

Quality of Mentoring and Personal Attributes as Correlates of Professional Competencies among Librarians of Region 10: Basis for Capacity Building Program

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The Southeast Asian Conference on Education 2020
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

It is essential for librarians to advance professionally. The professional competencies of librarians that were acquired through education and library practice may no longer be relevant for the jobs that have been changed or redesigned by technology. Thus, this study determined the association between the head librarians' quality of mentoring and personal attributes and the librarians' level of professional competencies. The respondents were the professional librarians in Northern Mindanao. Mixed method and standardized survey instruments were used in the study. Data were analysed using percentage, mean, Pearson's r , t-test and Anova. The findings of the study revealed that the quality of mentoring and personal attributes of head librarians is to a great extent as assessed by the librarians which includes career advancement and psychosocial support. The librarians' assessment of their level of professional competencies showed "high" in both their hard and soft skills. It was further disclosed that there was a significant association between the head librarians' quality of mentoring and personal attributes and the librarians' level of professional competencies. It is then concluded that head librarians are driven, committed, and engaged to enhance the professional competencies of the librarians. It is recommended that library administrators may consider planning, designing and implementing a mentoring program to further enhance and maintain the professional competencies of librarians.

Keywords: Mentoring, Competencies, Hard Skills, Soft Skills

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Introduction

Behind the success of an individual is a mentor. Mentor plays a significant role in the development of professional competencies of an individual. With the advancement of technology and the complex information needs of diverse clients brought a significant change in the library profession. As the library environment changed, it is essential for librarians to advance professionally. The professional competencies of librarians that were acquired through education and library practice may no longer be relevant for the jobs that have been changed or redesigned by technology. The competencies required to satisfy these demands are often acquired on the job, especially with the support and versed librarians.¹ Thus, the need for mentoring librarians to become as savvy as the clients they serve.

In addition, professional competencies refer to the practitioner's knowledge of information resources, access, technology and management, and the ability to use this knowledge as a basis for providing the highest quality information services.² Recognizing the need for enhancing and maintaining high ethical, moral and professional standards of librarianship, the Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians released the Resolution No. 3, Series of 2015 on the Prescription, Adoption and Promulgation of National Competency – Based Standards for Filipino Librarians. Moreover, this Competency – Based standards focuses on furthering the development of core competencies that Librarians, should exemplify in practice: communication, customer service, leadership, lifelong learning and personal growth, ethics and values, managing information resources, managing information services, managing information tools and technologies, and managing information organizations. Furthermore, competency standards or competencies are statements about a work role that are used to assist with credentialing, which in turn is a system that ensures individuals' competence to practice. Competency development is a key element of workforce development and refers to the attainment of a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable effective performance in the workplace.³

Indeed, the head librarian plays a significant role in keeping the librarians professional competencies through mentoring. Spencer and Ard believe that mentoring is designed to encourage development of management competencies.⁴ Furthermore, the competencies are often gained through examples, guided practice or experience than by education and training.

¹ Idoko, N., Ugwuanyi, R., & Osadebe, N. (2016). Mentoring: a strategy for professional development of librarians in Nigerian Universities. 1- 19.

² Abels, E. (2009). *Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century*. Retrieved from www.sla.org/competenciesportal.

³ Australian Public Health Nurtirion (2008). Retrieved October 11, 2018, from *Australian Public Health*
Nurtirion Academic Collaboration: [tp://www.aphnac.com/workforce.php](http://www.aphnac.com/workforce.php).

⁴ Spencer, B., & Ard, A. (2006). Nurturing new careers; preparing future librarians for their careers through pre- professional development sessions at the university of Alabama libraries. *Electronic Journal of Academic and special Librarianship*, 7(2), 1-10.

In today's environment librarians face rapid changes in technology, information overload, and complex information needs from diverse clients. The dynamic environment of the library and information sector stresses the need for librarians to remain flexible and adaptable to change. To meet this need, they have to ensure that their knowledge, competencies and skills meet the needs of the community they serve. Similarly, employers have a responsibility to provide opportunities for librarians to keep their skills, knowledge and competencies up-to-date. Nevertheless, there is lack of studies that integrate the concepts of quality of mentoring and its influence in the librarians' level of professional competencies. In this regard, the contribution of this study will be significant.

The above perspectives brought the researcher into a strong position to look into the significant relationship between the head librarian's quality of mentoring and the Region 10 librarian's level of professional competencies in order to prepare librarians greater productivity or achievement in the future with the end view of proposing a capacity building program for this group of professionals.

Conclusion

Findings of this study provide evidence that quality of mentoring and personal attributes of head librarians such as career advancement and psychosocial support have greatly contributed to their librarians' level of professional competencies both in soft skills and hard skills. The mentoring relationship between the head librarians and librarians affects the development of their competencies. It is interesting to note that head librarians are good mentors, they are driven, committed, and engaged to enhance the professional competencies of their librarians by examples, guided practice, transferring their knowledge through their stories of success and failures, sharing of personal wisdom, providing high profile and challenging assignments. Despite the positive findings of the study, complacency does not play in a dynamic organization. Hence, more have to be done to further enhance and maintain the professional competencies of librarians.

References

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