentoring tactics utilised to enhance librarian ability. The study also found that librarians could benefit greatly from mentoring since it helps with knowledge transfer, lifelong learning, and preparing mentees for leadership roles, among other things.

Retazo (2019) investigated the relationship between head librarians' mentorship quality and personal characteristics and librarians' levels of professional skills in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The study's findings show that the quality of mentoring and personal characteristics of head librarians, such as career growth and psychological support, have significantly influenced their librarians' level of professional competencies, both soft and hard skills. Babarinde et al. (2022) examined the impact of mentorship programs on the career development of junior teaching staff at several public and private universities in Nigeria's South-West geopolitical zone. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents verified that mentorship has a beneficial impact on their careers,

and some of those who believed mentoring was extremely effective acknowledged that mentoring had a favourable impact on their careers. The data also shows that good mentorship has a considerable impact on respondents' professional growth.

Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) investigated the impact of mentoring on employee job performance in Nigeria's service sector. The population consisted of four hundred and sixty Park Inn by Radisson and Green Legacy Resort employees, who were surveyed descriptively. According to the data, the most effective mentorship function that influences employee performance is role modelling, followed by counselling and exposure. Goodsett and Walsh (2015) examined the possible need for mentoring programs for new tenure-track librarians in the United States of America. The study's findings suggested that involvement in mentoring programs provides valuable assistance to mentees with professional, typically tenure-related activities such as peer-reviewed article publication and membership in national organisations. However, the vast majority of librarians polled did not have a mentoring program in place at their institutions.

Unegbu and Ajala (2022) investigated the impact of mentoring and motivation on job satisfaction among librarians at federal and state university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The findings suggested that librarians receive extensive mentoring in federal and state university libraries throughout Southern Nigeria. This finding also revealed that librarians were heavily mentored in their careers. The survey found that librarians in federal and state university libraries in Southern Nigeria received the most role modelling, followed by career help and psychosocial support. Ossai-Ugbah and Akporhonor (2023) evaluated the impact of mentoring on librarian productivity at universities in South-West Nigeria. The findings confirmed the presence of high-level mentoring among librarians in South-West universities in terms of career growth, role modelling, and psychosocial support. The study also found no significant association between mentoring and

librarian productivity in South-West Nigerian universities.

In summary, the review of literature highlighted the importance of mentoring in improving job performance across different professions, especially among librarians. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of studies on mentoring practices in health institutions in Nigeria. Addressing this gap can lead to enhanced career progression for medical librarians and the overall development of healthcare library services.

Methods

This study employed a survey research design of the cross-sectional type. The population comprised all the two hundred and forty-eight (248) medical librarians (professionals and paraprofessionals) working in university teaching hospitals, federal specialist hospitals, and federal medical centres in all the States in Southern Nigeria. Due to the manageable size of the population, a total enumeration was used to include all the medical librarians for the study. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The measured indicators for mentoring were psychosocial support, career support, and role modelling. These were further divided into subscales: psychosocial support (6 items), career support (8 items), and role modelling (6 items). Responses were recorded using a four-point Likert scale: very high (4), high (3), low (2), and very low (1). The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.97, indicating excellent reliability. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and frequency distribution, were used to analyse the data. Inferential statistics (multiple regression) was used to test the research hypothesis.

Results

A total of two hundred and forty-eight (248) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents; 232 copies were returned, but only 230 copies were appropriately filled and validated for analysis, indicating a 92.7% response rate. This indicates that the response is high and good for a study.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 230)

Characteristics	Classification	N	%
Gender	Male	108	47
	Female	122	53
Years			
Age	18 -24	2	0.9
	25-34	33	14.3
	35-44	74	32.2
	45-54	80	34.8
	55-64	41	17.8
Work experience	1-5	28	12.2
	6-1	38	16.5
	11-15	73	31.7
	16-20	36	15.7
	21 years & above	55	23.9
Highest educational qualification	MSc/MLS/MLIS/ MHIM	94	40.9
	PGD	7	3.0
	MPhil	9	3.9
	PhD	33	14.3
	BA/BSc/BLS	71	30.9
	Others (OND, HND)	16	7.0
Respondents' designation	University Librarian	6	2.7
	Deputy Librarian	21	9.1
	Principal Librarian	38	16.5
	Senior Librarian	49	21.3
	Librarian 1	35	15.2
	Librarian II	18	7.8
	Chief Librarian	3	1.3
	Assistant Librarian	21	9.1
	Others (Senior Library officer, Library Officer, Principal Library Officer, Assistant Chief Librarian, Assistant Director Library services)	39	17.0

Table 1 holds the demographic information of the participants of the study. The result revealed that there were 108 (47%) male and 122 (53%) female participants. This suggests that the respondents are fairly evenly distributed, with a slightly higher percentage of females.

The age range of the respondents also shows that 80 (34.8%) were between 45 -54 years old, 74 (32.2%) were 35-44 years, 41 (17.8%) were 55-64 years old, and 2(0.9) were 18-24 years old. This result indicates that the majority of respondents are in their prime working years, suggesting a workforce with significant experience and expertise.

On work experience, 73 (31.7%) had work experience of 11-15 years, 55 (23.9%) have more than 21 years' work experience, and 38 (16.5%) have worked for 6-10 years. This suggests that the respondents of the study are primarily composed of experienced professionals with substantial tenure in the field, likely contributing valuable expertise and insights to their responses.

On highest educational qualification, the results showed that most of respondents 94 (40.9%) were holders of MSc/MLS/MLIS/MHIM. Seventy-one (30.9%) were holders of BA/BSC/BLS, 33(14.3%) had PhD, Others (OND, HND) 16(6.9%), 9(3.9%) MPhil, while 7(3.0%) PGD. This suggest that a knowledgeable and qualified workforce.

On respondents' designation, majority of the respondents 49(21.3%) were senior librarians, followed by "Others" 39 (16.9%) [Senior library officer, library officer, principal library officer, assistant chief librarian, assistant chief medical librarian, assistant director library services, computer analyst], principal librarians 38(16.5%), librarian I 35(15.2%), assistant librarian 21(9.1%), librarian II 18(7.8%), 6(2.6%) university librarian, 3(1.3%), and the lowest category were 3(1.3%). The overall distribution suggests that a large number of the respondents occupy senior roles, with the "Others" category representing various specialized positions which could be attributed to different nomenclature used to categorized librarians in

Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDA) and other health institutions.

Research question one: What is the level of mentoring practices of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria

Table 2: Level of Mentoring Practices of Medical Librarians in Health Institutions

Mentoring practices	Very High level (%)	High Level (%)	Moderately High Level (%)	Moderately Low level (%)	Low Level (%)	Mean	SD
Role Modelling Support The level to which:						4.20	.842
I reverence my mentor's professional skills is	98(42.6)	107(46.5)	19(8.3)	6(2.6)	0	4.29	.728
I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others is	109(47.4)	86(37.4)	26(11.3)	5(2.2)	4(1.7)	4.27	.874
I admire my mentor's skill to bring up others is	101(43.9)	96(41.1)	22(9.6)	7(3)	4(1.7)	4.23	.874
I respect my mentor's ability to teach others is	89(38.7)	111(48.3)	23(10)	5(2.2)	2(.9)	4.22	.779
I generally like my mentor's lifestyle is	84(36.5)	98(42.6)	35(15.2)	13(5.7)	0	4.10	.858
I always emulate my mentor is	87(37.8)	98(42.6)	29(12.6)	11(4.8)	5(2.2)	4.09	.942
Career Support The level to which:						4.07	.953
My mentor gives me responsibilities that enhances my career development on the job is	94(40.9)	98(42.6)	25(10.9)	7(3)	6(2.6)	4.16	.923
My mentor trains me on the job is	89(38.7)	102(44.3)	24(10.4)	9(3.9)	6(2.6)	4.13	.933
My mentor inspires me to take advantage of professional development programme is	83(36.1)	110(47.8)	23(10)	7(3)	7(3)	4.11	.921
My mentor supports my professional goals is	85(37)	102(44.3)	28(12.2)	10(4.3)	5(2.2)	4.10	.925
My mentor always provides me with information on promotion opportunities is	80(34.8)	107(46.5)	30(13)	7(3)	6(2.6)	4.08	.912
My mentor exposes me to lots of career opportunities is	86(37.4)	90(39.1)	35(15.2)	14(6.1)	5(2.2)	4.03	.984
My mentor takes a personal interest in my career development is	77(33.5)	106(46.1)	29(12.6)	10(4.3)	8(3.5)	4.02	.976
My mentor devotes special time to my career is	80(34.8)	90(39.1)	38(16.5)	12(5.2)	10(4.3)	3.95	1.06
Psychosocial Support The level to which:						3.90	.993
I see my mentor as a senior colleague is	112(48.7)	81(35.2)	28(12.2)	7(3)	2(.9)	4.28	.857
I keep in touch with my mentor during work hours is	75(32.6)	97(42.2)	42(18.3)	11(4.8)	5(2.2)	3.98	.948
I consider my mentor to be a friend is	80(34.8)	99(43)	40(17.4)	11(4.8)	0	4.08	.843
I discuss my personal concerns with my mentor is	70(30.4)	76(33)	54(23.5)	19(8.3)	11(4.8)	3.76	1.12
My mentor and I always confide in each other is	59(25.7)	88(38.3)	55(23.9)	17(7.4)	11(4.8)	3.73	1.07
I socialize with my mentor after work is	49(21.3)	91(39.6)	51(22.2)	25(10.9)	14(6.1)	3.59	1.12
Overall Mean						4.06	.932

Decision rule: If mean is 1-1.79= low, 1.80-2.59 = moderately low, 2.60-3.39= moderately high, 3.40-4.19= High, 4.20-5.0= very high

The level of mentoring practices of medical librarians was revealed by the results on Table 2. The result showed that the level of mentoring practices of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria was high ($M = 4.06$ on a 5-point scale). The results on the sub-variables of mentoring practices further revealed that the level of role modeling support was very high ($M = 4.20$). Respondents indicated a strong reverence for their mentor's professional skills ($M = 4.29$), admired their mentor's ability to motivate others ($M = 4.27$), and they also admire their mentor's skill to bring up others ($M = 4.23$). Level of career support ($M = 4.07$) was also found to be high, with respondents noting that their mentor gives them responsibilities that enhances their career development on the job ($M = 4.16$), and also trains them on the job ($M = 4.13$). The analysis further revealed that the level of psychosocial support ($M = 3.90$) of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria was high, indicating that the mentoring relationship positively contributed to both professional and

personal growth. This is reflected in factors such as seeing senior colleagues as mentors ($M = 4.28$), considering their mentors as friends ($M = 4.08$), maintaining communication with mentors during work hours ($M = 3.98$), discussing personal concerns with mentors ($M = 3.76$), consistently confiding in each other in mentor-mentee relationship ($M = 3.73$), and socialising with mentors ($M = 3.59$). This analysis highlights the supportive and collegial environment that fosters strong psychosocial connections within the workplace. This suggest that the mentoring practices most highly involved by medical librarians was role modeling support, followed by career support, and psychosocial support being the lowest rated. This implies that role modeling and career support were considered more vital than psychosocial supports.

Hypothesis one: Mentoring practices have no significant influence on job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria

Table 3: Influence of Mentoring Practices on Job Performance

Variables	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig	Adj.R ²	F	ANOVA Sig
(Constant)	59.647	4.854		12.287	.000	.248	26.13	.000
Psychosocial Support	.229	.265	.081	.867	.387		(3,226)	
Career Support	.250	.263	.124	.951	.343			
Role Modelling Support	1.064	.350	.335	3.041	.003			

Dependent Variable: Job Performance.

Table 3 shows the regression analysis result on the influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. The result revealed that mentoring practices ($Adj. R^2 = .248$, $F(2, 227) = 26.126$, $p < .05$) had a significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians. This implied that 24.8% of the changes in medical librarians' job performance can be accounted for by mentoring

practices. This translates to imply that if medical librarians are properly mentored, it is likely to boost their performance on the job as librarians.

Table 3 also shows the multiple regression analysis of the relative influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in tertiary health institutions in Southern Nigeria. The result further revealed that psychosocial support ($\beta =$

.081, $t(226) = .867, p > .05$) and career support ($\beta = .124, t(226) = .951, p > .05$) did not have a significant influence on medical librarians' job performance. Whereas role modelling support ($\beta = .335, t(226) = 3.041, p < .05$) was found to have a statistically significant influence on medical librarians' job performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and restated thus: mentoring practices have a significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. The study outcome revealed that the level of mentoring practices of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria was generally high ($M = 4.06$ on a five-point Likert-type rating scale), with role modelling support being the most prevalent. This outcome implies that medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria were highly mentored in their jobs. The high score, based on the decision rule, suggests that there is a strong emphasis on the professional development of medical librarians through mentoring practices in the institutions under study. Mentorship programs are vital for the continuous improvement of librarians' skills and knowledge, especially in specialised fields like medical librarianship. This outcome corroborates the study by Babarinde et al. (2022), who confirmed that mentorship has a positive impact on their career, and some of the respondents who believed that mentoring is highly effective accepted that mentoring has positively impacted the career of junior teaching staff in some selected public and private universities in South-west, Nigeria.

This finding also confirms the study by Goodsett and Walsh (2015), whose results suggested that participation in mentoring programs provides valuable support for professional, often tenure-related activities for mentees, such as publishing peer-reviewed articles and joining national organisations. Therefore, for medical librarians, having experienced mentors could help them

navigate challenges, develop new skills, and build confidence in their roles. This, in turn, can lead to greater productivity, and subsequently job satisfaction and retention, thus benefiting not only the medical librarians but also their institution and broader healthcare team. However, the majority of librarians surveyed did not have a mentoring program in place at their institutions. The outcome of this present study disagreed with the findings of Spears-Frontin, Tladi and Omowale (2024), who conducted a comparative study of mentoring in Trinidad and Tobago and Botswana for members of the library associations. The outcome of their study revealed that the librarians in both countries understudied were not conversant with the concept of mentoring and mentoring programmes that boost library professionals.

The findings of the study indicated that the form of mentoring practices most highly involved by medical librarians was role modelling support, followed by career support, and psychosocial support was the lowest rated. This outcome suggests that medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria prioritize modelling support, career advancement, and learning from experienced mentors. This combination of role modelling and career support suggests a reasonable level of a holistic approach to mentoring, where both personal and professional development are nurtured through mentorship relationships. Meanwhile, this denotes the need to emphatically integrate psychosocial support into mentorship programs to better support the emotional well-being of medical librarians and create a more balanced and sustainable approach to mentorship.

The findings of this study agreed with the study of Fasola and Mamudu (2020), who reported that individual mentoring and role modelling were two of the prevailing forms of mentoring strategies used for capacity building of the librarians. This outcome also conforms with the study of Ossai-Ugbah and Akporhonor (2023), who investigated mentoring on librarians' productivity in universities in South-West Nigeria, and established the existence of mentoring among the librarians in South-West universities at a

high level in career development, role modelling and psychosocial support. This finding also supported the findings of Unegbu and Ajala (2022), who examined the influence of mentoring and motivation on job satisfaction of librarians in federal and state university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The outcome of their study indicated that role modelling of librarians was the highest, closely followed by career support, and psychosocial support. The outcome also substantiated the findings of Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020), whose findings indicated the highest mentorship function that affects employee performance is role model, followed by counselling, and exposure.

On the hypothesis tested, the result revealed that mentoring practices had a significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians. This translates to imply that if medical librarians are properly mentored, it is likely to boost their job performance. This outcome depicts the importance of structured and supportive mentoring relationships in enhancing the competencies, confidence, and overall effectiveness of medical librarians' jobs. The finding validates the study of Akinyoola (2021) that showed that there is a significant relationship between work performances and mentoring among library personnel in Oyo State, Nigeria. The finding further confirmed the study of Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020), who found a significant relationship existing between mentoring and employee job performance in the Nigerian service sector. The finding also supported the study of Babarinde et al. (2022), which indicates that mentoring effectiveness has a significant effect on the career development of their respondents. The finding also reinforced the study of Eseadi (2022), who reported that career mentoring significantly influences career orientation and career engagement of librarians. The findings of the present study are also corroborated by the study conducted by Lekan-Akomolafe et al. (2021), which examined the perception of mentoring as a developmental tool for enhancing employee performance. The findings of their study showed that mentoring perception, mentoring style, and mentoring communication are

prime drivers of employee performance, especially in the institutions of higher learning.

Following the hypothesis tested, it is important to determine which specific dimensions of mentoring practices contribute most significantly to job performance. The result further revealed that psychosocial support and career support did not have a significant influence on medical librarians' job performance, whereas role modelling support was found to have a statistically significant influence on medical librarians' job performance. The study suggests that psychosocial and career support may not directly affect job performance in this context, although they contribute to overall well-being and long-term career development.

This finding disagreed with the study of Bassey and Otu (2018), who reported that mentorship in terms of psychosocial support has a significant influence on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. In a similar vein, this finding disagreed with the results of Retazo (2019), who reported that the findings of their study provide evidence that the quality of mentoring and personal attributes of head librarians, such as career advancement and psychosocial support, have greatly contributed to their librarians' level of professional competencies, both in soft skills and hard skills. However, this finding agreed with the study of Achonna et al. (2022), who investigated the relationship of mentoring and career development among academic librarians in selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings established the existence of mentoring methods, and all the librarians agreed that mentoring helps to equip mentees for future leadership roles. The study also showed a weak, positive, and significant relationship between the benefits of mentoring and mentoring methods adopted by academic librarians for career development.

Conclusion

The study focused on the influence of mentoring practices on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. Following the outcome of the study, mentoring

practices had a significant influence on the job performance of medical librarians in health institutions in Southern Nigeria. This study further emphasises the importance of mentoring in enhancing the skills and competencies of medical librarians, enabling them to better support healthcare professionals and improve the quality of library services and healthcare delivery. It is evident that health institutions in Southern Nigeria are making meaningful strides in cultivating a supportive environment for the professional advancement of medical librarians.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Given that psychological support was the lowest-rated mentoring practice, this suggests a potential gap. Consequently, library management should adopt a more balanced mentoring approach that prioritizes the psychological well-being of medical librarians. This can be accomplished by ensuring mentors are trained to offer a wide range of support, fostering more effective and holistic mentoring relationships, while also providing emotional and mental health support.
2. Similarly, feedback from both mentors and mentees could be assessed to refine mentoring forms, in order to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of medical librarians.

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