



Using WhatsApp as Collaborative Tool for Mentorship Among Library and Information Science Educators in Niger Delta University Nigeria By

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Abstract

This article focused on Use of Blog as Mentorship Collaborative Tool Among Library and Information Science Educators in Universities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The purpose was to examine the relationship between the use of Blog as a collaborative tool and mentorship among LIS educators in Bayelsa State. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study population and sample size was 25 LIS educators using enumeration sampling technique. The findings revealed that As compared to the respondents do not use Blog App on their mobile devices. The study recommended that mentors and mentees in library an information science programmes should utilize social media platforms or Apps as a collaborative tool for learning; the use of mobile or online mentoring between mentors and mentees, as well as graduate and undergraduate students in library programmes, should be promoted; and, all parties involved in education should fully support and institutionalize the use of collaborative technologies for the development of essential skills.

Keywords: Collaborative tools, LIS, Educators, Mentorship, Social Media, Mentor, Mentee,

Introduction

With the availability of smartphones and social media apps, like WhatsApp, collaborative tools are being utilized more frequently by most professionals for networking and learning. WhatsApp, in particular, is highlighted as a popular platform for most professionals to connect, communicate, and share knowledge with one another. It is noted for its user-friendly interface, capacity to send messages to a large group of up to 256 people simultaneously, and its features for sharing videos and images at no cost (Hossain, Mugoya, Muchai, Krudwig, Davis, Shimp & Richart, 2021). In simple terms, the use of instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp in educational settings has become very common because these platforms are widely used in daily life. WhatsApp allows for the exchange of text, voice, and video messages, as well as voice and video calls. Researchers are interested in understanding how WhatsApp is being used in education, the benefits it can provide, and any challenges that may come with using it as a tool for learning because it is so widely accepted (Ajani and Khoalenyane, 2023).

Mentorship is a crucial aspect of professional development, especially in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). With the rapid advancements in technology and the evolving nature of the field, it is essential for educators to stay current and provide guidance to their students. Individuals learn knowledge from one another in a variety of ways, including face-to-face interactions, conversations (verbal and non-verbal) and observations (casual and formal). In today's era of large-scale scientific research, working together with other researchers and institutions is becoming more and more crucial in order to achieve significant scientific advancements, address complex scientific challenges, enhance cross-cultural communication, boost the effectiveness of research efforts, attain high levels of research quality and innovation, and facilitate the sharing of scientific and technological resources (Andrade et al., 2009). There are planned mentoring relationships and more casual ones that develop naturally. Some mentees actively seek out certain mentors, while others find their mentors by chance. From Graduate Assistant (GA) to Professor: LIS programmes provide a wide range of career opportunities. Those at lower ranks are expected to pick up knowledge from their superiors, as "publish or perish" is a well known credo in the academic world. The mentor-mentee relationship thrives when both parties work

together toward same goal. Collaboration among LIS educators is based on a shared commitment to solving the issues and overcoming the obstacles that affect all LIS programs. Given its critical role in not just overcoming these obstacles but also advancing LIS education, cooperation has been given considerable attention in the LIS literature. Education in library and information science (LIS) is crucial because it produces LIS professionals of exceptional caliber who play a special role in national progress. When it comes to knowledge, decision-making, and national growth, LIS practitioners are the gatekeepers and brokers of information.

The term "collaboration" refers to the simple process of teamwork, implying that there are tasks that are more effectively completed in tandem. Inyang (2022) referred to Omotoso and Igiomoh (2012), who argue that developing nations' library and information science sectors need to work together to overcome present issues. This is particularly true since there are clear signs of limitations on the part of any LIS educator who claims to have a complete understanding of all the pedagogical and ethical implications.

When it comes to mentoring, cooperation activities and the usage of collaborative tools are greatly aided by the availability and use of information and communication technology. According to Bajwa and Lewis (2003), referenced by Awodoyin, Simiaye, Osisanwo, and Adeyeoye (2020), collaborative technologies cover anything from e-mail to video meetings to proprietary groupware to web-based solutions. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, Instant Messaging, Google Drive, Research Gate, Academia, Chat Room, Skype, Google Docs, Slide Share, Discussion Forum, Voice Mails, Dropbox, Newsletters, Video Mails, Newsgroups, Mailing Lists, Webinars, Listservs, Intranet, Flickr, Web Forum, Microsoft Share Point, Podcasts, and Flipchats, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram are collaboration applications that are now popular among librarians and academics.

Collaborative tools are designed to enhance the quality of communication between their users. According to Kreijin and Kirchner (2002), referenced by Awodoyin et al. (2020), the use of collaborative technologies enables an interactive process in which students may construct new knowledge in a social context. Library attempts to stimulate contact with the many users who use various contemporary communication methods, to satisfy their urgent needs and wishes, might benefit from

a discussion of a few of the collaboration capabilities provided by the WhatsApp messaging program (Verma and Verma, 2014). Customers may get in touch with an information expert and ask them everything they need to know to complete their scientific study or syllabi-related special projects. In addition to the aforementioned WhatsApp application for library services, there is also selective dissemination that aims to keep users abreast of the scientific developments in their field of expertise; where the definition of users' attributions according to their specializations and research interests, with the aim of informing them of the new vessels for each in his or her field. One component of this service is advising them of upcoming international conferences and symposium.

To be a mentor, as defined by Ozioko, Echezona, and Osadebe (2012), is to act as a trusted instructor or counselor. In an ideal world, norms that support individual developments are consciously reinforced through mentoring by focusing on the mentee's specific learning needs, taking into account the mentee's career and psychological concerns, protecting the mentee's anonymity, and publicly acknowledging the mentee's accomplishments. Mentoring is defined here as a partnership between a more experienced individual and a less experienced individual in which the more experienced individual encourages and supports the less experienced one's creative problem solving and goal progress.

According to Pan and Hovde (2010), mentoring is "a relationship-based learning and development process in which an experienced librarian, termed a mentor, assists a novice librarian, called a mentee in achieving professional development and growth." One of the main characteristics that sets a mentoring relationship apart from other forms of personal relationships is that it is a relationship focused on professional growth. Career advancement is the major objective of mentoring partnerships, setting them apart from other types of interactions (Ragins & Kram, 2008).

Collaborating in mentorship relationships has been shown to be beneficial to both parties. Mentoring in the field of library and information science (LIS) is becoming increasingly popular, and as such, there is a pressing need to learn more about the various basic mentoring strategies employed by LIS educators, the mentoring programmes through which LIS educators are mentored to achieve professional development, the benefits of mentoring among LIS educators, the obstacles to

collaborative mentoring, and the means by which these obstacles can be overcome. As a result, this study looks at how LIS educators in Bayelsa State can better work together via the use of online platforms and the provision of peer guidance.

Statement of the Problem

Owing to the weight of several responsibilities in the areas of teaching, administration, and community involvement, every LIS educator aspires to achieve the pinnacle of their career as a symbol of professional progress. They are excessively time-consuming, leaving them with little room in their schedules for reading, research, writing, and publishing. No matter how busy LIS educators are, the "publish or perish" mentality of the modern academic world makes it imperative that they participate in research.

Collaborative tools for mentoring in the information age have been made possible by advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which enhance professional training and contribute to the effective learning of skills necessary for enhanced performance. There has been no study of collaborative tools and mentoring among LIS faculty in Bayelsa State's library schools, despite their widespread usage. As far as this author is aware, there is a dearth of empirical research on the topic of mentoring using collaborative technologies among LIS educators. This research looks at how LIS educators in Niger Delta University use WhatsApp to collaborate and provide one another guidance.

Objective of the Study

The focus of this research is on Using WhatsApp as Collaborative Tool for Mentorship Among Library and Information Science Educators in Niger Delta University, Nigeria, while the specific objective is to:

1. Find out the mentoring practices of LIS educators in Niger Delta University using WhatsApp as a communication medium.

Research Question

1. What role does WhatsApp play in mentoring among LIS educator in Niger Delta University?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses calculated at 0.05 levels guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the use of WhatsApp and mentorship among LIS educators in Niger Delta University

Review of Related Literature

Use of WhatsApp as a Collaborative Tool for Mentorship

The mentee may express his question whenever he likes, and the mentor can respond whenever he has the time. This is based on a statement by Alnesseri (2014), which Muhsin & Bijimol (2019) reference. The mentee might also benefit from the mentor's guidance by imparting it to others. In addition, the mentor may gather all of his students into a class to lecture them together. It's a time-saver and helps mentorship reach more people.

According to Itegroup10 (2015), WhatsApp forums allow distant learners (mentees) to work together on knowledge construction. WhatsApp has the potential to be used in the classroom as a useful and collaborative communication tool. WhatsApp chats may serve as virtual study groups and help spread the word about new educational initiatives. Student-to-student (mentee-to-mentor) contact, both real-time and delayed, improves educational outcomes. Students [mentees] may engage in social interactions with their mentor [teacher] through WhatsApp on mobile devices, which can help enhance learning and address learning challenges.

According to Ali & Kootbodien (2017), using an instant messaging service like WhatsApp makes it simple to contact individuals from far away. The process is now fast, simple, and cheap. The use of instant messaging led to an increase in both emotional closeness and the need for direct human contact. Other evidence suggests that the more you use instant messaging, the closer you and another person get (Si, 2012 as cited by Ali & Kootbodien, 2017).

The impact of WhatsApp on student mentoring was analyzed by Muhsin and Bijimol (2019). The research was a descriptive survey. Eighty people participated in the survey for this research. The enumeration sampling design yielded a sample size of 80. The questionnaire was used as the data gathering tool. Frequency count and simple percentage were the statistical tools employed for analysis. Mentors and mentees

spend the bulk of their time at educational institutions; the majority of candidates are utilizing WhatsApp for mentoring; parents are the main mentors and instructors are secondary; and WhatsApp plays a vital role in mentoring's bounce to a virtual presence.

Undergraduates at the University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom State were surveyed by Akpan & Abe (2017) on the efficacy of WhatsApp as a learning collaboration medium. The research used a quasi-experimental approach. Sixty (60) scientific education students were randomly selected from the population of all 400-level science education students in the faculty of education at the University of Uyo. The null hypotheses were tested using the Z-test and the t-test, while the mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research questions. The results show that the retention rate of students taught using the WhatsApp app is much higher than that of students taught with the traditional method to teaching, and that there is no significant difference between male and female students who use WhatsApp for learning. The paper ended with a conclusion and some suggestions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research was used for this investigation. All 14 academics from Niger Delta University, Amassoma, made up the study's population and sample. A self-structured questionnaire was delivered to the respondents at their respective universities and then collected by the researcher and research assistants. Respondent information was gathered and analyzed to provide answers to research questions and verify or refute predetermined hypotheses. A four-point rating scale, with SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, and SD = 1, with the mean of $4+3+2+1/4 = 2.50$ serving as the acceptance criteria we used for the analysis.

Nonetheless, the proposed null hypothesis was put to the test at the 0.05 level of significance. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for this purpose (PPMC). The null hypothesis was rejected when the P-value was greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant relationship between the two variables; conversely, the null hypothesis was accepted when the P-value was equal to or less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the two variables.

Presentation of Data

Response rate of the respondents.

The surveys instruments were distributed to twelve (12) respondents who were reachable. Two (2) were not physically reachable and could not take part in the study. All 12 questionnaires sent out were collected from the participants and used.

Designation of the Respondents

The designation distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages of Occupational Distribution of the Respondents

n= 12

Designation	Responses	Percentage (%)
Prof/As. Prof	1	8.3
Senior Lect.	1	8.3
Lect. I&II/	6	50
As. Lecturer	3	25
TOTAL	12	100

Of the respondents, Table 1 reveals that 1 (8.3%) is of the professorial cadre, 1 (8.3%) are senior lecturers or principal, 6 (50%) are in the bracket of lecturer II to lecturer I, while 3 (25%) are assistant lecturers.

Demographic Distribution of Educational Qualification

Table 2: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Highest Educational Qualification	Responses	Percentage
Master	6	50
PhD	6	50

Source: field survey, 2024

Table 2 shows that out of a total of twelve (12) respondents, 6 (50%) had Master degrees and 6 (50%) held Doctoral degrees

SECTION B: Research Question

Do you use WhatsApp as collaborative tool for mentorship? Please tick the appropriate ones

Table 3: Collaborative Tools Used

S/N		Yes	No
1	WhatsApp	12(100%)	=

Table 3 shows that 12(100)% of the respondents are WhatsApp users. According to this results, LIS educators in Bayelsa State mostly utilize WhatsApp as collaborative tool for mentoring.

Question 2. What is the relationship between the use of WhatsApp as a collaborative tool and mentorship among LIS educators in Niger Delta University?

Table 4: WhatsApp Use

n= 12, criterion mean = 2.50

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{x}$	Rk
1	WhatsApp is installed in my smartphone	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree
2	I can use WhatsApp effectively	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree
3	I use WhatsApp to keep in touch with colleagues	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree
4	I use WhatsApp for education and networking	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree
5	I use WhatsApp for communication with my mentor/mentee	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree
6	I use WhatsApp for electronic document delivery	12(100%)	=	=	=	4.0	Agree

Grand mean = 4.0

Table 4 shows that 100% of the respondents have WhatsApp installed on their phone, 100% can use WhatsApp effectively, 100% of use WhatsApp to stay in touch with colleagues, 100% do use WhatsApp for education and networking, 100% do use WhatsApp to talk to my mentor or mentee, and 100% also use WhatsApp to send and receive electronic documents. The majority of LIS educators in Bayelsa State agreed with the questionnaire items, giving a grand mean of 4.0, much higher than the criteria mean of 2.50, suggesting that WhatsApp is widely utilized as a collaborative platform for mentoring among LIS educators in the state. The results show that there is a strong correlation between mentoring and the usage of WhatsApp as a collaboration medium among LIS educators in Niger Delta University.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the use of WhatsApp and mentorship among LIS educators in library schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 5: WhatsApp and Mentorship relationship

Variable	N	Mean	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig/lev	p-value	Decision
WhatsApp	12	1.458	24	0.1039	13.86	0.05	0.001	Sig
Mentorship	12	1.458						

As can be seen in Table 5 above, there is a correlation between the usage of WhatsApp and mentoring among LIS professors in Bayelsa State's library schools. The p-value in the table is 0.001, and the resulting t-value is 0.1039 less than the t-critical value of 13.86. The p-value is smaller than the critical threshold of 0.05 for testing the hypothesis. As a result, we cannot accept the premise that "LIS instructors at library schools in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State do not use WhatsApp and engage in mentoring relationships." This means that there is a strong correlation between the usage of WhatsApp and mentoring among LIS educators in Niger Delta University.

Discussion of the Findings

The results of the study are discussed here, along with any conclusions that may be drawn from the researcher's point of view and the cited literature, to better reflect the study's goals and hypotheses.

Relationship between WhatsApp as a collaborative tool and mentorship among LIS educators in Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Bayelsa State

Analysis of data for the first study question showed that WhatsApp is used as a mentoring platform among LIS professors at universities in Bayelsa State. In particular, the study found that the majority of respondents agreed with the following statements about their use of WhatsApp: "WhatsApp is installed in my smartphone; I can use WhatsApp effectively; I use WhatsApp to keep in touch with colleagues; I use WhatsApp for education and networking; I use WhatsApp to communicate with my mentor/mentee; and I use WhatsApp for electronic document delivery." The results show that there is a strong correlation between mentoring and the usage of WhatsApp as a collaboration medium among LIS educators in Niger Delta University.

This result agrees with the claim made by Itegroup10 (2015) that mentees may work together to build their expertise in WhatsApp groups. Moreover, WhatsApp may be seen as a useful and collaborative tool for education, particularly when utilized as discussion forums to encourage the growth of learning communities and lend a hand to the academic endeavor as a whole. With WhatsApp built into mobile devices, mentees may have casual conversations with their mentor about their progress and any problems they're having. The results confirm those of Ali and Kootbodien (2017), who claimed that using an instant messaging service like WhatsApp makes it easier to contact with individuals from far away, which in turn increases social closeness and the urge to want to communicate face to face.

That "there is a substantial association between the usage of WhatsApp and mentoring among LIS educators in Niger Delta University" was a hypothesis tested and found to be true. Consistent with the findings of Akpan & Abe (2017), who looked at the efficacy of WhatsApp as a learning tool for undergraduates at University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, this conclusion was reached. Results from a t-test comparing retention rates of WhatsApp and traditional classroom instruction show a significant

difference between the two methods, while also showing no difference in the proportion of male and female WhatsApp users.

As a result, it is affirmed that LIS instructors in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State have found WhatsApp to be a useful collaboration tool and an inspiring source of mentoring for their students.

Implication of the Study

According to the results of this research, library school teachers in Bayelsa State are utilizing social media and electronic communication platforms including WhatsApp to provide mentoring to their students. In today's digital age, mentors and mentees may stay connected over great distances by participating in one other's online activities. The data analysis demonstrates that effective mentorship programmes may be implemented rapidly by using the suggested instruments.

In addition to fostering development in their mentees, the usage of collaborative technologies gives mentors a chance to hone their own skills. Several people believe that online collaboration tools have enormous promise as a mobile educational tool for assisting both mentors and mentees in the process of building their own knowledge via the usage of digital mobile devices.

Conclusion

The study's results suggest that in the modern age of information-based education, mentors and mentees alike may benefit from using the collaborative tools provided by application like WhatsApp. The research question asked and answered, as well as the null hypotheses examined, indicate that there is a substantial association between mentoring and the variable analyzed (WhatsApp) among LIS educators/ instructors in NDU, Bayelsa State. Based on the findings and data presentation in accordance with the analyzed research question and tested formulated hypotheses, it is concluded that there is a positive, significant, and encouraging relationship between the use of WhatsApp as collaborative tool and mentorship among LIS educators in Bayelsa State.

Recommendation

The study's findings informed the following suggestions for future research and practice in the field of library science:

1. Mentors and mentees in library science programmes should utilize social media platforms or apps as a collaborative tool for learning.
2. The use of mobile or online mentoring between mentors and mentees, as well as graduate and undergraduate students in library programs, should be promoted.
3. All parties involved in education should fully support and institutionalize the use of collaborative technologies for the development of essential skills.

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