

TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP AS DETERMINANTS OF PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AMONG LIBRARIANS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Professional effectiveness among librarians has become a growing concern in academic institutions, particularly as demands for efficient information services continue to rise despite varying levels of training and mentorship. This study examined training and mentorship as determinants of professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The purpose was to determine the extent to which these factors influence librarians' performance outcomes. The study adopted a quantitative explanatory design using the Training and Mentorship for Professional Effectiveness Questionnaire (TMPEQ). The instrument was validated through expert review and pilot testing, while reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88. A sample size of 240 respondents was selected using multistage sampling techniques. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings revealed that training significantly influenced professional effectiveness ($\beta = 0.64$, $R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$), mentorship also had a significant effect ($\beta = 0.59$, $R^2 = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$), while their combined influence was strongest ($R = 0.76$, $R^2 = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$). All null hypotheses were rejected. The study concluded that integrating structured training with mentorship enhances professional effectiveness. It is recommended that universities adopt comprehensive training systems and institutionalise mentorship frameworks to strengthen librarians' performance and ensure sustained service delivery improvement.

Keywords: *Training, Mentorship, Professional Effectiveness, Academic Librarians, Human Capital Development*

Introduction

Professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities has increasingly become a focal concern in contemporary knowledge economies where information services are expected to be fast, precise, user-centred, and technologically integrated. Yet, within many public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria, observable gaps persist between the expected standards of professional service delivery and the actual performance outcomes exhibited in



library systems. These gaps manifest delayed information retrieval services, limited user engagement, underutilisation of digital resources, and inconsistencies in research support services. Such outcomes raise a critical concern: if librarians are the intellectual navigators of the academic ecosystem, why does their operational compass sometimes appear misaligned?

At the heart of this concern lies the issue of professional effectiveness itself. Professional effectiveness in librarianship extends beyond routine task execution; it encapsulates the ability to deliver accurate, timely, and user-oriented information services, adapt to evolving technologies, support research productivity, and contribute meaningfully to institutional knowledge ecosystems. In practical terms, it is the difference between a library that merely stores knowledge and one that actively powers scholarships.

Recent studies have argued that professional effectiveness in academic libraries is strongly linked to human capital development mechanisms, particularly structured training and sustained mentorship (Aina & Ajiferuke, 2022; Okonedo & Popoola, 2021). However, despite the recognised importance of these mechanisms, their implementation remains uneven and, in some cases, superficial. Training, within the context of this study, refers to structured, systematic programmes designed to enhance librarians' competencies, technical skills, and professional knowledge in alignment with evolving information management practices. It includes formal workshops, continuing professional development (CPD), digital literacy programmes, and specialised certifications. In a rapidly digitising academic environment, training is not a luxury; it is oxygen that sustains professional relevance. Without it, librarians risk becoming custodians of obsolete practices in a world that demands agility. Contemporary literature underscores that training equips librarians with competencies in digital curation, data management, artificial intelligence applications in information retrieval, and user experience design (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2023; Olatokun & Tiamiyu, 2021).

Mentorship, on the other hand, operates in a more relational and developmental space. It involves a sustained professional relationship where experienced librarians guide, support, and nurture less experienced colleagues, facilitating the transfer of tacit knowledge, professional values, and institutional culture. If training is the map, mentorship is the compass—it helps professionals interpret the terrain, make judgement calls, and navigate complex organisational realities. Mentorship extends beyond technical instruction; it shapes professional identity, confidence, and decision-making capacity. Empirical evidence suggests that mentorship significantly enhances job performance, organisational commitment, and career progression among library professionals (Ogunmodede & Ebijuwa, 2022; Salaam & Oladokun, 2020).

The interplay between training and mentorship can be likened to the dual engines of a well-calibrated aircraft. Training provides the thrust—the technical capability to move forward—while mentorship ensures directional stability and adaptability in turbulent conditions. When either component is weak or absent, the system falters. This analogy aligns with the Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in education and skill development enhance individual productivity and organisational performance (Becker, 1993, as applied in contemporary contexts by Adebayo, 2022). Similarly, Social Learning Theory offers a complementary lens by emphasising that individuals acquire behaviours, skills, and attitudes through observation, interaction, and modelling within social contexts (Bandura, 1977; reinterpreted in organisational studies by Yusuf & Balogun, 2021). Mentorship, in this regard, becomes a critical conduit for experiential learning that formal training alone cannot achieve.

Despite the theoretical clarity, the operational reality in many public universities in

Ogun State suggests a disconnect. Training programmes are often irregular, inadequately funded, or misaligned with emerging professional demands. In some cases, they are treated as ceremonial obligations rather than strategic investments. Mentorship structures, where they exist, tend to be informal, undocumented, and inconsistent, leaving younger librarians to navigate complex professional terrains largely through trial and error. The consequence is a workforce that may possess baseline qualifications but lacks the dynamic competencies required for optimal professional effectiveness.

This situation raises several pressing academic questions. To what extent do existing training programmes align with the evolving competencies required in modern academic librarianship? How effectively do mentorship practices facilitate the transfer of critical tacit knowledge within library systems? Can professional effectiveness be significantly enhanced through a deliberate integration of structured training and institutionalised mentorship frameworks? More fundamentally, what explains the persistent gap between capacity-building initiatives and observable professional outcomes in public university libraries?

These questions are not merely rhetorical; they strike at the core of institutional performance in higher education. Universities rely heavily on their libraries as knowledge hubs that support teaching, learning, and research. When librarians operate below optimal effectiveness, the ripple effects are felt across the academic ecosystem—students struggle with information literacy, researchers face delays in accessing critical resources, and the institution's scholarly output suffers. In this sense, professional effectiveness among librarians is not an isolated variable; it is a strategic determinant of academic excellence.

The significance of examining training and mentorship within this context becomes even more pronounced when viewed against the backdrop of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and data analytics into information services has fundamentally altered the skill requirements for librarians. Traditional cataloguing and indexing skills, while still relevant, are no longer sufficient. Librarians are now expected to function as data stewards, digital curators, and research partners. This paradigm shift demands continuous skill upgrading and adaptive learning mechanisms, which can only be achieved through robust training and mentorship systems (Adeleke & Nwalo, 2023).

Moreover, the institutional environment in public universities often presents unique challenges, including limited funding, bureaucratic constraints, and high staff turnover. These factors can undermine the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives. Yet, they also underscore the need for innovative and sustainable approaches to professional development. Mentorship, for instance, offers a cost-effective mechanism for knowledge transfer that leverages internal expertise. When properly structured, it can mitigate the limitations of formal training programmes and foster a culture of continuous learning.

An analogy from the medical field may further illuminate this point. A medical student may undergo years of formal training, but it is the mentorship received during clinical rotations that transforms theoretical knowledge into practical competence. Similarly, librarians may attend numerous workshops, but without mentorship, the translation of acquired knowledge into effective practice remains uncertain. This duality highlights the complementary nature of training and mentorship as determinants of professional effectiveness.

Recent empirical studies reinforce this perspective. Aina and Ajiferuke (2022) found that continuous professional development significantly improves service delivery outcomes in academic libraries, particularly when aligned with institutional goals. Ogunmodede and



Ebijuwa (2022) demonstrated that mentorship enhances not only technical competence but also organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Ezeani and Igwesi (2023) emphasised the role of digital training in equipping librarians with competencies for managing electronic resources and supporting online learning environments. Collectively, these studies suggest that a holistic approach to professional development—integrating both training and mentorship—is essential for achieving optimal effectiveness.

However, the literature also reveals gaps that justify the present study. Many existing studies focus on either training or mentorship in isolation, with limited attention to their combined effect on professional effectiveness. Additionally, there is a paucity of context-specific research that examines these dynamics within public universities in Ogun State. Given the unique socio-economic and institutional characteristics of this setting, findings from other regions may not be directly applicable. This creates a compelling need for empirical investigation that is both contextually grounded and theoretically informed.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and Social Learning Theory, which together provide a robust framework for understanding how knowledge, skills, and behaviours are developed and applied in organisational contexts. Human Capital Theory emphasises the economic value of investing in employee development, while Social Learning Theory highlights the social processes through which learning occurs. The integration of these theories allows for a comprehensive analysis of how training and mentorship contribute to professional effectiveness.

The rationale for this study, therefore, emerges from both practical and theoretical considerations. Practically, there is a need to enhance the performance of librarians in public universities to support academic excellence. Theoretically, there is a need to deepen understanding of how different capacity-building mechanisms interact to influence professional outcomes. By addressing these dimensions, the study aims to contribute to both scholarly discourse and policy formulation in the field of library and information science. In essence, the study positions training and mentorship are not as peripheral activities but as strategic determinants of professional effectiveness. It challenges institutions to move beyond ad hoc interventions and adopt a more systematic approach to human capital development. It also invites scholars to reconsider the dynamics of professional effectiveness in an era characterised by rapid technological change and increasing demands for accountability.

Ultimately, one is left with a simple but profound reflection: if librarians are the custodians of knowledge, then the systems that develop them must be equally robust, dynamic, and forward-looking. Anything less would be akin to entrusting a modern navigation system to outdated maps—functional, perhaps, but far from optimal.

Statement of the Problem

Professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State has increasingly come under scrutiny as universities demand higher levels of research support, digital resource management, and user-centred services. Despite the strategic role of librarians as knowledge facilitators, observable deficiencies persist in service delivery, including limited responsiveness to users' needs, inadequate utilisation of digital tools, and inconsistent research support services. These shortcomings suggest that professional effectiveness is not being optimally realised within the system. The situation raises a fundamental concern: why do librarians, who are formally trained and professionally certified, still struggle to meet evolving institutional expectations?

Emerging evidence indicates that capacity-building mechanisms, particularly structured training and mentorship, may be insufficient, irregular, or poorly institutionalised in many public universities (Aina & Ajiferuke, 2022; Ogunmodede & Ebijuwa, 2022). Training programmes are often sporadic and not aligned with contemporary technological demands, while mentorship practices tend to be informal and lack strategic direction. Consequently, librarians may possess theoretical knowledge but lack the adaptive competencies and experiential insights required for effective practice in a dynamic academic environment.

This disconnect creates a performance gap that undermines the efficiency of library services and, by extension, the academic productivity of universities. It is therefore unclear to what extent training and mentorship contribute to enhancing professional effectiveness among librarians in this context. Without empirical clarity, institutional interventions risk being misdirected or ineffective. This study addresses this gap by systematically examining how training and mentorship influence professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how training and mentorship function as determinants of professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study sought to generate empirical evidence that could guide institutional strategies for strengthening human capital development within academic libraries.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the influence of training programmes on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.
2. To assess the effect of mentorship practices on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.
3. To determine the combined influence of training and mentorship on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at level of significance of 0.05.

- Ho** : Training programmes have no significant influence on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.
- Ho** : Mentorship practices have no significant influence on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.
- Ho** : Training and mentorship jointly have no significant influence on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State.

Literature Review

Concept of Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding how investments in employee development translate into improved organisational performance. The theory posits that individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies constitute a form of capital that can be enhanced through deliberate investment in education,



training, and experiential learning (Adebayo, 2022). Within the context of academic librarianship, this perspective frames training and mentorship as strategic investments rather than routine administrative activities.

Training enhances librarians' technical and cognitive capabilities, equipping them to manage digital information systems, support research activities, and deliver user-centred services. However, Human Capital Theory also recognises that formal training alone may not fully capture the tacit dimensions of professional competence. This is where mentorship becomes critical, serving as a mechanism for transferring experiential knowledge, professional judgement, and institutional norms (Ogunmodede & Ebijuwa, 2022). In essence, while training builds capacity, mentorship refines its application.

Recent empirical studies affirm that continuous professional development significantly improves service delivery outcomes in academic libraries (Aina & Ajiferuke, 2022). Similarly, mentorship has been linked to enhanced job performance, organisational commitment, and career progression among librarians (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2023). The synergy between these two mechanisms aligns with the central proposition of Human Capital Theory: that sustained investment in human capabilities yields measurable improvements in performance. However, the effectiveness of such investments depends on their quality, relevance, and consistency. In contexts where training is sporadic and mentorship is unstructured, the expected gains in professional effectiveness may not materialise. This underscores the need for a systematic and integrated approach to human capital development within academic libraries.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the influence of training and mentorship on professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate as it enabled the testing of hypothesised relationships among variables using statistical techniques.

The population comprised of professional librarians across selected public universities in Ogun State. A sample sized group of 240 respondents was determined to ensure adequate representation while maintaining analytical efficiency. A multistage sampling technique was employed, combining purposive selection of institutions with stratified and simple random sampling to select respondents across different library units.

Data was collected using a self-designed instrument titled *Training and Mentorship for Professional Effectiveness Questionnaire (TMPEQ)*. The instrument consisted of structured items measured on a four-point Likert scale. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent expert review and a pilot study involving 30 librarians outside the study area. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.88, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collection was conducted through direct administration of questionnaires to respondents. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarise the data, while inferential statistics, including linear regression and multiple regression analysis, were employed to test the stated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 240)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Institution	FUNAAB	85	35.42
	TASFUED	78	32.50
	OOU	77	32.08
Gender	Male	132	55.00
	Female	108	45.00
Years of Experience	1 – 5 years	64	26.67
	6–10 years	82	34.17
	11 years and above	94	39.16
Educational Qualification	BLS/BLIS	58	24.17
	MLS/MLIS	132	55.00
	PhD	50	20.83

Source: Field Report, 2026

The demographic distribution shows a balanced representation across the three public universities, with FUNAAB contributing slightly more respondents. Gender distribution indicates moderate male dominance, though female participation remains substantial, suggesting inclusivity within the profession. Most respondents possessed over six years of experience, implying that responses were drawn from seasoned professionals capable of providing informed insights. Educationally, most librarians held postgraduate qualifications, reinforcing the intellectual capacity of the sample. Overall, the demographic profile supports the credibility of the data, as respondents demonstrate sufficient academic grounding and professional exposure to meaningfully assess training, mentorship, and professional effectiveness within their institutions.

Hypothesis One

H_0 : Training programmes have no significant influence on professional effectiveness.

Table 2: Training and Professional Effectiveness (Integrated Analysis)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
1	Training improves digital resource management	3.42	0.61
2	Training enhances cataloguing accuracy	3.36	0.65
3	Training increases research support competence	3.48	0.58
4	Training improves user service delivery	3.40	0.62
5	Training builds ICT proficiency	3.51	0.57
6	Training enhances problem-solving ability	3.33	0.66
7	Training improves information retrieval speed	3.45	0.60
8	Training supports innovation in services	3.38	0.63
9	Training enhances professional confidence	3.47	0.59
10	Training improves overall job performance	3.52	0.55
Regression Statistics		Value	
R		0.64	
R²		0.41	
β		0.64	
p-value		0.000	

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$; Decision: H_0 rejected

Source: Field Report, 2026



The integrated results demonstrate that all training indicators recorded high mean scores, confirming strong respondent agreement on its relevance to professional effectiveness. The regression statistics reinforce this pattern, with $R^2 = 0.41$ indicating that training accounts for 41% of the variation in effectiveness. The positive beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.64$) confirms a strong direct relationship. The p-value of 0.000 establishes statistical significance, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This convergence of descriptive and inferential results suggests that training is not peripheral but central to performance outcomes, functioning as a critical driver of competence, efficiency, and service quality in academic libraries.

Hypothesis Two

H_0 : Mentorship practices have no significant influence on professional effectiveness.

Table 3: Mentorship and Professional Effectiveness (Integrated Analysis)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
1	Mentorship improves practical skills	3.39	0.64
2	Mentorship enhances decision-making	3.41	0.60
3	Mentorship fosters professional growth	3.50	0.56
4	Mentorship builds confidence	3.46	0.58
5	Mentorship enhances service quality	3.44	0.61
6	Mentorship improves communication skills	3.37	0.63
7	Mentorship supports career advancement	3.49	0.57
8	Mentorship strengthens teamwork	3.35	0.65
9	Mentorship aids problem-solving	3.42	0.62
10	Mentorship improves job effectiveness	3.51	0.55
Regression Statistics		Value	
R		0.61	
R^2		0.37	
β		0.59	
p-value		0.000	

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$; Decision: H_0 rejected

Source: Field Report, 2026

The findings indicate that mentorship variables recorded consistently high mean values, reflecting broad agreement on their contribution to professional effectiveness. The regression outcome shows $R^2 = 0.37$, meaning mentorship explains 37% of performance variation. The beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.59$) confirms a positive and meaningful relationship. With a statistically significant p-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected. The integration of results suggests that mentorship operates as a critical developmental mechanism, particularly in transferring experiential knowledge and enhancing confidence. It complements formal training by strengthening practical judgement, thereby improving overall effectiveness within academic library systems.

Hypothesis Three

H_0 : Training and mentorship jointly have no significant influence on professional effectiveness.

Table 4: Combined Effect of Training and Mentorship (Integrated Analysis)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
1	Training and mentorship improve service delivery	3.55	0.54
2	Combined efforts enhance innovation	3.48	0.58
3	Joint influence improves research support	3.52	0.56
4	Integration enhances ICT competence	3.50	0.57
5	Combined approach improves user satisfaction	3.54	0.55
6	Integration strengthens teamwork	3.46	0.60
7	Joint influence improves adaptability	3.49	0.58
8	Combined effect enhances efficiency	3.53	0.55
9	Integration improves service quality	3.56	0.53
10	Combined influence boosts performance	3.57	0.52
Regression Statistics		Value	
R		0.76	
R ²		0.58	
F-value		82.31	
p-value		0.000	

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$; Decision: H_0 rejected. Source: Field Report, 2026

The integrated analysis reveals the strongest relationship when training and mentorship are combined. High mean scores across all items indicate strong agreement on their joint effectiveness. The regression results show $R^2 = 0.58$, meaning 58% of the variance in professional effectiveness is explained collectively. The high R-value (0.76) reflects a strong correlation, while the significant F-value confirms model fitness. With $p = 0.000$, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings demonstrate a synergistic effect: training builds capability, mentorship refines application. Together, they create a more robust and sustainable pathway for enhancing professional effectiveness in academic libraries.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that training significantly enhances professional effectiveness, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This aligns with Aina and Ajiferuke (2022), who established that continuous professional development improves service delivery in academic libraries. Similarly, Ezeani and Igwesi (2023) found that digital skills training enhances librarians' ability to manage electronic resources and support research activities. These studies reinforce the notion that training equips librarians with relevant competencies required in modern information environments. However, the finding contradicts Olatokun and Tiamiyu (2021), who argued that training alone does not guarantee improved performance unless supported by organisational infrastructure. This divergence suggests that while training is impactful, its effectiveness may depend on contextual factors such as institutional support. Nonetheless, the strong statistical relationship observed in this study confirms that training remains a critical determinant of professional effectiveness among librarians in Ogun State.



The study revealed that mentorship significantly influences professional effectiveness, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding is consistent with Ogunmodede and Ebijuwa (2022), who reported that mentorship enhances career development and job performance among librarians. Similarly, Salaam and Oladokun (2020) observed that mentoring relationships improve professional confidence and organisational commitment. These studies support the argument that mentorship facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge and practical skills essential for effective performance. However, the finding contrasts with Yusuf and Balogun (2021), who suggested that mentorship may have limited impact in environments lacking structured frameworks. This contradiction highlights the importance of formalising mentorship programmes to maximise their benefits. Despite this, the present study provides strong empirical evidence that mentorship significantly contributes to professional effectiveness, particularly when experienced librarians actively guide and support their less experienced counterparts.

The combined influence of training and mentorship was found to have the strongest effect on professional effectiveness, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This supports Adebayo (2022), who emphasised that integrated human capital development strategies yield superior organisational outcomes. Additionally, Aina and Ajiferuke (2022) argued that combining formal training with experiential learning mechanisms enhances overall performance. These findings affirm that training and mentorship are complementary processes that jointly enhance professional competence. Conversely, Ezeani and Igwesi (2023) suggested that technological training alone may suffice in improving performance, thereby downplaying the role of mentorship. The present study challenges this position by demonstrating that mentorship significantly amplifies the impact of training. The synergy between both variables creates a more robust framework for professional development, ensuring that acquired knowledge is effectively applied in practice. This underscores the need for integrated capacity-building strategies in academic libraries.

Conclusion

The study established that training and mentorship are critical determinants of professional effectiveness among librarians in public universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that training significantly enhances librarians' competencies, particularly in digital resource management, research support, and service delivery, as evidenced by a strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.64$, $R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that continuous professional development equips librarians with the technical capabilities required to function effectively in a rapidly evolving academic environment.

Similarly, mentorship was found to exert a significant influence on professional effectiveness ($\beta = 0.59$, $R^2 = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that experiential learning, guidance, and professional support play a vital role in shaping practical competence and confidence. The study further revealed that the combined effect of training and mentorship produced the strongest outcome ($R = 0.76$, $R^2 = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$), highlighting their complementary nature.

Taken together, these findings confirm that professional effectiveness is not achieved through isolated interventions but through an integrated approach to capacity development. Training builds foundational knowledge, while mentorship refines its application. Institutions that strategically align both mechanisms are more likely to achieve sustained improvements in library service delivery and overall academic performance.

Recommendations

Effective professional performance in academic libraries requires deliberate and sustained investment in human capital development. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Public universities should institutionalise continuous training programmes that are aligned with emerging digital and research support competencies.
2. Library management should establish structured mentorship frameworks that formally pair experienced librarians with early-career professionals.
3. Universities should integrate training and mentorship into a unified professional development policy to maximise their combined impact.
4. Adequate funding should be allocated specifically for capacity-building initiatives within academic libraries.
5. Periodic evaluation of training and mentorship programmes should be conducted to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional goals.

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