

7-2016

# REAL OR SUBTLE: THE MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY STAFF

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MARTIN-YEBOAH, EBENEZER MR, "REAL OR SUBTLE: THE MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY STAFF" (2016). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 1432.  
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## **Introduction**

The ever-changing environment within which library and information professionals work has gained attention among both researchers and practitioners. Alemna (2001) observes that there is often the danger that today's prediction of future needs will be overtaken by events of tomorrow, as it is gradually becoming clear to the profession that the era when librarians and information scientists were merely considered as managers and operators of libraries and information services is gone, albeit, some core services still remain. Never has technology been so impactful in the history of the world than in this contemporary era, requiring that a new kind of approach to surviving in the profession be seriously pursued. It is in this view that Spencer and Ard (2006), consider it essential for employees to aspire for professional development by acquiring new knowledge and skills which relate to the job responsibilities or work environment. To them, it is instrumental in maintaining trained, informed and motivated employees irrespective of job classification. Mentorship, thus, has been seen as key to the survival and growth of information professionals, as it is considered to be the bridge connecting people from the land of little experience to the kingdom of vast experience. It is a professional activity, a trusted relationship, a meaningful commitment which entails formal agreements between expert and novice where each develops professionally through the two-way transfer of experience and perspective (Ellinger, 2002; Buell, 2004).

The concept of mentoring is relatively new to formal organizations. Having been a mere intervention in the past, mentoring has now become indispensable in schools and job places for youth and adults alike. According to Zachary (2005), the concept of organizational mentoring first became popular in the mid-1970s when it was realized that organizations needed a strong

foundation of mentoring to build and retain a healthy workforce that can react quickly to change, and can develop, adapt, and regenerate itself over time.

### **Statement of the problem**

Nkechi et al (2016) consider mentoring in librarianship as a process of learning and development based on a personal relationship in which an experienced librarian, called a mentor, helps a new librarian, called a mentee, to develop as a professional and achieve professional goals. They believe that mentoring is unique to all other forms of relationship because it is developmental and embedded in the career context. This is in sync with Ragins and Kram (2007)'s view that mentoring relationships are unique because they primarily focus on career growth and development. Alemna (1998) believes that the speed of social, economic and technological change is forcing corporate bodies to become "learning organizations" thus, librarians and information scientists have no excuse not to adapt to changes. To him, one avenue for the survival of the profession is for a transfer of experience or knowledge from the old to the younger generation of professionals (Alemna, 1998). This demands new kinds of competences and approaches in retrieving and disseminating information, in designing systems, decision-making, and in relating with information users as well as colleagues.

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) Library has been in existence to serve the teaching, learning and research mandate of the university. This, it does with the nearly two-hundred library employees made up of professional librarians, paraprofessional and non-professional librarians. Non professionals are employees with no formal library or information science-related training. That is, a library employee with no post secondary certificate and even those with diploma, degree, masters or PhD in a non-library or information science-related programme is considered

a non-professional. A paraprofessional is considered to be an employee with a diploma or a bachelor's degree in library or information science related programme. Library professionals on the other hand are employees who have acquired a masters degree or higher in library or information science related programme. Since the university, like every community, is organic, there is always the need to ensure self-sustenance, especially with respect to the human resource. Librarianship has been seen to be complex and multifaceted. As such, a network of mentors makes it easier for employees to adapt to changes and gain a diverse portfolio of knowledge quickly.

Literature abounds with myriad of mentoring schemes and programmes as well as types in many libraries the world over (Robbeloth et al, 2013; Robinson, 2011; Buel, 2004; USWE, 1999). In these, the benefits of mentoring in the transfer of professional experience from a more experienced librarian to a less experienced have been established. However, these studies have often focused on professional librarians. Not many studies have been done in relation to libraries with paraprofessional and non-professional library staff who equally work together to meet the teaching, learning and research needs of the academic community. Despite the potency of mentorship to prepare people for improved capacity to render quality service, very little is known of the real or apparent mentorship schemes that exist in the University of Cape Coast Library. It is for this reason that the study sought to assess the mentorship experience of the University of Cape Coast Library employees.

### **Research questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

What is the level of academic or career progression of UCC library staff?

What are the mentorship needs of UCC Library employees?

What is the mentorship experience of UCC Library employees?

What perceptions do library employees hold about mentorship?

## **Literature review**

As a concept, mentorship is seen differently by different people. For some, it is the establishment of relationships based on trust and empathy (MacCallum & Beltman, 1999). Goldman (2011) contends that mentoring involves any activity which supports mentee's career growth by providing coaching, visibility, protection and challenging assignments as well as providing confirmation, counseling and friendship. Robbeloth et al (2013) also share the opinion that informal mentoring actually exists in many forms. They are however of the view that much difficulty arises as to how to assess or evaluate informal mentoring, suggesting that much as lots of support could be derived from informal mentoring, its approach shifts the responsibility of initiating and organizing the mentoring process largely to the mentee. Confirming this assertion, Lee (2009), states that when mentoring is formally structured and effective, it significantly impacts employee success and confidence, giving the newly hired library professional an orientation within the university, the library, and their professional position and responsibilities. Putting it aptly, Robinson (2011) opines that mentorship begets mentorship, and provides a mechanism for knowledge transfer.

Contributing to the diverse nature of formal mentoring, the USWE (1999) categorizes mentoring into four different types including:

- (a) Highly-structured, short-term mentoring (a new employee paired with an experienced one).
- (b) Highly-structured, long-term mentoring (when a successor is groomed for a new position).

(c) Informal, short-term mentoring (“off-the-cuff mentoring. There may not be an ongoing relationship).

(d) Informal, long-term mentoring (sometimes referred to as “friendship mentoring. Mentor is available on a casual basis over a long period of time).

On the other hand, Buell (2004) considers mentoring relationships as being developed under cloning model, nurturing model, friendship model and apprenticeship model as explained as follows:

In the Cloning Model, the mentor attempts to produce a copy of himself or herself whilst in the Nurturing Model, the mentor assumes the position of a parent figure, creating an open and free environment (Buell, 2004). Mentoring is conducted within the Friendship Model where the mentor and mentee are peers rather than unequal. Further, Buell (2004) considers the Apprenticeship Model of mentoring as being the situation whereby the professional focus is emphasized rather than personal and social aspects.

Irrespective of the model or type of mentoring, three key variables – the mentor, mentee and mentoring process – exist in mentorship (Spencer, 2010; Freedman, 2009; Nkechi et al, 2016). To Freedman (2009), a mentor is an individual with more experience and knowledge, and committed to providing upward career guidance and advice to a less experienced individual. In the same vein, Spencer (2010) considers a mentee as a novice in the field who is seen as a partner, protégé or participant in the mentoring process. The mentoring process is also seen as the avenue of continuing relationship between a mentor and the mentee.

Kaufmann (2009) observes that in some professions such as law, medicine and business, mentoring has a very long standing tradition. Among the key benefits of mentoring in librarianship identified are the opportunity of becoming familiar with institutional identity,

ability to put theoretical knowledge into practice, and a means to internalize the culture, values and beliefs of a profession (Nkechi et al, 2016; Nwabueze & Ozioko, 2012; Pan & Hovde, 2010; Edwards & Hunchliffe, 2009).

Drago-Severson (2004) believes that meticulous managers and visionary leaders often encourage transformational learning so as to change their organizations for the better. He further observes that in Africa, leaders are gradually realizing the benefits of mentoring and coaching in preparing people with the requisite skills and knowledge to take any future mantle. This, it is believed, to be the best approach for producing effective and efficient leaders. In a study in an educational setting, Fullan (1991) discovered that mentoring, as an aspect of professional development, opens up new opportunities for professionalism while exposing logistical and normative constraints to changing the culture of a profession.

In view of the merits and demerits of each of the types or models, it is expected of organizations to structure their mentoring to ensure that mentors follow a certain stipulated programme for a certain set time when they guide their mentees. This is because the significance of mentoring as a tool for organizational leadership cannot be overemphasized. It is an art which, when carefully and consciously undertaken, shapes the lives of people in their formative years before they undertake any form of increased responsibility (Nkechi et al, 2016; Nwabueze & Ozioko, 2012; Goldman, 2011).

## **Materials and methods**

The study employed the descriptive survey method to elicit information from respondents. In the view of Fraenkel and Wallen (2004), a descriptive survey provides the opportunity to ask the

same set of questions to a large number of people and subsequently, make inferences and generalizations from the sample to the population.

The study earmarked 120 respondents (from the available 193 library staff at post) selected through the simple random sampling (out of which 107 actually participated). The table below shows the population from which the study participants were sampled.

Table 1: Study participants

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Junior Library Assistants (Non-professionals)	89	52
Senior Library Assistants (Non-professionals and paraprofessionals)	73	45
Principal Library Assistants (Para-professionals and professionals)	19	8
Senior Members/Head of sections (professionals)	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>107</b>

*Source: UCC Library (2014)*

The instruments for data collection were questionnaire and interview. The University Librarian (*UL*), together with the Regional Coordinator (*RC*) of the Ghana Library Association was purposely engaged in an in-depth interview considering the fact that these senior members possess very rich experience in the management of staff. This is in line with Paton (1990) who contends that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore, must select a sample from which the most can be learned. Gay (1992) also posits that when well conducted, semi-structured interviews can provide in-depth data that is not possible with questionnaire. However, this instrument of data collection does not pass without demerits such as high financial and time cost as well as the



requirement of high communicative skills. But interviewing only two people made these demerits practically manageable. The interview guides essentially followed the questionnaire pattern with the focus to acquire deeper understanding of issues.

The questionnaire, which comprised both close-ended and open-ended items, was structured according to the objectives (research questions) of the study, with the first section catering for the bio-data of the respondents. In all, 105 questionnaires were returned completed and thus valid for onward analysis while the two purposively selected management members duly granted the interview. The IBM SPSS version 18 was used to analyze the quantitative data whereas the interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Where percentages are portrayed in table presentation of results, are approximated to one decimal place. Ethical issues comprising informed consent of respondents, acknowledgment of literary sources, confidentiality and avoidance of possible harm were ensured accordingly.

## Results and discussions

### *Bio-data of respondents*

Of the 105 respondents who partook in the questionnaire, 61 were males and 44 were females.

The mean age was 31.8years, depicting a generally youthful workforce.

**Table 2: Bio-data of respondents**

	All	21-25yrs	26-30yrs	31-35yrs	36-40yrs	40yrs+
Characteristics	N 105*	4	42	22	19	29
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	61	4	19	16	10	12
Female	44	0	23	4	9	8
<b>Status</b>						
Professional & Para-professionals	22	0	4	5	0	13
Non-professionals	83	4	38	15	19	7
<b>Previous qualification</b>						
SSSCE/GCE	74	4	28	12	14	16
Library diploma/ degree/Master	8	0	2	2	4	0
Other diploma/ degree/masters	23	0	12	6	1	4
<b>Current qualification</b>						
SSSCE/GCE	22	4	7	5	3	3
Library diploma/degree/Master	24	0	0	3	8	13
Other diploma/degree/masters	59	0	35	12	8	4

*\*Two of the 107respondents engaged differently in interviews.*

Even though there has been a general growing concern that the library profession is experiencing aging of its members (Alema, 1998; 2001), the above revelation of the mean age of 31.8years suggests that the case of the University of Cape Coast is different. Such a youthful workforce

provides solid bedrock for the study's quest to assess the mentorship experience of members of staff.

Table 2 again depicts that only eight employees had a qualification in Library or Information Studies at the diploma, degree or post graduate level prior to their being employed in the library, as compared to 74 respondents who first came to work in the library with Senior High School or GCE 'O' and 'A' Level certificates. The current situation, however, is that more than half of respondents have attained qualification in programmes which are not library or information related, as shown by Table 2. That is, 83(79.0%) were non-professional librarians with the rest being either professionals or paraprofessionals who are also Ghana Library Association (GLA) members of good standing.

### ***Educational/Career progression***

Table 3 reveals that 45 respondents had not attained any other further qualification since they started working in the library. A further analysis suggests that of the 74 staff whose certificate, prior to their being employed, was SSS/GCE certificate, half of them have obtained degrees in other programmes not related to library or information science. It is again instructive to note that whereas all 3 respondents who previously had a qualification in librarianship had proceeded to obtain higher qualification in the field, in the case of those employed with no library background, approximately less than a quarter of respondents have attained further qualification in librarianship. Even though it is impressive that more respondents have pursued further studies than those who had not, there is still a cause for concern that a greater proportion of these had pursued programmes in non-library related fields than in librarianship. That is, whereas 22

respondents had moved on to attain qualification in librarianship, 38 persons had pursued programmes not related to the library or information field.

**Table 3: Educational progression by previous education**

		No	Qualification	Qualification in	Total
		change	in	other	
Previous education			librarianship	programmes	
	SSS/GCE Certificate	22(21.0)	15(14.2)	37(35.2)	74(70.4)
	Librarianship	0(0)	3(2.9)	0(0)	3(2.9)
	diploma/degree				
	Other degree/diploma	23(21.9)	4(3.8)	1(1.0)	28(26.7)
Total		45(42.9)	22(21.0)	38(36.1)	105(100.0)

Throwing more light on this, the university librarian asserts:

*“As much as possible, we encourage library staff to pursue further studies and some have been here for about 8 to 10 years without any further studies. We encourage them to go for professional programme. But the fact is, some see the library as a transitory place, hanging on to get a new job, hence this affect the kind of courses they pursue(UL).*

In a similar position held by the Regional Coordinator of Ghana Library Association (who is also a Senior Member of UCC library), she said:

*“if you consider the fact that each and every year, over five people pursue post-graduate education in Library and Information related programmes, then you can say that the future is safe in the hands of the younger generation” (RC).*

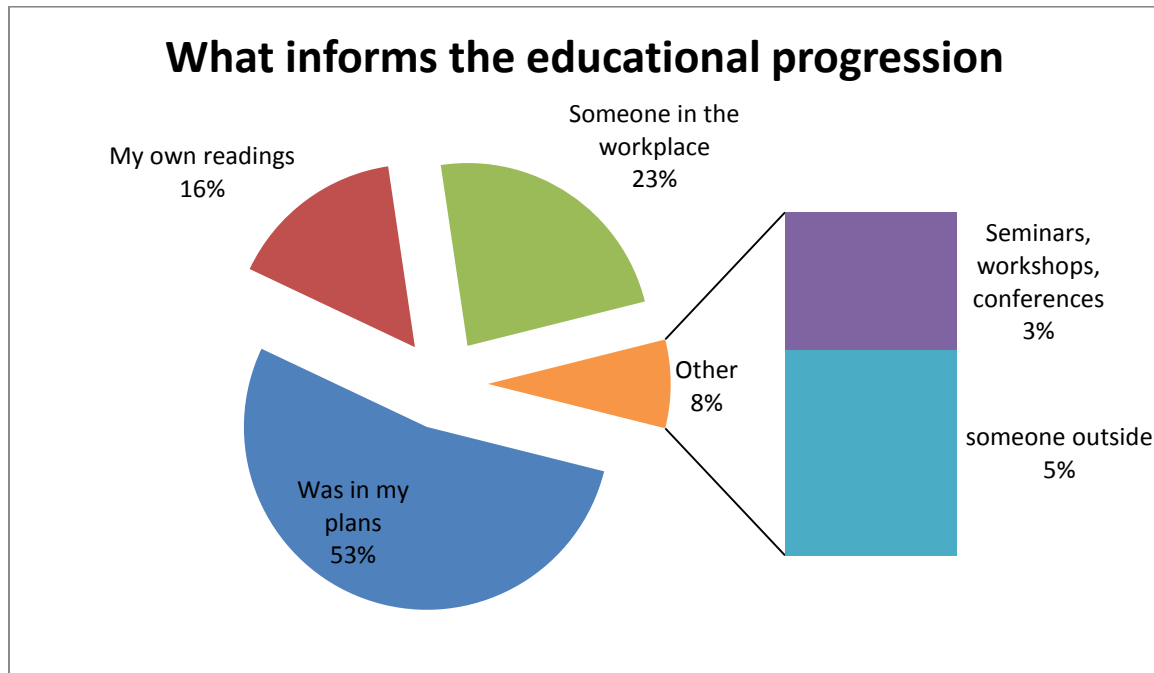
A cursory look at Table 4 supports a safe conclusion that it generally takes more than five years to progress from one academic qualification to another. Looking at the table, out of the 39 respondents who have worked with the library between one and five years, only 12 have been able to pursue further studies. The table portrays that generally, it takes more than five years for an employee to obtain an educational qualification. This situation may be due to the fact that working in an organization such as the university, certain conditions such as long years of service would have to be fulfilled in order to be considered pursue further studies.

**Table 4: Educational qualification by number of years worked in the library**

		<b>No change</b>	<b>Qualification in librarianship</b>	<b>Qualification in other programmes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Years worked</b>	1-5yrs	27(25.7%)	5(4.8%)	7(6.7%)	<b>39(37.1)</b>
	6-10yrs	13(12.4%)	3(2.9%)	24(22.9%)	<b>40(36.2)</b>
	11-15yrs	4(3.8%)	5(4.8%)	5(4.8%)	<b>14(13.3)</b>
	16-20yrs	0(0.0%)	1(1.0%)	1(1.0%)	<b>2(1.9)</b>
	20yrs+	1(1.0%)	8(7.6%)	1(1.0%)	<b>10(9.5)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>45(42.9)</b>	<b>22(21.0)</b>	<b>38(36.1)</b>	<b>105(100.0)</b>

With respect to the driving force behind the educational transition of respondents, as displayed in Figure 1 below, it emerged that a little over half (56.7%) of the sixty respondents who had advanced in their education, had actually nurtured the idea prior to their coming to work with the library whilst less than 4% claimed the various seminars, workshops and conferences of the Ghana Library Association motivated them.

**Figure 1: What informed respondents' educational progression decisions**



Recruiting and retaining qualified librarians has been a challenge to many a library the world over. The University of Cape Coast Library has not been an exception to this situation as portrayed by the findings. These findings are very significant in how people are trained and retained in the library profession. It has been acknowledged by Ard (2006) that employees would aspire for professional development and this is often done through acquiring new knowledge and skills which relate to the job responsibilities or work environment. What remains to be seen, however, is the ability of mentoring as a tool to effectively play a role in the educational progress and career development of staff. Not only have a majority of respondents pursued further degrees in non-library/information science areas, but the many who have obtained further qualification have not attributed their educational pursuits to a mentor, and this runs contrary to the views of Zhang, Deyoe & Matveyeva (2007), that mentoring has thus become an important tool for the development and retention of library professionals and used by institutions of higher learning for junior members by senior ones to successfully achieve tenure and promotion.

### ***Mentorship experience***

There is actually no formally institutionalized mentoring programme in the library for library staff. This, the University Librarian confirms as,

*“Unlike Senior members who are given mentors immediately after their being appointed by the Appointments and Promotions Board, there is no formal existing scheme for the other categories of staff in the library. For the senior and junior staff, we expect the sectional heads to be mentoring them. That is why we assign them to the various sections. The idea is that you acquire as much knowledge when you are taken to a particular section. For example, when you are taken to the Acquisitions Section, you would become familiar with issues there. Added to this, we at least rotate them from time to time, with the view that they apply themselves to the processes there” (UL).*

In a similar vein, as stated by the Regional Coordinator of the Ghana Library Association, who also doubles as the Deputy Librarian:

*“The Ghana Library Association, through the various workshops, conferences and seminars nationally and within the region, sharpens the skills of professionals, paraprofessionals and even non-professional library staff” (RC, 2015).*

This, of course, has not been without some challenges. Significant among them is the ability to obtain permission and ability to pay for such programmes. For instance, the Regional Coordinator further states that:

*“In most cases, the library can permit only few members, at most, 5 when the conference is outside of the region and about 15 if it is within Cape Coast. Again,*

*it is not all the programmes that the library administration pays for members. As such, even for those who secure the permission to attend such advertised conferences and workshops, they are still unable to honour due to lack of funds” (RC) .*

Notwithstanding the non-existence of structured mentorship schemes, respondents generally conceded to having interacted with different categories of people concerning personal growth and job output. Some of these people were junior colleagues, senior colleagues and those at the same level in the library, and people outside of the library, and in issues including educational and career progression, client satisfaction and work ethics as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Areas of focus in mentorship**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Mentoring needs</b>	Educational progression	51	48.1
	Career progression	21	20.4
	Customer care or client satisfaction	9	8.3
	Work ethics	24	23.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>105</b>	<b>100.0</b>

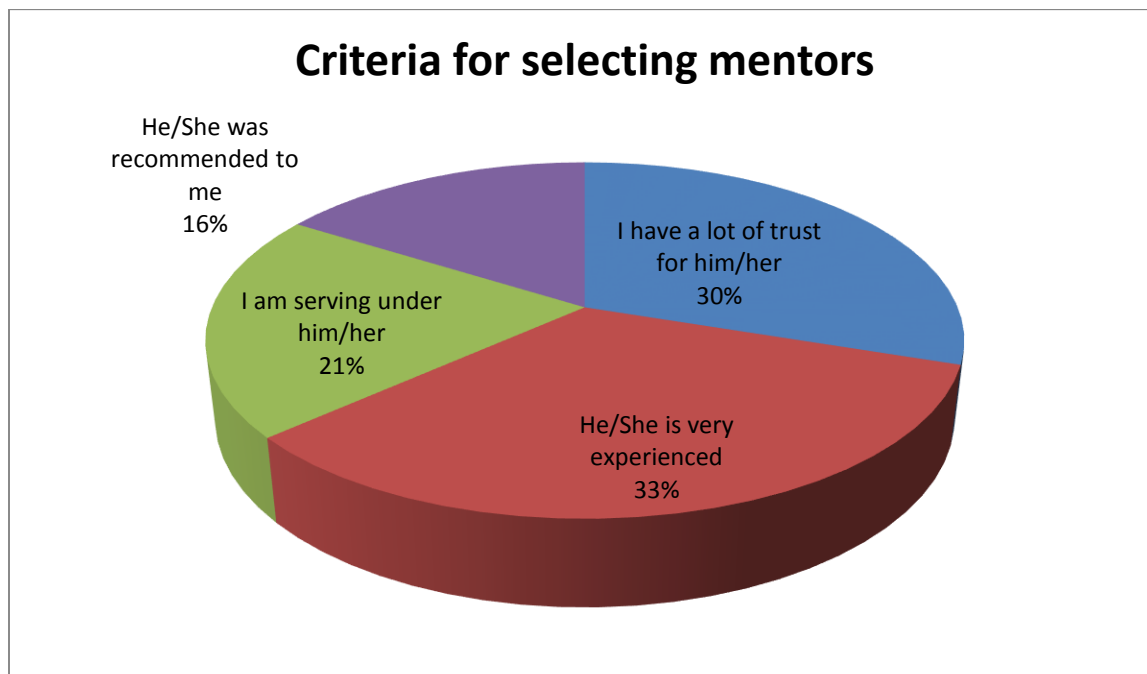
Table 5 shows that almost half (48%) of the instances that respondents have interacted with their mentors have been on issues pertaining to educational progression. Interestingly, customer care or career satisfaction is the least (8.3%) among the issues respondents would want to be nurtured about. In fact when observed closely, issues that directly relate to personal growth of respondents (educational/career progression) dominate. This confirmation of an ‘informal mentoring’ existing in the library is in sync with the view of Drago-Severson (2004) that the thrust of mentorship is



about growth and advancement which enables one to explore avenues to enhance self-development. He further opines that this brings about transformational learning (equipping adults to better manage complexities of work and life) as opposed to informational learning (increasing the amount of knowledge and skills).

Respondents identified the criteria upon which they rely to choose individuals who act as their advisors or mentors, to share issues of career, educational progression and productivity. Figure 2 depicts that generally; a third of the respondents will consider experience and trust respectively in choosing who their mentor should be. This is opposed to 16% who said it would be based on the fact that he or she is serving under such a senior colleague. These confirm the observation of USWE (1999) that mentors have specific skills, competence as well as the ability to share with others, and hence, essentially have a positive effect on their trainees.

**Figure 2: Criteria for selecting mentors**



Respondents were unanimous in their affirmation of mentorship as enabling them to take good decisions. As shown in Table 6, only 2.9% of respondents debunked the assertion that mentoring affords people the opportunity to make good decisions.

**Table 6: Does mentoring afford you the opportunity to make good decisions**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	102	97.1
No	3	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

The rate or frequency at which respondents engaged their mentors in personal and career growth, as well as job output was inquired. It emerged from the results that nearly three out of every four respondents engaged with their mentors very often. It is also noteworthy to observe from Table 7 that 13.3% of respondents had engaged with their supposed mentors just once.

**Table 7: Rate or instances of mentoring experienced by employees**

<b>Rate of mentorship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Just once	14	13.3
Once a month	1	1.0
Once a semester	5	4.8
Once a year	8	7.6
Very often	77	73.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The study also sought to ascertain the incidence of mentoring rendered by respondents to their colleagues. It emerged, as indicated by Table 8, that a little above half of the total respondents (54.3%) have ever played the role of mentoring between one and five persons. It is also

instructive to note that a third of respondents (34.3%) had never engaged in any kind of mentor-relationship with any library staff.

**Table 8: Number of persons ever mentored by respondents**

Number of persons	Frequency	Percent (%)
None	36	34.3
1 – 5	57	54.3
6 – 10	9	8.6
11 – 15	3	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the sixty-nine respondents who had ever engaged in mentoring other library staff, 65.3% claim they have been very successful at it, with only 1.4% stating otherwise as shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Level of success**

Success rate	Frequency	Percent (%)
Not successful	14	13.3
Fairly successful	1	1.0
Very successful	5	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is not strange for library staff to participate in mentoring in one way or the other, since in the view of Keener et al (2012), librarianship is an inherently collaborative profession. When the mentoring process is done well, it could lead to development prospects for both mentors and mentees. This view is strengthened by the Librarian who states that:

*“well, as far as the succession plan is concerned, management has put in place a programme to assist those who want to pursue the professional programme.*

*Especially so, looking at the age profile of the senior members now (almost all are past fifty years). The university has also been generous to the library in the sense that for the past two years alone, we have had two batches of five people going to library school to do the professional post-graduate programme. Then hopefully, this year, 3 or 4 will be following suit. So in terms of succession plan, it is on course (UL).*

### ***Perception of mentoring and benefits***

Respondents' views were sought as to the relevance of mentorship to the performance of the library profession, as well as which areas and format any formal mentorship programme in the library should focus. Concerning the areas that a future mentorship programme should focus, the respondents enumerated, in order of ascendancy, job delivery and work ethics, career progression, leadership and educational progression. It is worthy to note that even though respondents in practices had focused on issues pertaining to personal growth and development in their informal mentoring experiences with their mentors (As earlier shown by Table 5), they believe that their job delivery and work ethics should be the basic priority in any future formal mentorship programme. In furtherance to the support of job delivery and work ethics as the most important area for a formal mentorship scheme to look at, the librarian states:

*“Job ethics. And this is how it relates to the overall delivery of the library, I mean, if you are not disciplined, how can you do what is expected of you as a library employee” (UL).*

**Table 9: Areas to focus future formal mentoring**

Area of focus	Frequency*	Percent(%)*
Educational progression	56	53.3
Career progression	79	75.2
Leadership	57	54.3
Job delivery and work ethics	87	82.9

*\*Multiple responses*

Figure 3 depicts the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed about some issues concerning mentoring. There was near unanimity in agreement on the assertion that mentoring was important for staff development, smooth succession and to prevent suspicion and conflict. Especially on leadership and smooth succession, the University Librarian believes that:

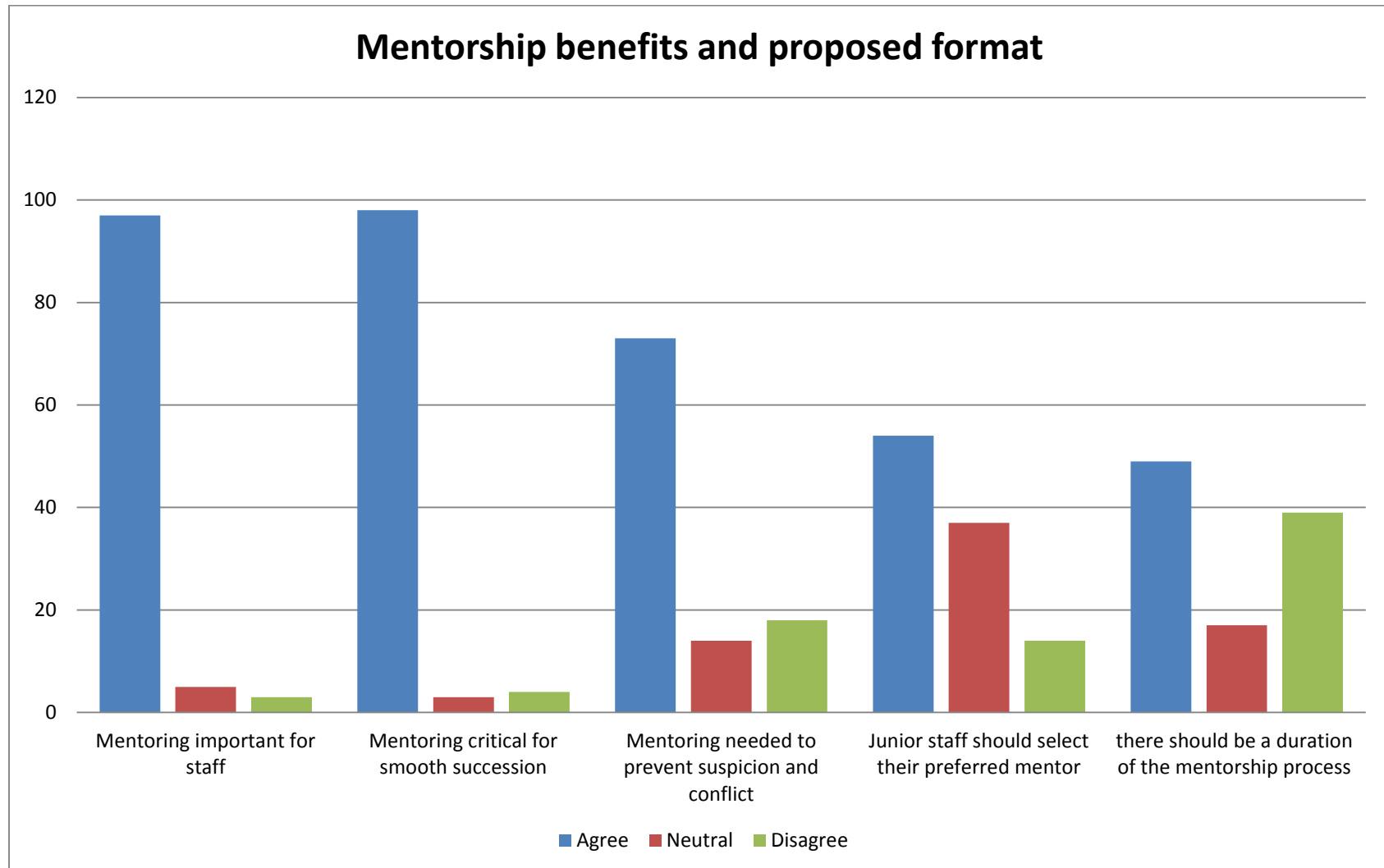
*“Once you are appointed into a position of responsibility, the very day that you assume office, you have to start planning for your exit. In doing that, you should be able to bring up people who are dedicated and trustworthy and can hold the forth anytime of the day” (UL).*

This supports Ellinger (2002) that mentors bring their knowledge and experience to bear on others. An efficient mentoring process can be structured through promotions, early career advancement and job satisfaction as pointed out by Ellinger (2002)

Also, over a third of respondents were neutral as to whether junior staff should select their own mentors out of the available senior members, even though over half of respondents agreed to this position. Again, even though almost half of respondents believe there should be duration for the mentorship process, a considerable proportion of respondents (39%) disagreed. In view of the above findings, the study sides with the position that mentoring is globally considered as one of

the solutions to professional development. There is now the quest for specific on-job and on-site leader develop, as opined by Zhang, Deyoe, & Matveyeva (2007). This, in their view, is because “authentic organizations and leaders are seeking ways to train their employees and emerging leaders” whiles on the other hand, “enterprising and emerging leaders are seeking for coaches and mentors to train them for life assignments”. Many successful organizations intentionally create leadership structures since formal education in itself is not adequate in grooming a person for complex organizational tasks.

**Figure 3: Mentorship benefits and proposed mentorship format**



## **Conclusion**

Not regarding whichever form mentoring takes, it is quite beneficial when it exists in a formal establishment. More especially, in an academic library like the UCC Library which has employees that comprise professional librarians, paraprofessionals and non-professionals. Thus the study sought to explore the extent to which mentoring activities occur in the University of Cape Coast Library. It emerged that even though there was not a formally structured mentoring programme in existence, there was really some on-going subtle and informal mentoring whereby respondents selected their mentors based on their own criteria of selection. Apparently, issues pertaining to educational and career progression, customer care, work ethics among others are what occupy most of these mentoring activities. It is obvious that the library management and the Ghana Library Association underscore the importance of mentoring in upholding the profession, but this notwithstanding, financial and administrative constraints thwart the efforts at instituting enough formal mentoring programmes for members of the practicing librarianship.

## **Recommendations**

Looking at the UCC Library culture, a merger of highly structured, short term and the apprenticeship Model where the professional focus is emphasized rather than personal aspects, could be considered in the adoption of any formal mentorship programme. While highlighting the need for organizations to have mentorship programmes that support long term professional development, it is prudent to promote short term mentoring than to have none at all. And in any form of mentoring model, there should be an empirical assessment of the performance of both mentors and mentees.



Again, the study made some critical observations in how respondents get themselves trained and retained in the library profession. If people had it in their plans to pursue non-related library diploma or degree or masters prior to their being employed in the library, the profession should be attractive enough to make them want to stay. For this reason, the library management and to a large extent, the Ghana Library Association (GLA) should continually hold formal interactions for all categories of library workers pertaining to the various openings and prospects within the profession, and the various means of career progression.

The GLA should use the various conferences, seminars and workshops to expose library employees, especially non-professionals, to the avenues and prospects of the profession. Again, the library management could set up a fund and make it accessible to library staff for the purposes of library related workshops, conferences and seminars. This will make as many willing people avail themselves to such events. Failure of this, only the few privileged to have guidance of a senior member can climb the professional ladder.

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