

Mentoring, Cataloguing Self-Efficacy and Expectancy among Early-Career Librarians in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria: A Social Cognitive Career Perspective

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Abstract

Effective cataloguing remains the cornerstone of librarianship, yet the complexities of modern cataloguing standards and technologies often present significant challenges for early-career librarians, thus highlighting the importance of targeted support through structured mentoring programmes. The present study investigated the role of mentoring in shaping the cataloguing experiences of early-career librarians, focusing on how mentoring influences their cataloguing self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs. It aims to identify the mentoring programmes early-career librarians are exposed to, and determine the impact of mentoring on their cataloguing self-

efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to 63 early-career librarians. The data were analysed using SPSS (version 25). Findings revealed that early-career librarians have been exposed to 13 different mentoring programmes, with One-on-one Mentoring (90.5%), Supervisory Mentoring (88.9%), and Staff Rotation (87.3%), being the most commonly cited. In contrast, Reverse Mentoring, External Mentoring, and E-mentoring were the least cited, with (28.6%), (23.8%), and (23.8%) of participants respectively reporting exposure to these programmes. Overall, the mean (7.90) showed that early-career librarians have a moderate level of exposure to mentoring, thus indicating a positive leaning towards exposure to mentoring. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to determine early-career librarians' levels of self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing revealed a very high level in each variable (Mean=4.30, Mean =4.32, respectively). Regression analyses demonstrated that mentoring significantly influenced cataloguing self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = .000$) and outcome expectation beliefs ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = .043$) of early-career librarians. This study, therefore, concluded that mentoring plays a crucial role in enhancing the cognitive belief factors essential for skill development in cataloguing by boosting self-efficacy and outcome expectations among early-career librarians. Among other recommendations, the study highlighted the need to prioritise institutionalising and

formalising mentoring programmes, particularly the one-on-one, supervisory, and job/staff rotation types to enhance early-career librarians' skill development in cataloguing, while expanding or strengthening other mentoring programmes, to cater to their diverse learning styles, needs and preferences.

Keywords: Mentoring Programmes, Early-Career Librarians, Cataloguing, Academic Libraries, South-East Nigeria.

Introduction

Cataloguing is a term that, in contemporary library and information science discourse, encompasses the creation and management of metadata. Cataloguing, also known as 'information organisation' and/or 'knowledge organisation is critical to the general library services, and describes the conscientious activities involved in the processing and organisation of library resources. Cataloguing typically involves several key steps which include: bibliographic description, that involves creating a detailed record of the resources' bibliographic characteristics; subject analysis, which requires identifying and assigning relevant subjects or topics; classification notation, which has to do with assigning a classification code to facilitate shelving and retrieval; physical preparation, which entails preparing the items for shelving- which are often performed under the guidance of a trained cataloguing librarian. Cataloguing is a fundamental aspect of librarianship, serving to organise and provide access to a library's collection. It enables users to efficiently locate materials, whether on shelves or online, by creating and maintaining bibliographic and authority records in the library catalogue (Haider, 2015). This process not only saves users time and resources but also assists in the preservation of materials by reducing physical handling (Attar, 2021). Cataloguing is a critical function in librarianship which facilitates information discovery and access by organising and describing library materials. Emphasising its importance in the library profession and service delivery, Raju (2017), in her "LIS Professional Competency Index for the Higher Education Sector in South Africa", outlined cataloguing competencies LIS professionals should possess. These, among others include:

- Understand and implement descriptive metadata creation, and subject analysis of content for assigning classification numbers, subject headings, index terms and other subject descriptors towards

the organisation and retrieval of information of all types (including research data),

- Understand and apply internationally recognised standards (e.g. Resource Description and Access (RDA), Machine-Readable Cataloguing (MARC), Dublin Core, Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Subject Headings, Medical Subject Headings, etc.) to organise print and digital information resources for in-person or remote accessing from electronic library catalogues, institutional repositories and other database formats (Raju, 2017, pp. 8-9).

Similarly, the Association for American Library Association (2017) highlighted the knowledge competencies as well as skill and ability competencies, which are the threshold of major competencies for LIS professionals in the cataloguing/metadata domain. According to ALCTS, Knowledge competencies cover the background and context for cataloguing and metadata work. This includes understanding the conceptual models on which standards are based, as well as the structure of basic cataloguing tools and encoding standards. On skill and ability competencies, American Library Association (2017) argues that the foundation for competency in cataloguing is not limited only to the ability of mastering individual principles and skills, but the ability of synthesising these principles and skills to "create cohesive, compliant bibliographic data that function within local and international metadata ecosystems".

Cataloguing, being at the centre of library professional practices (Nwosu et al., 2018), is part of the performance concerns of the university library requiring skill development. The development of cataloguing skills and confidence among early-career librarians is crucial for effective information organisation and retrieval. Yet, many librarians enter the profession with limited experience and training in this area. Many new librarians may feel unprepared for the intricacies involved in cataloguing. This may lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, thus highlighting the need for targeted support and structured mentoring programmes to aid in their professional development in cataloguing.

Statement of the Problem

Early-career librarians' confidence and proficiency in cataloguing are not only necessary for effective service delivery, but also vital for continuity and succession planning, ensuring the seamless transfer of knowledge and expertise as experienced cataloguers retire or leave the profession. However, empirical studies (e.g., Bello and

Mansour, 2017; De Klerk and Fourie, 2017; Muhammad et al., 2018) have consistently reported a concerning trend of negative mindsets among early-career librarians, including a lack of interest and negative attitudes toward cataloguing, raising doubts about their preparedness to meet professional expectations in the future. Preliminary investigations further indicate that many working cataloguers, particularly newer professionals, often work in cataloguing units reluctantly and seek opportunities to transfer to other library sections at the earliest chance.

Negative perceptions of cataloguing extend to Library and Information Science (LIS) students, with studies by Adamu et al. (2017), David-West and Wali (2020), Ogunniyi (2015), Rafiu (2020) documenting widespread negative attitudes toward cataloguing. Nwosu et al. (2018) emphasise that initial LIS education provides a basic qualification but falls short of addressing the evolving demands of professional practice. Scholars have also highlighted deficits in curricula (David-West and Wali, 2020; Madu, 2017), inadequate time for theoretical and practical teaching of cataloguing (Adamu, 2018; Ogunniyi and Nwalo, 2016), educators' negative perceptions of cataloguing, and a lack of experienced instructors (Adamu, 2018). Moreover, Snow and Hoffman's (2015) study highlights the theoretical rather than practical focus of cataloguing courses, even at advanced levels like Postgraduate Diplomas and Master's programmes in LIS.

Altogether, these issues contribute to a persistent skill gap and disinclination toward cataloguing among LIS graduates transitioning into early-career librarianship. Mentoring emerges as a promising strategy to address these challenges, providing the targeted support necessary to build interest, skills, and confidence in cataloguing. However, research on the perceptions of early-career librarians regarding mentoring in cataloguing, particularly within the contextual challenges identified, remains scarce.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the perceptions of early-career librarians toward mentoring as a strategy for skill development in cataloguing. The research is grounded in the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent et al. (1994), which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how mentoring can influence self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and ultimately shape professional behaviours and skill development.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching aim of this study is to

determine the impact of mentoring on early-career librarians' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify the mentoring programmes early-career librarians have been exposed to for skill development in cataloguing,
2. Examine the influence of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy belief,
3. Determine the impact of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' cataloguing outcome expectation belief.

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Mentoring

The benefits of mentoring have been extensively acknowledged, both in the professional and academic domains. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (n.d.) has acknowledged mentoring as an effective approach to employees' development, having grown in popularity, and used by many employers for the enhancement of their employees' proficiency, knowledge and performance in specific skills and goals. Mentoring, according to the Human Resources (n.d.) "brings value at many levels for mentees, mentors, supervisors and the organization for which they work" (p.1). Therefore, "Effective mentoring brings long-term benefits to the institution, the mentor and the mentee" (Tan, 2016, p. 5). The importance of mentoring programmes for mentees with regard to their job satisfaction, career advancement, improved knowledge and skills, advice and guidance, has been established for the last three decades in most disciplines, e.g., library and information science (LIS), Education, Nursing, Business and Psychology (Freedman, 2021).

The Psychological Functions of Mentoring

Mentoring provides career and psychosocial functions (Ragins and Kram, 2007), and may yield positive outcomes in terms of addressing poor performance, negative mindset (negative attitude, lack of interest and disinclination for cataloguing). Within this context, Whiteside (2019) notes that having a positive mindset increases self-esteem and self-belief, and emphasises the role of a mentor in inculcating this belief in the mentee. Laurian-Fitzgerald and Roman (2016) observes that students who began their skill learning process with a positive mindset

maintained their positive outlook and approaches to academic challenges. This may also apply to learning cataloguing skills. The present study will approach early-career librarians' perception of mentoring for skill development in cataloguing through a cognitive theory, which highlights the roles of career-related behaviours such as self-efficacy, outcome expectation belief, etc in performance attainment e.g., skill development.

Self-efficacy acts as a bridge between mentoring and skill development by influencing motivation, confidence, resilience, and the overall mindset of individuals undergoing the learning process. Thus, positive mentoring experiences contribute to the development of high self-efficacy, thereby creating a supportive foundation for effective skill development. An effective mentoring experience is believed to provide a robust self-efficacy belief for skill development of early career librarians in cataloguing. In the Nursing Profession, mentoring is proved to enhance self-confidence, leading to development of new skills and knowledge (Mijares et al., 2013). Mentoring function (role modeling) has been established to have significant influence on students' career-related behaviours, e.g., outcome expectation (Jun et al., 2018) and career optimism (Kanten et al., 2017). Outcome expectations play a pivotal role in the relationship between mentoring and skill development. Thus, positive outcome expectation, fostered by effective mentoring in cataloguing can enhance early career librarians' skill development.

Mentoring and Librarianship

Mentoring is not a novel concept in librarianship. Research shows that mentoring is a deep-seated and time-honoured strategy for staff training and development, especially in the academic library. Goldman (2011) observes that a number of university libraries have a formal first-year mentoring programme in place to ease the assimilation and familiarisation of their new librarians in the library system, particularly, and the university community at large. Hence, the supportive role of mentoring during the transition period in academic librarians' careers is widely acknowledged (Freedman, 2021). A survey of some university libraries in the United States of America confirms that the most common time for academic librarians to experience mentoring is at the early-career stage, especially in the first five years of employment. This assertion is corroborated by Uche (2019), who echoed the need for early-career

librarians' guidance through mentoring to enable them play their roles for the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives.

From the perspectives of succession planning, continuity, and retention, the academic library's future rests on the early-career librarians. For this reason, their training and development through mentoring is of paramount importance. On this note, American Library Association (n.d.) aver that the future of libraries is being forged by librarians new to the field. Therefore, as the library profession continues to exist, the new librarians make progress and rise through the ranks of leadership and management positions thereby replacing the retired librarians (Nwankwo et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2019). Mentoring is a trusted way of ensuring employee retention and therefore helps in the building of reliable professional relationships amongst librarians, assists early-career librarians to become accustomed to the new work environment, and helps in improving cross-generational relationship and teambuilding (Makinde, 2018).

Mentoring and Cataloguing

Studies on mentoring in cataloguing have also been identified in the literature, highlighting its importance in this field. The importance of mentoring in cataloguing has been expressed in terms of its benefit in knowledge transfer and enhancement of cataloguers' technical, managerial, and research abilities and skills; easy learning and mastery of the task, building self-confidence in descriptive and subject cataloging, surmounting the challenges of fear and nervousness in cataloging practices, stimulating interest in cataloguing, and helping in the retention of cataloguers in libraries (Popoola et al., 2024; Tan, 2016; Xu, n.d.).

Early-Career Librarians

Early-career librarians, in this context, refer to individuals who are in the early stages of their professional careers in librarianship. They have recently entered the workforce after completing their formal education in library and information science, and are beginning to gain experience and expertise in various aspects of library services. Based on the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) (2023) classification, they are library professionals with 0-6 year's professional experience. Thomas et al. (2019) interpreted early career to include

librarians with less than a decade of experience (pre-MLIS and paraprofessional experiences inclusive). Within the Nigerian context, Nwankwo et al. (2017) categorize librarians with five years of professional experience as “young librarians” whether they possess Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Library and Information Studies.

Theoretical Background

Mentoring embraces several theories (Memon et al., 2014). Of interest to this study is Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994). SCCT explained three interdependent facets of career development viz: (a) how basic academic and career *interests* develop, (b) how educational and career *choices* are made, and (c) how academic and career *success* is obtained (Lent et al., 1994). Hence, Self-efficacy Beliefs, Outcome Expectations, and Goals are the three major interrelated variables forming the pillars of this theory. According to Lent et al. (1994), self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals play major parts in the SCCT's models of educational and vocational interest development, choice making, and performance attainment. SCCT also acknowledged the influence of personal and contextual variables (e.g., sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations) that contribute in career outcomes.

Self-efficacy Beliefs: This refers to individuals' assessment of their ability to accomplish a set of actions necessary to achieve chosen types of performances. SCCT holds that individuals have the tendency to develop interest in, choose to pursue, and perform better at activities in which they have strong self-efficacy beliefs, as long as they also have necessary skills and environmental supports to pursue these activities (IResearchNet, n.d.). Self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations derive from four basic information sources such as personal performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. SCCT and other precursory theories on career development consider self-efficacy as an important determiner of both academic and career performance. These beliefs play critical roles in interest development, choice, and performance processes (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy has been acknowledged as a strong predictor of career-related choice and performance indices (Hackett and Lent,

1992; Lent et al., 1994; Multon et al., 1991).

Outcome Expectations: This is a belief about the consequences (positive or negative) of involving in, or performing a particular task. It refers to “beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviors”. This study adapted SCCT to understand if mentoring has positive relationships with early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs. Figure 1 presents the relationship between the variables.

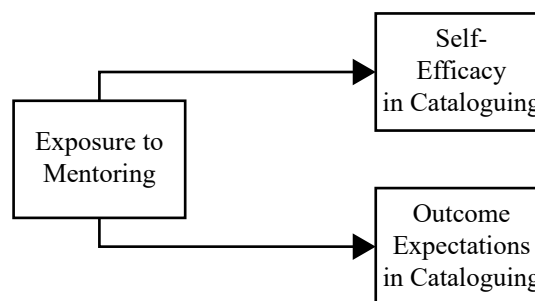


Figure 1: Adapted Social Cognitive Career Theory. Source: Lent et al. (1994).

Research Methodology

The study adopted a positivist paradigm and a quantitative research method. The study, conducted in June 2025, employed a closed-ended questionnaire framed on a 5-point Likert scale and used a census survey. The questionnaire instrument was administered to all the 66 early-career librarians identified in five federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The distribution details of the questionnaire and results are as shown in Table 1.

Out of 66 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 63 copies representing 95.5% response rate were successfully received and found usable for the study. Data collected were analysed using SPSS (Version 25), and presented using frequency counts, percentages, mean ratings, and simple regression analysis. For the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to determine the early-career librarians' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing, a Criterion Mean of 2.50 was set as a yardstick for decision rule of accepting or rejecting an item. Thus, any descriptor statement with a Mean score of less than the criterion Mean of 2.50 (i.e. Mean = 0.00 to 2.49) is considered rejected while a Mean score greater than or equal to Criterion Mean of 2.50 (i.e. Mean = 2.50 to 4.00) is

accepted by the respondents. Furthermore, the levels of self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing were measured as follows: a Mean score of 1.00 – 1.75 implies Low Level; Mean score = 1.76

– 2.50 implies Moderate Level; Mean score = 2.51 – 3.25 implies High Level; Mean score = 3.26 – 5.00 implies Very High Level.

Table 1: Distribution of the Early-career Librarians According to the Participating Universities.

S/N	Institutional Libraries	Number of Questionnaire Distributed and Response Rates		
		Expected Respondents	Actual Respondents	% of Actual Respondents
1.	Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo	11	10	15.9%
2.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	12	12	19.0%
3.	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike	10	10	15.9%
4.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka	19	17	27.0%
5.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	14	14	22.2%
	Total	66	63	100%

Source: Research Survey, 2025

Decision on the effect of a predictor variable was assessed using coefficient β as follows: 0 – 0.29 = small effect; 0.30 – 0.49 = medium effect; and 0.50 and above = large effect (Nieminen, 2022). The *p*-value was used to decide on whether to reject or not to reject a hypothesis. Hence, a *p*-value less than ($<$) 0.05 meant that a null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted; while a *p*-value greater than ($>$) 0.05 meant that a null hypothesis was not rejected.

Findings

This section presents an in-depth discussion of the findings, aligned with the research questions that guided the study.

Respondents' Demographics

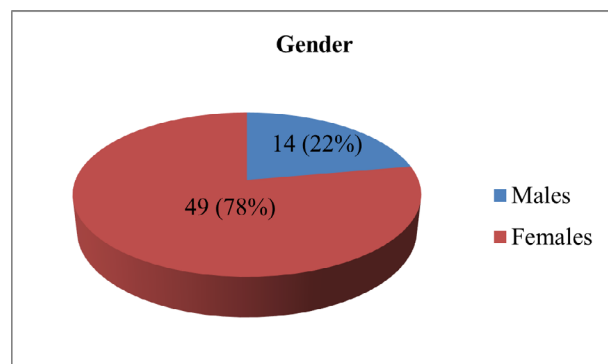


Figure 2: Respondents' Gender.

The background information on the participants displayed in Figure 2 shows that majority, 49 (78%) of the participants were females, while 14 (22%) were males.

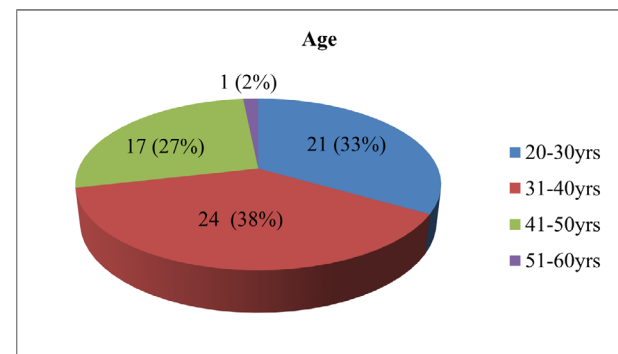


Figure 3: Respondents Age.

Information on Figure 3 showed that 24 (38%) of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years, which was the age bracket most represented. This was followed by 21 (33%) of the respondents aged between 20 and 30 years of age. Also, 17 (27.0%) of the respondents fell within the category of 41 and 50 years, while 1 participant (2%) fell within the range of 51 - 60 years.

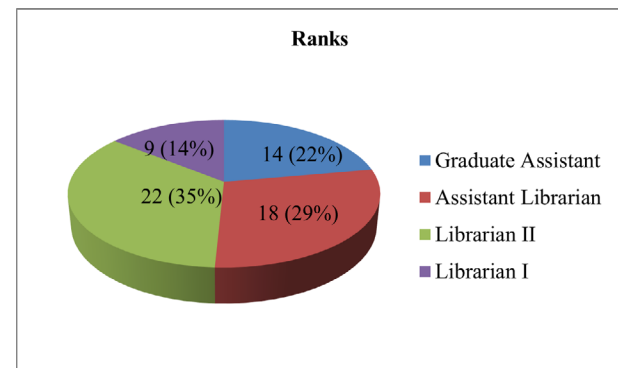


Figure 4: Ranks of the Respondents.

In terms of their ranks, Figure 4 shows that 22 (35%) of the participants were in the Librarian

II cadre. This was followed by 18 (29) respondents in the Assistant Librarian Cadre. Figure 4 further revealed that 14 (22%) of the participants were in the Graduate Assistant Cadre, while 9 (14%) of the respondents were in Librarian I Cadre.

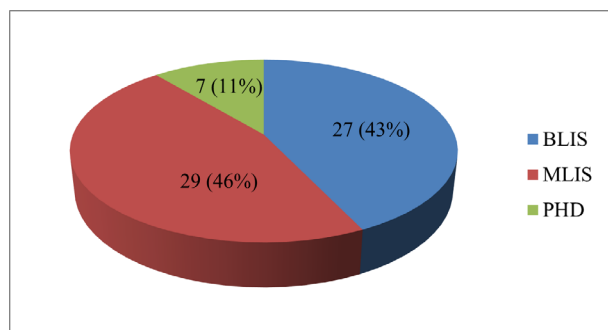


Figure 5: Respondents' Highest Qualifications.

Regarding the participants' distribution according to the highest academic qualification obtained, Figure 5 depicts that 29 (46%) of the participants possessed Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS). Moreover, 27 who possessed BLIS accounted for 43% of the participants; while 7 (11%) of the participants possessed PhD.

Table 2 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics arising from the questionnaire survey, providing an overview of the distribution of scores for each variable. It shows the mean and standard deviation scores of the predictor and the outcome/criterion variables. N = number of participants, Min = minimum or lowest value or score observed in the

dataset of each variable. Max = maximum or largest value or score observed in the dataset of each variable. Mean = average score for each variable, while SD = standard deviation, indicating variability around the mean. The mean scores ranged between 7.90 (exposure to mentoring) and 34.59 (outcome expectation).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Outcome/Criterion Variables.

Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Exposure to mentoring	63	3.00	13.00	7.90	2.34
Self-Efficacy	63	24.00	40.00	34.40	4.09
Outcome Expectations	63	25.00	40.00	34.59	4.12

Research Question 1: What mentoring programmes are early-career librarians exposed to for skill development in cataloguing in the federal universities in South-East Nigeria?

The first research objective sought to find out the mentoring programmes the early-career librarians have been exposed to for skill development in cataloguing in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the researcher provided a wide range of mentoring programmes, informed by relevant literature. From the itemised programmes, the respondents were asked to indicate the programmes they had been exposed to for skill development in cataloguing. Participants were given the chance to choose as many programmes as are applicable to them. The Responses (N) represent the number of participants who answered they have been exposed to a particular mentoring programme, while % of Respondents represents their percentage vis-à-vis the total number of respondents.

Table 3: Early-career Librarians' Multiple Responses and Percentages on Mentoring Programmes for Skill Development in Cataloguing (n=63).

Mentoring Programmes	Responses	% of
	N	Respondents
1. One-on-one mentoring (face-to-face interaction between a mentor and mentee)	57	90.5
2. Supervisory Mentoring (Guidance from an experienced colleague, e.g., unit/departmental head).	56	88.9
3. Staff/job Rotation (temporarily posting staff to different departments to expand skill sets)	55	87.3
4. Conferences/Seminars/Workshops	54	85.7
5. Staff Orientation (introducing new librarian seeks mentoring support from other librarians) outside his/her primary workplace)	53	84.1
6. Team mentoring (team members share knowledge, expertise and experiences)	40	63.5
7. Internship (temporary work experience programme that allow recent graduates to gain practical experience)	40	63.5
8. Peer Mentoring (more exposed early-career librarian mentors less-exposed early-career librarian)	36	57.1
9. Group Mentoring (a senior librarian willingly mentors a group of early-career librarians with a common area of interest)	35	55.6
10. Situational Mentoring (short-term mentoring programme for responding to a particular situation or solving a particular problem)	34	54.0
11. Reverse mentoring (early-career librarian mentors older librarian in new technologies, while the older librarian transfers professional experience to the early-career librarian)	18	28.6
12. External mentoring (a new librarian seeks mentoring support from other librarians outside his/her primary workplace)	15	23.8
13. E-mentoring/Distance/Virtual Mentoring (use of ICTs to foster interaction between a mentor and a mentee who are separated by geographical distance)	15	23.8
*Total	508	806.3

Source: Research Survey, 2025, *Computation Based on Multiple Responses

The multiple responses and percentages presented in Table 3 show that early-career librarians have been exposed to 13 different mentoring programmes. Out of this number, three (3) namely, one-on-one mentoring (90.5%), supervisory mentoring (88.9%), and staff/job rotation (87.3%) were cited by the majority of the participants. This was followed by attendance to conferences/seminars/workshops (85.7%) and staff orientation (84.1%). The three least popular mentoring programmes they were exposed to include: reverse mentoring (28.6%), external mentoring (23.8%), and e-mentoring (23.8%). As shown in Table 1 (Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Outcome/Criterion Variables), respondents' exposure to an array of mentoring programmes (a minimum of 3, and a maximum of 13) suggests that early-career librarians in the sample have had diverse mentoring experiences. The mean score of 7.90 indicates that, on average, respondents have been exposed to approximately 8 different mentoring

programmes. This suggests a moderate level of exposure to mentoring. Moreover, since the mean (7.90) is closer to the maximum score (13) than the minimum score (3), it indicates a positive leaning towards exposure to mentoring.

Research Question 2: What influence does exposure to mentoring have on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy?

This research objective sought to determine the influence of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' self-efficacy beliefs in cataloguing. To achieve this objective, eight questions were asked on a Likert scale to obtain the respondents' views about their cataloguing self-efficacy belief (see Table 4 below). To determine the influence of exposure to mentoring on self-efficacy belief, the scores obtained from the exposure to mentoring (see Table 3 above) were statistically correlated with the scores obtained from cataloguing self-efficacy belief, using simple regression analysis, thus testing research hypothesis 1:

H₁: Exposure to Mentoring significantly influences early-career librarians' Self-efficacy beliefs in cataloguing.

Table 4: Early-Career Librarians' Level of Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Cataloguing.

Self-efficacy Beliefs in Cataloguing	Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	S.D
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
I believe I can achieve most of the goals I have set for myself in cataloguing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	4.8%	23	36.5%	37	58.7%	4.54	0.59
When facing difficult tasks in cataloguing, I am certain I can accomplish them	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	4	6.3%	37	58.7%	21	33.3%	4.24	0.64
In general, I think I can obtain outcomes important to me in cataloguing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	6.3%	34	54.0%	25	39.7%	4.33	0.60
I believe I can succeed at any cataloguing task on which I set my mind	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	5	7.9%	26	41.3%	31	49.2%	4.37	0.77
I successfully overcame many challenges relating to cataloguing	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	7	11.1%	33	52.4%	22	34.9%	4.19	0.76
I am confident I can perform effectively on many different cataloguing tasks	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	12.7%	27	42.9%	28	44.4%	4.32	0.69
Compared to others, I believe I can do most cataloguing tasks very well	1	1.6%	1	1.6%	5	7.9%	40	63.5%	16	25.4%	4.10	0.73
Even when things are tough, I believe I can perform quite well in cataloguing	1	1.6%	1	1.6%	4	6.3%	28	44.4%	29	46.0%	4.32	0.80
Grand Mean											4.30	0.70

Source: Research Survey, 2025, Criterion Mean = 2.50

Table 5: Simple Regression of Exposure to Mentoring as a Predictor of Self-efficacy belief of Early-career Librarians in Cataloguing.

Predictor	B	SE	β	T	p-value	Remark
Constant	28.93	1.50		19.	.000	Significant
Exposure to mentoring	.69	.18	.41	3.80	.000	Significant

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to determine early-career librarians' self-efficacy belief in cataloguing. The results revealed that all the Mean ratings for all the descriptor statements were greater

than the Criterion Mean of 2.50 which implies that all the statements were accepted by the respondents and since the overall Grand Mean rating of 4.30 with a Standard Deviation of 0.70 is greater than the Criterion Mean of 2.50, the analysis implies that

there was a strong agreement with all the descriptor statements (Mean Score ranging from 4.10 to 4.54). Therefore, it was concluded that there was a Very High Level of cataloguing self-efficacy belief among the early-career librarians in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

As shown in Table 5, the regression of self-efficacy on exposure to mentoring yielded a standardised coefficient $\beta = 0.41$, $p = .000$. This value indicates that unit increase in exposure to mentoring leads to a 0.41 standard unit increase in the cataloguing self-efficacy belief of early-career librarians. This suggests a positive and medium sized effect of exposure to mentoring on self-efficacy belief of early-career librarians in cataloguing. Based on the decision rule (see methodology), the β value (0.41) falls within the range of 0.30 – 0.49. This indicates a medium effect size, suggesting that exposure to mentoring has a moderate influence on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy. This was statistically significant, indicating that the observed relationship between the two variables

did not happen by chance. Table 5 further revealed that the p-value (.000) is < 0.05 . Therefore, the H_1 , which states that exposure to mentoring significantly influences early-career librarians' Self-efficacy beliefs in cataloguing, is accepted.

Research Question 3: What impact does mentoring have on early-career librarians' cataloguing outcome expectation beliefs?

This research objective aimed to ascertain the influence of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing. To achieve this objective, eight questions were also asked on a Likert scale to obtain the respondents' views about their cataloguing outcome expectation beliefs (see Table 6 below). The score obtained from the exposure to mentoring (see Table 3 above) was statistically correlated with the scores obtained from cataloguing outcome expectation beliefs, using simple regression analysis, thus testing research hypothesis 2: H_2 : Exposure to Mentoring significantly influences early-career librarians' outcome expectations in cataloguing.

Table 6: Early-Career Librarians' Level of Outcome Expectation Beliefs in Cataloguing.

Outcome Expectation for Cataloguing	Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	S.D
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
I believe I can always be relevant and valued in LIS profession if I have cataloguing skills	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	36.5%	40	63.5%	4.63	0.49
I believe my versatility in the library would be enhanced if I am adequately skilled in cataloguing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	26	41.3%	36	57.1%	4.56	0.53
I think I can be a cataloguing/metadata consultant in the future if I have adequate cataloguing skills	3	4.8%	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	27	42.9%	32	50.8%	4.35	0.92
With cataloguing skills, I believe I could still be relevant and employable even after retirement	9	14.3%	0	0.0%	2	3.2%	25	39.7%	27	42.9%	3.97	1.33
With cataloguing skills, I have a sense of fulfilment in the library profession	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	4	6.3%	29	46.0%	29	46.0%	4.35	0.74
My self-confidence in librarianship will be enhanced if I possess adequate cataloguing skills	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	6.3%	29	46.0%	30	47.6%	4.41	0.61
I may likely get a better working condition if I have good cataloguing skills	2	3.2%	5	7.9%	6	9.5%	32	50.8%	18	28.6%	3.94	1.00
If I am sufficiently proficient in cataloguing, I believe I have marketable skill	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	3	4.8%	30	47.6%	29	46.0%	4.38	0.66
Grand Mean											4.32	0.79

Source: Research Survey, 2025, Criterion Mean = 2.50

Table 7: Simple Regression of Exposure to Mentoring as a Predictor of Outcome Expectations of Early-career Librarians in Cataloguing.

Predictor	B	SE	B	t	p-value	Remark
Constant	31.56	1.61		19.59	.000	Significant
Exposure to mentoring	.40	.19	.24	2.06	.043	Significant

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation computed to determine early-career librarians' outcome expectation belief in cataloguing. The results revealed that all the Mean

ratings for all the descriptor statements were greater than the Criterion Mean of 2.50 which implies that all the statements were accepted by the respondents and since the overall Grand Mean rating of 4.32 with a

Standard Deviation of 0.79 is greater than the Criterion Mean of 2.50, the analysis implies that there was a strong agreement with all the descriptor statements (Mean Score ranging from 3.94 to 4.63). Therefore, it was concluded that there was a Very High Level of cataloguing outcome expectation beliefs among the early-career librarians in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Result, as displayed in Table 7, shows that the standardised coefficient is $\beta = .24$, $p = .043$. This value indicates that a unit increase in exposure to mentoring leads to a 0.24 standard deviation unit increase in outcome expectations, the belief of early-career librarians in cataloguing. This also suggests a positive and small effect of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' outcome expectations. Based on the decision rule (see methodology), the β value (.24) falls within the range of 0 – 0.29. This indicates a small effect size, suggesting that exposure to mentoring has a mild influence on early-career librarians' cataloguing outcome expectation. This was statistically significant, indicating that the observed relationship between exposure to mentoring and outcome expectation belief in cataloguing did not happen by chance. Moreover, Table 7 further revealed that the p -value (.043) is < 0.05 . Therefore, the H_{2a} which states that exposure to mentoring significantly influences early-career librarians' outcome expectation belief in cataloguing is upheld.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides an in-depth discussion of the findings, aligned with the study's objectives outlined earlier.

Mentoring programmes that Early-Career Librarians have been exposed to for Skill Development in Cataloguing

Findings revealed that the early-career librarians have been exposed to 13 different mentoring programmes. These are presented in their ranking order: One-on-one Mentoring (90.5%), Supervisory Mentoring (88.9%) Staff/job Rotation (87.3%), Conferences/seminars/workshops (85.7%), Staff Orientation (84.1%), Team Mentoring (63.5), Internship (63.5), Peer Mentoring (57.1), Group Mentoring (55.6), Situational Mentoring (54.0), Reverse Mentoring (28.6%), External Mentoring (23.8%), and E-mentoring, (23.8%). The three most cited mentoring programmes

were: One-on-one Mentoring, Supervisory Mentoring, Staff/job Rotation. This suggests that these are the most-practised mentoring programmes for early-career librarians' skill development in cataloguing; while the least practised mentoring programmes they were exposed to include: reverse mentoring, external mentoring, and e-mentoring.

This finding affirms the findings of Nwabueze and Anike (2016), which reported availability of one-on-one mentoring, e.g., junior librarians readily solicit advice and counsel from experienced colleagues at their discretion, experienced librarians provide guidance and mentorship to the junior colleagues on as-needed basis; and e-mentoring, e.g., librarians participating in online forums like Linked-In, List serve to exchange ideas and support their ongoing professional development; and involvement in professional networks, including associations, conferences, and seminars. Also corroborating this finding is Ubogu (2019), who reported that mentoring programmes through which librarians are mostly mentored are sponsorship to conferences, seminars and workshops and individual mentoring. The findings are also consistent with those of other scholars (Bello and Mansour, 2017; Madu, 2017; Olatokun and Njideaka, 2020) who identified similar mentoring programmes in their respective studies. Moreover, a moderate level of exposure to mentoring as the mean (7.90) suggests, is a positive indication, showing a favourable inclination towards exposure to mentoring programmes by the early-career librarians.

Influence of Exposure to Mentoring on Early-Career Librarians' Cataloguing Self-Efficacy Belief

This objective sought to determine the influence of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy beliefs. Findings revealed a Very High Level of cataloguing self-efficacy beliefs among the early-career librarians in federal universities in South-East Nigeria (Mean=4.30). Furthermore, finding revealed that exposure to mentoring is a significant and valid predictor of early-career librarians' cataloguing Self-Efficacy belief ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = .000$). Although a review of the existing literature reveals lack of empirical evidence on the impact of mentoring on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy belief, confirmatory evidence of the predictive validity of mentoring on librarians' self-efficacy has been

established by Ubogu (2019), who identified instillation of self-confidence in librarians as one of the significant benefits of mentoring; highlighting its potential to foster confidence and competence, which further prepared them for more challenging tasks in professional practice.

Whereas the librarianship literature is sparse in studies focusing on mentoring and self-efficacy relationship, research from other fields, e.g., Business, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Medical Sciences, etc have consistently lent validity to this finding. From the Business literature, it is investigated that the role of mentorship in fostering entrepreneurship self-efficacy, specifically examining its impact on opportunity recognition among novice entrepreneurs. The findings indicated that mentoring has a positive impact on the development of entrepreneurship self-efficacy. The present finding corroborates previous studies (Charleston and Leon, 2016; Cziraki et al., 2017; Rockinson-Szapkiw and Wendt, 2020; Sarkar, 2022) which had examined similar phenomena from different fields of study. The extant literature thus underscores mentoring as a robust facilitator of self-efficacy, exerting influence on individuals' cognitive and developmental processes.

Influence of Exposure to Mentoring on Early-Career Librarians' Cataloguing Outcome Expectation Belief

This objective sought to determine the influence of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' cataloguing outcome expectations. Findings revealed a Very High Level of cataloguing outcome expectations belief among the early-career librarians in federal universities in South-East Nigeria (Mean=4.32). In addition, findings also indicated that mentoring is a credible predictor of early-career librarians' outcome expectation belief in cataloguing ($\beta = .24$, $p = .043$). This resonates with the related existing literature. Research has consistently demonstrated that mentoring relationships can have a significant influence on individuals' outcome expectations and belief. This finding aligns with that of Adekoya and Fasae (2021), who similarly observed that librarians hold a strong expectation that mentoring is essential for meeting their job demands. This finding suggests that exposure to mentoring significantly influences librarians' outcome expectation beliefs, specifically in terms of their perceived ability to fulfil their job expectations and meet demanding work requirements.

The Social Cognitive Theory, presents three categories of outcomes which include: physical, social, and self-evaluative. Findings of Adekoya and Fasae (2021) bear on self-evaluative outcome expectations, which are the feelings, e.g., self-satisfaction for having attained a change in one's behaviour.

Conclusion

This study examined the mentoring of early-career librarians for skill development in cataloguing operations within federal universities in South-Eastern Nigeria. A review of relevant empirical literature revealed that this area remains largely unexplored in the field of librarianship, particularly in relation to cataloguing. The investigation was motivated by the observation that early-career librarians often exhibit negative dispositions toward cataloguing, a challenge that not only hampers their skill development but also poses potential succession planning issues within the profession. The study's findings are grounded in the adapted Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) model, which provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of mentoring and its influence on early-career librarians' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs – cognitive behaviours that shape skill acquisition, professional attitudes, and career development in cataloguing. Based on the findings, the study concludes as follows:

Early-career librarians surveyed have been exposed to diverse mentoring experiences. A moderate level of exposure to mentoring observed indicates a positive leaning towards exposure to mentoring. This implies that their level of exposure to mentoring is encouraging and suggests a favourable attitude towards mentoring. Thus, they tend to have a positive view of mentoring and are likely to seek out, or benefit from mentoring opportunities.

Exposure to mentoring plays a crucial role in enhancing the cognitive belief factors essential for skill development in cataloguing by boosting self-efficacy and outcome expectations among early-career librarians. It has a significant, positive and moderate influence on early-career librarians' cataloguing self-efficacy, and a positive but mild effect on their outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the study recommends as follows:

University library managements should

prioritise the institutionalisation and formalisation of mentoring programmes, particularly the one-on-one, supervisory, and job/staff rotation types to enhance early-career librarians' skill development in cataloguing. Efforts should also be made to expand or strengthen other mentoring programmes, e.g., reverse mentoring, external mentoring, and e-mentoring so as to cater to diverse learning styles, needs and preferences of the early-career librarians with reference to their skill development in cataloguing.

Given that early-career librarians have demonstrated a moderate level of exposure to mentoring programmes, indicating a positive attitude towards such initiatives, university library managements should capitalise on this favourable disposition by ensuring that mentoring programmes are not only implemented but also sustained, monitored, evaluated, and tailored to support the skill development needs of early-career librarians in cataloguing.

Although the early-career librarians have had some beneficial mentoring experiences, as the average level of exposure (Mean = 7.90) suggests, there is still room for improvement and expansion of mentoring initiatives.

Given the significant and positive impact of exposure to mentoring on early-career librarians' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs, mentoring programmes should be designed to specifically target these cognitive factors, which would play important roles in shaping their skill development in cataloguing. Furthermore, since exposure to mentoring has been found to have accounted for only moderate and mild effects respectively on self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing, other skill development interventions, which have the potential to enhance early-career librarians' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs in cataloguing, should also be considered to complement mentoring programmes.

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