International Journal of Information Resource Management (IJIRM)
Volume 3, Number 4 (October, 2026)
E- ISSN: 1118-7786

MENTORSHIP AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This article examined mentorship and job performance among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to determine the level of job performance among librarians, ascertain the extent of mentorship among librarians, and establish the relationship between mentorship and job performance in the selected Federal University Libraries. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 247 librarians in six selected Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria, and the entire population was used as the sample through total enumeration. Data were collected with a self-designed structured questionnaire titled *Mentorship and Job Performance Questionnaire* (MJPQ). The instrument was validated by experts and yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87. Out of 247 copies of the questionnaire administered, 210 were retrieved, representing an 85% response rate. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis at the .05 level

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of significance with SPSS version 27. Findings showed that librarians had a high level of job performance (grand mean = 3.60, *SD* = 1.02) and experienced mentorship to a moderately high extent (grand mean = 3.62, *SD* = 1.19). The study also found a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between mentorship and job performance ($r = 0.449$, $p < .001$, $N = 210$) among the surveyed librarians. It recommended that university library management should formalise mentorship structures, assign qualified senior librarians as mentors, and integrate mentorship outcomes into staff development and performance improvement plans.

***Keywords**:* mentorship, job performance, librarians, federal university libraries, North-East Nigeria, academic libraries

Introduction

Libraries operate in a dynamic environment, leading to continuous changes in librarians' roles and working conditions. Job performance among librarians refers to how effectively they carry out assigned tasks, responsibilities and professional roles within library systems. It encompasses both quantitative and qualitative aspects, reflecting how librarians meet user needs, achieve organisational goals and contribute to service effectiveness. It is a multidimensional concept involving behavioural, technical, cognitive and interpersonal components.

Librarians' job performance can be examined across several dimensions. Behavioural and task performance include core duties such as cataloguing, classification, indexing, reference services, circulation and information literacy instruction. In academic settings, these extend to supporting teaching, learning and research through collection development and specialised services. Contextual and interpersonal performance involve teamwork, communication, collaboration and participation in outreach activities that enhance organisational effectiveness. Innovative and adaptive performance reflect

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librarians' ability to use digital technologies, automation systems and online platforms to improve service delivery in modern libraries.

Mentorship is a structured developmental relationship in which experienced librarians provide guidance, knowledge sharing and career support to less experienced colleagues. It enhances competencies, leadership skills and continuous learning, while also strengthening professional identity and confidence. Mentorship functions through skill development, professional guidance, psychosocial support, role modelling and career advancement opportunities.

In Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria, mentorship is particularly critical due to the academic demands of teaching, research and community engagement. Strong mentorship enables librarians to acquire relevant skills, adapt to technological changes and perform effectively. Conversely, weak mentorship may limit competence in areas such as digital services, research support and user engagement. This study therefore examines the relationship between mentorship and job performance among librarians in the region.

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Statement of the Problem

Libraries remain important teaching, learning and research hubs in universities. Librarians working in these institutions are therefore expected to perform efficiently and effectively in ways that satisfy library users and support institutional goals. A librarian is expected to use selection tools effectively during acquisition, organise resources systematically, provide access to information, support research activities, and maintain both physical and digital information resources.

Poor job performance usually leads to underutilisation of university libraries and loss of interest by users. Preliminary observations conducted as part of the broader survey study on which this article is based revealed that librarians in some university libraries exhibited signs of low motivation and underperformance, resulting in poor service delivery and irregular use of library resources by users. In Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria, declining library patronage and users' resort to alternative sources of information have become concerns for university management and library administrators.

Previous studies have examined several factors related to librarians' job performance, including work environment, leadership, motivation, organisational support and self-efficacy. However, empirical evidence on the specific relationship between mentorship and job performance among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria remains limited. This gap is significant because mentorship is a practical mechanism through which professional knowledge, institutional culture, service ethics and technical competence can be transferred from experienced librarians to less experienced

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colleagues. The present article therefore focuses on mentorship and job performance among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the level of job performance of librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?
- What is the extent of mentorship among librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between mentorship and job performance of librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance:

H_0: There is no significant correlation between mentorship and job performance of librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria.

5. Literature Review

Job performance among librarians is commonly reflected in the quality, timeliness and effectiveness with which librarians execute professional duties. These duties include cataloguing and classification, provision of reference services, preservation of library resources, collection development, user education, research support, digital repository

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management, record keeping, library marketing and participation in policy development. Bankole et al. (2023) described job performance as a multidimensional construct involving behavioural, technical, cognitive and interpersonal components of library work. Librarians' performance should therefore be judged not only by task completion but also by the quality of user interaction, innovation and professional contribution.

In academic libraries, job performance is closely tied to the core functions of the university. Librarians support teaching by ensuring access to relevant learning resources, support research by assisting users to identify and retrieve information, and support institutional visibility through scholarly communication and digital resource management. Adesuwa and Ogbomo (2024) reported that organisational support, leadership style and work environment affect librarians' task efficiency, timeliness and quality of service delivery. Similarly, Amusa, Iyoro and Olabisi (2013) observed that the work environment could influence the performance of librarians in public universities, particularly where resources and infrastructure either support or constrain professional tasks.

Nwokike and Unegbu (2019) examined the job performance of librarians in universities in South-East Nigeria and reported that librarians performed strongly in traditional service areas such as cataloguing, reference services and user assistance, although some gaps remained in digital literacy and ICT-related functions. Fajonyomi (2021), in a study focused on Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria, similarly observed that librarians' job performance could be affected by conditions within their work

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environment, even though human and professional factors remained important in explaining performance outcomes.

The reviewed literature suggests that job performance among librarians is influenced by a combination of professional competence, institutional support, staff development and adaptability. Since librarianship is increasingly shaped by digital transformation, academic librarians are expected not only to perform traditional tasks but also to adapt to digital repositories, electronic databases, virtual reference services and emerging user expectations. This makes mentorship relevant because it can help librarians acquire the competencies required for both traditional and technology-mediated library services.

Mentorship in librarianship is a professional development relationship that brings experienced and less experienced librarians together for guidance, knowledge sharing, support and career growth. Adekoya and Fasae (2021) examined mentorship in librarianship and emphasised that effective mentorship helps meet professional needs and address developmental challenges among librarians. Similarly, Burke and Tumbleson (2019) argued that mentorship in academic libraries supports career development, leadership preparation and peer learning, thereby contributing to professional effectiveness.

Mentorship may be formal or informal. Formal mentorship usually involves structured mentor–mentee pairing, defined goals, scheduled interaction and institutional monitoring. Informal mentorship, on the other hand, develops naturally through trust,

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shared interests and collegial support. Allen, Eby and Lentz (2016) showed that formal mentorship programme characteristics influence perceived programme effectiveness, while Bynum (2015) highlighted the power of informal mentorship in professional growth. In academic libraries, both forms can be useful, especially where senior librarians are willing to guide junior colleagues through practical tasks and professional challenges.

Several elements make mentorship useful for librarians. Skill development allows mentees to learn cataloguing, reference services, digital repository management, user education and collection development from experienced professionals. Professional guidance assists mentees in understanding institutional procedures, ethical service standards and workplace expectations. Psychosocial support helps librarians manage anxiety, build confidence and sustain motivation in demanding work environments. Role modelling gives mentees the opportunity to observe and emulate exemplary professional conduct. Career advancement support helps librarians identify training opportunities, conferences, research activities and leadership pathways (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003).

Empirical studies support the importance of mentorship in library settings. Njoku (2017) found that mentoring significantly influenced performance improvement among librarians in academic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria. Bello and Mansor (2013) also viewed mentorship as important in libraries and information organisations, particularly from the perspective of catalogue librarians who require specialised guidance. Ekwelem, Abdulsalam and Bimpe (2022) examined mentoring as a tool for re-skilling

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academic librarians in the ICT age and found that mentoring could enhance librarians' ability to cope with technological change. Udo-Anyanwu (2022) similarly treated mentoring as a collaborative tool for professional development among library and information science professionals.

Mentorship matters for job performance because it provides the practical support through which librarians become more confident, efficient and adaptable. In the context of Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria, mentorship can help strengthen professional continuity, reduce skill gaps and improve service delivery. Early-career librarians in particular need support in research assistance, policy implementation, user engagement, preservation practices and digital service delivery.

The relationship between mentorship and job performance is grounded in the assumption that employees perform better when they receive guidance, support, feedback and opportunities for professional learning. In librarianship, mentorship strengthens job performance by improving technical competence, confidence, professional behaviour and organisational understanding. Zubairu, Ngeme and Olagoke (2021) examined mentoring and employee motivation as determinants of job productivity among library personnel in university libraries in Osun State and found that mentoring contributed positively to job productivity. In this sense, mentorship extends beyond career advice to directly influence day-to-day professional output.

Amanda and Akpana (2023) similarly reported that mentorship improves employee productivity through guidance, knowledge sharing and support. In the library context, such

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productivity may be seen in better user assistance, improved cataloguing accuracy, stronger teamwork and greater willingness to participate in professional development. Noe (1988) also emphasised that successful mentoring relationships depend on several determinants, including mentor competence, mentee readiness and organisational support. Mentorship therefore enhances performance most effectively when it is intentionally structured and supported by the organisation.

The literature also suggests that mentorship supports performance indirectly by creating a learning culture. Chang, Desselle, Canedo and Mantzourani (2022), although working outside librarianship, found that mentorship effectiveness depends on institutional support, mentor availability and organisational culture. The insight is relevant to academic libraries because mentorship cannot thrive when it is treated as an informal favour rather than as a recognised professional development process. Where library management creates time, structure and recognition for mentoring, the effects on job performance are likely to be stronger.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, which involves collecting data from a population at a single point in time. This design provides a snapshot of variables as they exist and enables the examination of relationships without manipulation, and was considered appropriate for investigating the relationship between mentorship and job performance among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria. Correlational analysis was used to determine the degree of association

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between the variables. The population comprised all 247 librarians across six selected Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria. Census sampling (total enumeration) was adopted due to the manageable size of the population. The libraries included Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Library, Federal University Wukari Library, Federal University Kashere Library, Modibbo Adama University Library, Ramat Library (University of Maiduguri), and Federal University Gashua Library.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Mentorship and Job Performance Questionnaire* (MJPQ). The instrument consisted of three sections: demographic information, job performance (13 items), and mentorship (13 items), all measured on a five-point Likert scale. Validity was established through expert review, while reliability was confirmed via a pilot study with 20 librarians outside the study area, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at the .05 level of significance with SPSS version 27.

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Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What Is the Level of Job Performance of Librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?

Table 1 *Level of Job Performance among Librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria*

No.	Statement	VLL	LL	ML	HL	VHL	M	SD
1	My involvement in organising and classifying library materials using a cataloguing system is:	9 (4.3)	27 (12.9)	60 (28.6)	88 (41.9)	26 (12.4)	3.45	1.007
2	My assistance to library users in finding information and answering their research questions is:	4 (1.9)	24 (11.4)	50 (23.8)	62 (29.5)	70 (33.3)	3.81	1.081
3	My ability to maintain and innovate digital repositories for users is:	8 (3.8)	35 (16.7)	82 (39.0)	62 (29.5)	23 (11.0)	3.27	0.992
4	My contribution to users' information literacy instruction is:	8 (3.8)	7 (3.3)	63 (30.0)	93 (44.3)	39 (18.6)	3.70	0.938
5	My ability to preserve and conserve library resources, both physical and digital, is:	3 (1.4)	7 (3.3)	104 (49.5)	52 (24.8)	44 (21.0)	3.60	0.902
6	My delivery of reference services that address users' information needs proficiently is:	3 (1.4)	23 (11.0)	60 (28.6)	55 (26.2)	69 (32.9)	3.78	1.067
7	My engagement in collection development through the organisation of relevant materials is:	9 (4.3)	29 (13.8)	30 (14.3)	106 (50.5)	36 (17.1)	3.62	1.056
8	My assistance to researchers, library users and faculty members is:	6 (2.9)	15 (7.1)	60 (28.6)	87 (41.4)	42 (20.0)	3.69	0.967
9	My promotion of library services and advocacy for library resources with enthusiasm is:	4 (1.9)	5 (2.4)	97 (46.2)	62 (29.5)	42 (20.0)	3.65	0.963
10	My performance in library marketing efforts and	6 (2.9)	48 (22.9)	65 (31.0)	48 (22.9)	43 (20.5)	3.35	1.128

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	community outreach initiatives is:							
11	My assistance to researchers in identifying and accessing needed information effectively is:	4 (1.9)	23 (11.0)	50 (23.8)	86 (41.0)	47 (22.4)	3.71	0.996
12	My maintenance of accurate records of library usage, circulation and acquisitions is:	3 (1.4)	24 (11.4)	59 (28.1)	61 (29.0)	63 (30.0)	3.75	1.053
13	My contribution to developing policies and strategies for library growth and improvement is:	5 (2.4)	45 (21.4)	67 (31.9)	41 (19.5)	52 (24.8)	3.43	1.148
Grand Mean		**3.60**	**1.02**					

Note. VLL = Very Low Level; LL = Low Level; ML = Moderate Level; HL = High Level; VHL = Very High Level. Values are frequencies with percentages in parentheses. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 shows that librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria demonstrated a high level of job performance (grand mean = 3.60, *SD* = 1.02). The strongest areas included assisting users with information needs, delivering reference services, and maintaining accurate records. High performance was also observed in information literacy instruction, research support, the promotion of library services, and collection development. Relatively lower performance, however, was recorded in digital repository management, library marketing and community outreach, and participation in policy and strategic development. These results are consistent with the literature suggesting that academic librarians perform critical roles in teaching, learning and research support. The pattern is consistent with Nwokike and Unegbu (2019), who found that librarians in South-East Nigerian universities performed highly in traditional library duties such as cataloguing, reference services and user assistance, and with Fajonyomi

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(2021), whose work in North-East Nigeria drew attention to the performance conditions of librarians in Federal University Libraries. The present finding shows that librarians in the region demonstrate strong user-service orientation, especially in helping users find information, answering research questions, delivering reference services and assisting researchers.

The high level of job performance may be explained by librarians' professional training, institutional expectations and commitment to user service. In academic libraries, librarians are expected to support students, lecturers and researchers, and these expectations may encourage consistent performance in reference services, information literacy and research assistance. The lower mean scores in digital repository management, library marketing and policy development suggest that performance strength is not evenly distributed across all professional areas. Performance improvement efforts should therefore focus not only on sustaining existing strengths but also on strengthening emerging areas of academic librarianship.

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Research Question Two: What Is the Extent of Mentorship among Librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?

Table 2 *Mentorship among Librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria*

No.	Statement	VLE	LE	ME	HE	VHE	M	SD
1	I am guided in improving my user service provision and interaction skills.	10 (4.8)	14 (6.7)	21 (10.0)	52 (24.8)	113 (53.8)	4.16	1.146
2	I am coached in the use of digital tools and technology for library services.	7 (3.3)	15 (7.1)	21 (10.0)	46 (21.9)	121 (57.6)	4.23	1.101
3	I receive guidance in collection development and management practices.	2 (1.0)	26 (12.4)	26 (12.4)	79 (37.6)	77 (36.7)	3.97	1.037
4	I am supported in developing my research and reference skills for better user support.	6 (2.9)	20 (9.5)	30 (14.3)	52 (24.8)	102 (48.6)	4.07	1.126
5	I am mentored in the development of leadership and administrative skills.	6 (2.9)	12 (5.7)	32 (15.2)	88 (41.9)	72 (34.3)	3.99	0.993
6	I receive guidance in understanding and implementing library policies and procedures.	16 (7.6)	68 (32.4)	20 (9.5)	45 (21.4)	61 (29.0)	3.32	1.383
7	I am supported in learning effective research strategies for assisting library users.	53 (25.2)	49 (23.3)	2 (1.0)	56 (26.7)	50 (23.8)	3.00	1.573
8	I receive mentorship as an intern or trainee to aid my professional development.	40 (19.0)	69 (32.9)	9 (4.3)	63 (30.0)	29 (13.8)	2.87	1.391
9	I am guided in fostering collaboration and teamwork among library staff.	9 (4.3)	64 (30.5)	16 (7.6)	57 (27.1)	64 (30.5)	3.49	1.317
10	I am mentored in identifying and pursuing career development opportunities in librarianship.	4 (1.9)	65 (31.0)	18 (8.6)	65 (31.0)	58 (27.6)	3.51	1.242
11	I receive coaching on the preservation and conservation of library	5 (2.4)	80 (38.1)	16 (7.6)	82 (39.0)	27 (12.9)	3.22	1.157

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	materials.							
12	I am guided in understanding and applying information literacy concepts.	3 (1.4)	18 (8.6)	54 (25.7)	105 (50.0)	30 (14.3)	3.67	0.876
13	I receive ongoing feedback and encouragement to enhance my professional growth as a librarian.	3 (1.4)	51 (24.3)	35 (16.7)	77 (36.7)	44 (21.0)	3.51	1.116
Grand Mean		**3.62**	**1.19**					

Note. VLE = Very Low Extent; LE = Low Extent; ME = Moderate Extent; HE = High Extent; VHE = Very High Extent. Values are frequencies with percentages in parentheses. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 shows that mentorship among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria was moderately high (grand mean = 3.62, *SD* = 1.19). The strongest areas of mentorship included coaching in digital tools, user service skills, and research and reference support. Librarians also received guidance in leadership, administration, collection development, and information literacy. Mentorship was weaker, however, in areas such as internship training, advanced research strategies, and the preservation of library materials. Mentorship thus exists across key professional areas but remains uneven, with some aspects requiring further strengthening to ensure balanced professional development. Librarians in the selected libraries received meaningful guidance and professional support from senior colleagues, a pattern consistent with Adekoya and Fasae (2021), who emphasised that mentorship helps address professional needs and challenges in librarianship, and with Burke and Tumbleson (2019), who argued that mentorship in academic libraries contributes to leadership development, peer learning and career growth. The high scores recorded for coaching in digital tools, user-service skills, and

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research and reference services suggest that mentorship is already being used to strengthen practical service delivery in the selected libraries.

At the same time, the relatively lower scores recorded for internship or trainee mentorship, research strategy support and preservation-related coaching show that mentorship practices are not yet fully comprehensive. Mentorship, while present, may still be informal or unevenly implemented across departments and institutions. The implication is that library management should move from casual mentoring practices to structured mentorship systems with clear goals, mentor–mentee pairing, regular meetings, documentation and evaluation.

Research Question Three: What Is the Relationship between Mentorship and Job Performance of Librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria?

H_0: There is no significant correlation between mentorship and job performance of librarians in Federal University Libraries, North-East Nigeria.

Table 3 *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Mentorship and Job Performance*

Variables	r	p (2-tailed)	N	Remark
Mentorship and Job Performance	0.449	< .001	210	Significant at the .01 level

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 shows a statistically significant, moderate, positive relationship between mentorship and job performance (r = 0.449, p < .05). Higher levels of mentorship were associated with better performance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming mentorship as an effective strategy for enhancing librarians' productivity. This finding is consistent with Njoku (2017), who reported that mentoring significantly

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influenced performance improvement among librarians in academic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria. It also supports Zubairu, Ngeme and Olagoke (2021), who found that mentoring contributed to job productivity among library personnel in university libraries in Osun State, and Amanda and Akpana (2023), who linked mentorship with employee productivity through knowledge sharing and support.

The moderate strength of the relationship suggests that mentorship is important but not the only factor shaping job performance. Librarians' performance may also be influenced by motivation, work environment, self-efficacy, leadership, institutional resources and opportunities for professional development. Its statistical significance nonetheless confirms mentorship as a practical route for improving job performance. When senior librarians provide consistent guidance, mentees are more likely to gain clarity of task expectations, develop relevant competencies, handle users better and adapt to technological changes in library services.

The finding also has practical implications for succession planning in academic libraries. Mentorship can prepare early-career and mid-career librarians for higher professional responsibilities, thereby strengthening not only immediate job performance but also long-term leadership capacity, institutional continuity and service innovation in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the findings of this study:

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1. University library management should formalise mentorship structures by assigning qualified and experienced senior librarians as mentors to junior and mid-level librarians, with clearly defined goals, structured mentor–mentee pairing and scheduled interaction.

2. Mentorship outcomes should be integrated into staff development and performance improvement plans, with mentorship activities documented and linked to periodic performance reviews, feedback reports and mentor–mentee progress evaluations.

3. Targeted coaching should be expanded in digital repository management, library marketing and community outreach, and participation in policy and strategic development, where the study recorded relatively lower performance and mentorship scores.

4. Mentorship programmes should be extended to cover internship and trainee librarians, advanced research strategies and the preservation of library materials, so that early-career librarians receive comprehensive support for balanced professional growth.

5. University management should provide the resources, time and recognition needed to sustain mentorship, including periodic assessment of mentorship effectiveness, in order to strengthen long-term leadership capacity and institutional continuity in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria.

Conclusion

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This study examined mentorship and job performance among librarians in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria. The findings established that librarians in the region generally demonstrated a high level of job performance, particularly in user assistance, reference services, research support and information literacy instruction. The study also showed that mentorship was experienced to a moderately high extent, especially in the areas of digital tools, user-service skills, research and reference support, leadership development and collection management. Crucially, the study found a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between mentorship and job performance. This means that mentorship contributes meaningfully to how librarians perform their professional duties. The article therefore concludes that mentorship is a valuable professional development strategy for improving librarians' competence, confidence and service delivery in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria.

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