

COLLABORATIVE MENTORING OF YOUNG LIBRARIANS COMPETENCIES IN CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of collaborative mentoring of young librarians competencies on cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State, South-South of Nigeria. In particular, the study seeks to determine the synergy between experienced cataloguers and young librarians' competencies in cat and class in the world of emerging trends in technology coupled with the application of artificial intelligence in all fields of human endeavours. **Methology:** A descriptive research design was adopted for the study to investigate the views of librarians on collaborative mentoring of young librarians' competencies in cat and class in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom states, Nigeria. The researchers used questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection from 116 librarians in the study area, and four (4) academic libraries involved in the study. The data collected was analyzed using Mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and simple linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. **Findings:** The findings revealed that collaborative mentoring plays a vital role on young librarian's competencies in cat and class in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom state, and also indicated that experienced cataloguers and ICT skills of mentors was a most influential predator of young librarians competencies in cat and class. This underscores the importance of collaborative mentoring of young libraries in academic libraries. **Implication:** The results of the study will help academic libraries and librarians to appreciate the rule of mentoring in the library profession and do all to sustain the ethics. **Originality:** The studys contribution to knowledge lies in its evidence to support the position that young librarians need mentoring particularly in the area of cat and class in the library to facilitate productivity and professionalism in academic libraries

KEYWORDS: collaborative mentoring, young librarians' competencies, cataloguing and classification, academic libraries, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advance in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution and the emerging trends in technology coupled with application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all fields of human endeavor including academic libraries, really demands that a young librarian in the profession should acquire sufficient practical knowledge as basis of wisdom in today's digital world for him/her to function effectively in the chosen field. Cataloguing is the fundamental facet of library and information service. It is apparently the core of library practices because it serves as an entry point to information access and dissemination. Cataloguing and classification have for the time immemorial been the pivot of librarianship. According to Bamise, et al (2019) cataloguing represents the process of formulating bibliographic entries for all materials available in the library. The advance in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as proliferation of information resources warrants young librarians to be competent in cataloguing and classification in today digital environment. Therefore, it is necessary for young librarians to be knowledgeable in the field of information processing as well as possessing a specialized knowledge in the area of classification.

Cataloguing and classification competencies represents the distinct services needed to provide high quality professional support to users of bibliographic entries. Competences in cataloguing and classification are distinct and peculiar to cataloguers. These are technical services which enhance the understanding and processing of information for easy access and retrieval. Bello and Mansor (2012) recognized that growth in information and communication technology as well as electronic resources have not altered the requisite tasks and services of cataloguers, it only calls for an improvement in description of electronic resources. Thus, for young librarians to acquire skills and knowledge, especially literacy skills, critical thinking and evaluation skill for effective service delivery in the global environment. On the other hand, collaborative mentoring in cataloguing and classification services is an essential approach in academic libraries, promoting professional growth, knowledge sharing and improved cataloguing quality. Mentors provide young cataloguers with the support and guidance they need to develop their skills and knowledge on cataloguing processes. Thus, collaborative mentoring in cataloguing and classification lead to improved cataloguing and classification quality as mentors provide guidance and feedback to mentees. Their roles facilitate knowledge sharing among young cataloguers as well as promoting best practices and expertise. According to Parks (2024), collaborative mentoring supports the profession growth of cataloguers, thus enabling them to develop new skills and take on new challenges.

According to Ekechukwu and Horsfall (2015), mentoring is a process for the formal or informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the mentee). Therefore, mentoring is an invaluable tool for career development for a young librarian who desire to become a professional in the field librarianship. According to Mathews and Crow (2003), it is a recognized way of facilitating learning in the workplace and designed to make use of guided learning with a view to developing the knowledge and skills required for high performance. Mentoring programmes offer an established, verified, and proven best practice to enhance organizational and individual learning (Goodyear, 2006). Mentoring helps young librarians to be proven in the field of endeavour as well as helping the young librarian to become professional in cataloguing and classification. This backdrop constitutes the reasons for carrying out these study to investigate the essence of collaborative mentoring and its impact on young librarian competences in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Cataloguing and classification services in academic libraries are the core services of library and information science. Academic libraries today are facing challenges in providing high quality cataloguing and classification services due to ineffective mentoring programs, thus, insufficient skills and knowledge among young cataloguers. Most young librarians in our academic libraries suffer due to inadequate guidance and support lead to errors and inconsistencies in bibliographic records. However, some of the professional cataloguers may not have opportunity for professional growth and development of young librarians, hence leading to stagnation and decreased job satisfaction. Many libraries struggle to find and retained qualified cataloguers, leading to shortage of expertise in cataloguing and metadata management. Also the complexity of cataloguing standards such as RDA and MARC pose a lot of difficulty for cataloguers to keep up to date with the latest developments and best practices. There is also limited opportunities for professional development. Young cataloguers sometimes, may not have access to adequate training and professional development opportunities leading to stagnation and decreased job satisfaction. Mentoring in libraries is a fantastic way to foster professional growth, networking and knowledge sharing.

Collaborative Mentoring therefore, is very essential in professional development of cataloguers, to enable them to develop new skills and stay current with emerging technologies. Researchers have emphasized the need for collaborative mentoring approaches that takes into account unique needs and goals of individual cataloguing professionals (Tan, 2016 and Gundi, et al, 2023). The problem of ineffective mentorship and guidance may hinder the growth and development of cataloguers, particularly in academic libraries. These challenges may lead to poor quality cataloguing, inconsistency and difficulties in bibliographic data that may affect resources discovery and access impossible. Therefore, young cataloguers who are struggling to keep up with the demands of cataloguing may face the problem of decreased productivity and efficiency in their academic output. Thus, young cataloguers may feel frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs due to the lack of support, resources and opportunities for growth and development. Again, this observation suggests that mentoring and collaborative approaches as essential for supporting the professional growth, development and management of young cataloguers in academic libraries. Therefore, the need for this study is to investigate the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competences in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of experience cataloguers on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine the form of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
3. To examine the influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of experienced cataloguers on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
2. What is the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
3. What is the influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of experience cataloguers on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is no significant influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cataloguers mentoring experience and young Librarians competences

Bahmann (2007) described cataloguers as professional librarians, sizeable in number but are indispensable in providing important but veiled services to libraries and library users. Apart from the supervisory roles of a cataloguer, the primary duties of a cataloguer are to prepare bibliographic record and provide access and retrieval items in the library. Bello and Mansor (2012) identified the activities expected of a cataloguer that require the core cataloguing skills to include: original cataloguing which involves both descriptive and subject cataloguing, copy cataloguing, and authority control. According to Oluwabiyi (2020), mentoring is an invaluable tool for career development for library and information professionals. It is a recognized way of facilitating learning in the workplace and designed to make use of guided learning with a view to developing the knowledge and skills required for high performance. Similarly, Goodyear (2006) opined that mentoring programmes offer an established, verified, and proven best practice to enhance organizational and individual learning. A mentor is a trainer, a senior and experienced person in the organization or library who gives guidance and training to the less experienced colleagues, in this case, a young librarian. According to Oladele and Oyelude (2010), a mentor is a skilled adviser and supporter, somebody, usually older and more knowledgeable, who advises and guides a younger, or less qualified person.

More so, Santamaria (2003) defined mentoring as a one-to-one relationship in which an expert or a senior person voluntarily gives time to teach, support, and encourage another. The concept of mentoring relates to emotional support and guidance usually given by a mature individual to a younger person called a mentee. According to Zachary (2002), mentoring passes on knowledge of subjects, facilitates personal development, encourages wise choices, and helps the mentee to make decisions. Ozioko, Nwabueze and Igwesi (2012) sees mentoring as a strategy for continuous staff development, which describes a relationship between a less experienced individual called a mentee and a more experienced individual known as a mentor. It is an informal relationship that develops naturally in the work place between professional colleagues to benefit individuals with regards to the profession and psychologically.

Oluwabiyi (2020) noted that mentoring is a matter of sharing with others what one has learned in a manner and form that makes it understandable and useful to them. However way mentoring is done, its roots are in sharing experience and expertise. It requires looking back to see what people have learned; what they "did right"; what they could recommend to others and what they will do differently if they were starting again. Bell (2000) sees mentoring as an arrangement where someone helps a mentee learn something that he or she would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all if left alone. According to Gunadi et al (2023), mentoring programmes can facilitate knowledge sharing among cataloguers promoting best practices and expertise. Sodipe and Madukoma (2013) maintained that mentorship is a professional training of librarians as it promotes skill acquisition for improved performance and success in one's career. Mentoring can be applied to a variety of people, purposes and

situations, it is a developmental relationship between a more experienced individual (the mentor) and a less experienced partner (the mentee) for the purpose of sharing technical information, institutional knowledge and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavor. Mentoring creates a supportive environment that is non-judgmental and non-competitive because it fosters trust, facilitates the sharing of information among colleagues in a work place.

Experienced mentors aim to improve the child or a young librarian chances for achieving his/her set goals in the organization by linking them to resources and support not otherwise available within the set system. The mentor's purpose is to pass knowledge, experience and judgment or provide guidance and support for change in behavior, attitudes and ambition of a young person or a librarian in the profession. Doolittle et al. (2009) in their discussion stated that creating a "culture of mentoring" helps the organization, individuals in the organization, and those with whom they interact. This culture provides integrity (accountability) throughout the organization, and opportunities for learning, for feedback and for improvement of performance throughout the organization. Libraries are using mentoring to orient new librarians, to assist them through the promotion and tenure process, and to provide information to librarians interested in advancement.

Collaborative Mentoring and Young Librarians' Competencies

Collaborative mentoring in cataloguing services is an essential approach in academic libraries, promoting professional growth, knowledge sharing and improved cataloguing quality. According to Swenson and Parks (2024), mentoring programmes can provide cataloguers with the support and guidance they need to develop their skills and knowledge. Collaborative mentoring in cataloguing can lead to improved cataloguing quality as mentors provide guidance and feedback to mentees. (Tan, 2016).

According to Gunadi et al (2013), mentoring programmes can facilitate knowledge sharing among cataloguers promoting best practices and expertise. Similarly, Parks (2024) noted that collaborative mentoring supports the professional growth of cataloguers, which enable them to develop new skills and take on new challenges. But it has been observed that the technicalities, guidelines and procedures attached to cataloguing and classification have made it difficult for librarians to develop the desire to engage in it. Even in situations where it is mandatory for library professionals to perform cataloguing and classification, they do it nonchalantly with no recourse to impact quality cataloguing and classification for improved service delivery. However, young librarians seeking jobs in libraries often do not possess the requisite cataloguing skills to accomplish this complex task. This is because formal coursework with no adequate cataloguing practice made it difficult for them to acquire requisite skills, but more than coursework is needed to develop competent cataloguers. Cataloguing and classification are complex, hence it becomes imperative that young librarians need to be adequately mentored in order to sustain the profession. This call for collaboration and partnership of all stakeholders in the library profession to mentor the upcoming librarians on the existing and emerging tools on cataloguing and classification.

Collaborative Mentoring has long been recognized as an effective process that assists young professionals to nurture, grow, and develop new skills and attitudes. The basic premise of mentorship is a choice to engage in a specific form of developmental activity. Mentorship provides the mentee with guidance and support, new knowledge and abilities, increased self-confidence, and enhanced employability. Mentorship allow individuals to pass on knowledge gained from work experience that cannot be taught strictly through academic programmes. Chesler and Chesler (2002) noted that mentoring young professionals, those who will inherit the changed and changing landscape of libraries is one of the values of librarianship. According to Inyang (2022), a young cataloguer needs someone who is knowledgeable, committed, respectful of individuals and alternate lifestyles, good listeners; non-judgmental; sensitive to another person's struggle; stable and flexible; honest, patient and trustworthy, and maintains a balance between praise, criticism and advice.

Ozioko, Nwabueze and Igwesi (2012) sees mentoring as a strategy for continuous staff development, which describes a relationship between a less experienced individual called a mentee and a more experienced individual known as a mentor. It is an informal relationship that develops naturally in the work place between professional colleagues to benefit individuals with regards to the profession and psychologically. Collaborative mentor ship allow the mentee to learn to define professional and personal responsibilities that could generally be perceived as staff development. Igbokwe (2016) opined that mentoring is an effective way to develop the potential of up and coming professionals, however it should never be regarded as an inexpensive form of staff development. Mentoring offers a very effective way of harnessing the experience and wisdom within to best advantage, but it is not resource free, and should never be seen as a cheap option for staff development. Considering the need for continued sophisticated library services, its transparency on the emerging new roles placed on librarians in our contemporary society, mentoring cannot be over emphasized. Sodipe and Madukoma (2013) maintained that

mentorship is a professional training of librarians as it promotes skill acquisition for improved performance and success in one's career. They also noted that there is formal or institutional mentorship, which is part of management practice and where it is taken as a policy for senior staff members to compulsorily train the junior ones on the job routines.

Mentors' ICT Skills and Young Librarians' Competencies

Mentoring is designed for professional support like sponsorship to conferences, seminars, scholarly writing and or workshops. By attending conferences and seminars according to Eke (2011) librarians learn to interact with fellow librarians, learn how to present papers, network and build more contacts. However, the transformation generated by the utilization of information communication technology facilities in the library services such as cataloguing and classification of information resources, storage, retrieving and distribution of information has posed challenges to young librarians in carrying out the duties in the library. The usage of information technology in the library system requests that the young librarians be exposed to and have ICT knowledge so as to be able to effectively use the ICT facilities to carry out cataloguing and classification. Without ICT skills young librarian cannot catalogue and classify information effectively.

A mentor has sufficient knowledge on information skills and skills necessary to correct, identify information needed to perform a specific task or solve a problem, cost – effectively search for information, organize or reorganize it, interpret and analyze it once it is found and retrieve (e.g. downloaded), evaluate the accuracy and reliability of the information, including ethically acknowledging the sources from whence it was obtained, communicate and present the results of analyzing and interpreting it to others if necessary, and then until: it for achieving actions and results(Lau, 2006).

ICT can be seen as a generic term referring to the technologies used in collecting, storing, processing and passing information on various forms. This implies that ICT includes communication satellites, radio, television, telephone, video, tape recorder and microphone, among others. Nna-Etuk et al (2025) noted that digital literacy is an individual's ability to use computers to investigate, create, and communicate in order to participate effectively at school, in the workplace, and in society. Fraillon et al (2013) is stress thus:

- Knowing about and understanding.
- Accessing and evaluating information (the processes that enable a person to find, retrieve, and make judgements about the relevance, integrity, and usefulness of computer-based information.
- Managing information (the capacity of individuals to adopt classification and organization schemes to arrange and store information efficiently).

According to Philip (2019) and Nna-Etuk et al (2024) the thrust of the discourse on digital literacy has been on computer applications, being regarded as an important element of ICT. In this regard, digital literacy is regarded in terms of proficiency with computers and software learning tools, networking systems and protocols, hand-held digital devices, and other technologies that enable users to access, create, and communicate information and engage in creative expression.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in four academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State in South-South geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in the study area. The four academic libraries involved were: University of Uyo established in 1991 as conventional university, Federal University of Technology, Ikot Abasi, a technology-based institution established in 2022, University of Akwa Ibom State, Ikot Akpaden, established 2003 as Akwa Ibom State University of Technology, in 2010, the university became a conventional, multi-campus university renamed Akwa Ibom State University with two campuses: the main campus at Ikot Akpaden and Obio Akpa campus in Oruk-Anam Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, and Federal Polytechnic, Ukana established in 1991. These four academic libraries constituted the study area. The population of the study constituted of all the professional librarians of these four academic libraries which were 116 professionals. The total population of 116 were used as sample size because it was small and manageable. The instrument passed through first and content validation using two (2) experts in the Department of Psychological Foundation, University of Uyo, Uyo. Combach Alpha Reliability Technique were used to measure the reliability of the instrument using 20 professionals from Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osura which were not part of the main study. The test produced reliability coefficient of .85 and above. This proved that the instrument was reliable for the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and simple linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

4. ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis carried out on data collected for the study are presented in this section. The presentation was done under the following subheadings data presentation/analysis and discussion of findings.

Research Question One

What is the influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: The result of mean and standard deviation of the influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N= 116)

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Cataloguer's mentoring experience	0.785	0.616	0.613
Young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification			

The result in Table 1 show a correlation coefficient (R-value) of 0.785, indicating a high relationship between cataloguer's mentoring experience and young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of determination (R² – value) of 0.616 also shown in Table 1 indicates that 61.6 percent of the variance in young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by cataloguer's mentoring experience . This means that there is influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: The result of mean and standard deviation of the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N= 116)

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Collaborative mentoring	0.623	0.388	0.383
Young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification			

The result in Table 2 show a correlation coefficient (R-value) of 0.623, indicating a high relationship between collaborative mentoring and young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of determination (R² – value) of 0.388 also shown in Table 2 indicates that 38.8 percent of the variance in young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by collaborative mentoring. This means that there is influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question Three

What is the influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 3: The result of mean and standard deviation of the influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N= 116)

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Mentors' ICT skills	0.853	0.727	0.725

 Young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification

The result in Table 3 show a correlation coefficient (R-value) of 0.853, indicating a very high relationship between mentors' ICT skills and young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The coefficient of determination (R^2 - value) of 0.727 also shown in Table 3 indicates that 72.7 percent of the variance in young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State is explained or predicted by mentors' ICT skills. This means that there is influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State

Table 4: Result of Simple Linear Regression of the influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N=116)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2964.60	1	2964.60	76.04	.00 ^b
	Residual	4444.61	114	38.99		
	Total	7409.21	115			

The result in Table 4 shows the F-ratio of 76.04 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that, there is significant influence of cataloguer's mentoring experience on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State

Table 5: Result of Simple Linear Regression of the influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N=116)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2377.25	1	2377.25	53.86	.00 ^b
	Residual	5031.95	114	44.14		
	Total	7409.21	115			

The result in Table 5 shows the F-ratio of 53.86 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that, there is significant influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State

Table 6: Result of Simple Linear Regression of the influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State (N=116)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3386.33	1	3386.33	95.96	.00 ^b
	Residual	4022.88	114	35.29		
	Total	7409.21	115			

The result in Table 6 shows the F-ratio of 95.96 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that, there is significant influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of data analyzed on hypothesis one reveals that there is significant influence of cataloguers' mentoring experienced on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This was confirmed in Table 4 which shows the F-ratio of 76.04 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based with this result, the null hypothesis therefore, was rejected. This result implies that, there is significant influence of cataloguers' mentoring experience on young librarians' competence in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This result was supported by Mathews and Crow (2003) who maintained that mentoring is an invaluable tool for career development for library and information professionals. It is a recognized way of facilitating learning in the work place and designed to make use of guided learning with a view to developing the knowledge and skills required for high performance. Similarly, Goodyear (2006) opined that mentoring programmes offer an established, verified and proven best practice to enhance organizational and individual learning. He further noted that a mentor is a trainer, a senior experienced person in the organization or library who gives guidance and training to the less experienced colleagues, in this case, is a young librarian. According to Oyalude (2010), a mentor is a skilled adviser and supporter, somebody, usually older and more knowledgeable, who advises and guides a young, or less qualified person.

The result of data analyzed in hypothesis two reveals that, there is significant influence of collaborative mentoring on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This was confirmed in Table 5 which shows the F-ratio of 53.86 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based, with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that, there is significant influence of collaborative mentoring experienced on young librarian competence in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This was supported by the work of Tan (2016), who observed that collaborative mentoring lead to improved cataloguing quality as mentors provide guidance and feedback to mentees. According to Swenson and Parks (2024), mentoring programmes can provide cataloguers with the support and guidance they need to develop their skills and knowledge. This confirms the hypothesis that knowledge of collaborative mentoring enhances young librarians to carry their functions effectively in area of cataloguing and classification.

The result of data analyzed in hypothesis three reveals that, there is significant influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarians' competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This was confirmed in Table 6 which shows the F-ratio of 95.96 with the corresponding probability level of significance of .00 alpha at 1 and 114 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based, with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that there is significant influence of mentors' ICT skills on young librarian competence in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. This was supported by the work of Nna-Etuk et al (2025), who noted that digital literacy is an individual's ability to use computers to investigate, create and communicate in order to participate effectively at schools, in the work place, and in the society. According to Philip (2019) and Nna-Etuk et al (2024) the thrust of the discourse on digital literacy has been on computer application, being regarded as important element of ICT. In this regard, Fraillon et al (2013) noted that digital literacy is regarded as proficiency with the use of computers and software learning tools in solving a problem in a work place.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study empirically analyzed the relationship between collaborative mentoring of young librarians and its competencies in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The study discusses critically the essence of collaborative mentoring on young librarian competencies in cataloguing and classification particularly in the era of technology evolution. It examines some basic facts on mentors cataloguing experience, influence of collaborative mentoring and mentors' ICT skills as it influences mentees cataloguing and classification competences. It therefore, concludes that a strong relationship exists between mentoring experience and young librarian competences in cataloguing and classification in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nigerian Library Association and Library Registration Council of Nigeria should develop special

programmes during annual conference/workshop on mentorship for the training of young librarians in specialized areas like cataloguing and classification.

2. Experienced librarians should be voluntary mentoring young librarians who are interested in librarianship to growth and possess sufficient professional knowledge in the field of librarianship.
3. Mentors should regularly update their skills and knowledge in ICT because of the emerging trends in AI application in the field of information science.
4. Young librarians should seek and engage in collaborative mentoring with their senior colleagues in order to acquire knowledge in cataloguing and classification skills.
5. Mentors should be straightforward with the mentees because it is only by trust that young ones can work together and learn\
6. Regular training and retraining programme for both mentors and mentees (experienced and less experienced cataloguers) be organized by academic libraries in conjunction with parent organizations and regulatory bodies.

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