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Mentoring Young Academia: A Prerequisite for Scholarly Publishing

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ABSTRACT
Mentoring is a key determinant for quality assurance and effective performance in every organisation for career growth and job satisfaction for both the mentors and the mentees, which will increase the mentee's academic confidence and boost their writing and publishing skills. It is pertinent to note that the absence of mentoring in higher institutions of learning has been a quandary that needs to be revisited. This paper emphasizes the importance of mentoring programs for young academia as a prerequisite for scholarly publishing. Surveys and several related literatures were analysed to determine what is practiced at different higher institutions of learning concerning mentor and mentee programs and the findings show that the majority of young academia complained about the absence of mentoring programs in their higher institution of learning, which makes the young academia adaptation difficult in most academic environment and hindered their performance. It was suggested that there should be training and retraining of staff at regular intervals to be abreast of the ever-revolving technology and to enhance the quality of practicum by making use of research-based knowledge, which will boost the quality performance in the education sector.

KEYWORDS
Education sector, mentee, mentor, mentoring, researcher, scholarly publishing, young academia

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INTRODUCTION

It is pertinent to note that the absence of mentoring in higher institutions of learning has been a quandary that needs to be revisited. However, most young academia has high hope of publishing articles after joining academics but are mostly hindered by the unavailability of suitable mentor that will train and guide them appropriately. It is worthy of note that a quality mentoring program will enable the mentee to perform the task effectively and boost their career growth. This paper aims to validate the notion that a mentoring program is a necessity for young academia to publish scholarly articles in reputable journals. Surveys and several related literatures were analysed to determine the level of the mentoring program available for young academia and the findings show that the majority of young academia complained about the absence of mentoring programs in their higher institution of learning. However, the research will be incomplete without the definition of some key terminology. Consequently, a mentor is an experienced and trustworthy person who imparts and advises to young and inexperienced colleague[1], while a mentee is a person who receives training, advice, or guidance from a more experienced or skilled mentor[2]. Hence, mentoring is known as a major tool that helps individuals achieve the desire career growth and personal development[3].

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Nicholas *et al.*[4] studied predatory publishing of early career researchers from Russia and their findings show that most early career researchers do not publish in predatory journals. Similarly, Owusu-Agyeman[5] studied the importance of mentoring to early career academics and his findings show that mentoring will enhance their performance in terms of teaching and researching, which increases their network opportunities. However, scholarly publishing serves as a formal communication need for scholars or researchers[6], which becomes an integral part of the academic world. Hence, to grow the academic environment, it is either you publish or perish because the regulatory bodies mandate all higher institutions of learning to measure academic staff performance in areas of teaching, supervision, research and most especially scholarly publications.

Benefits of mentoring to a mentee: Early researcher entry into the academic world will gain professional stamina through the mentoring program". Figure 1 shows some of the benefits of mentoring to a mentee (young academia), but the benefits are not limited to the following.

Benefits of mentoring to a mentor: The mentor would feel fulfilled when they train an early career researcher, which will make the mentee more productive and also lessen the mentor's stress. Figure 2 shows the major benefits of mentoring to a mentor (experienced researcher), but the benefits are not limited to the following.

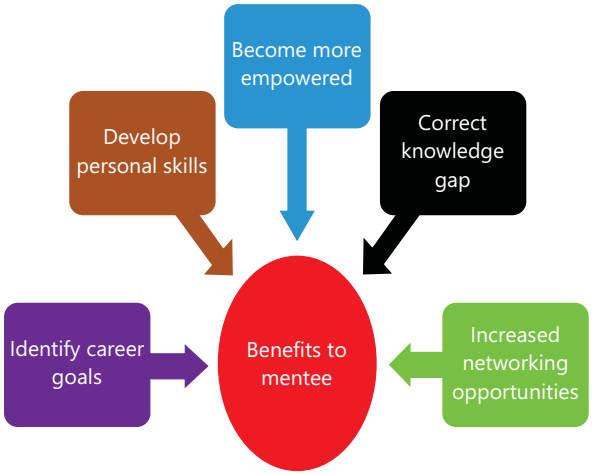


Fig. 1: Benefits of mentoring to a mentee



Fig. 2: Benefits of mentoring to a mentor

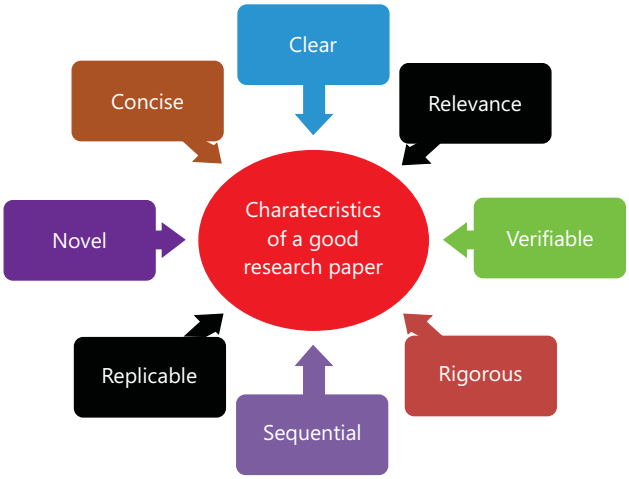


Fig. 3: Characteristics of a good research paper



Fig. 4: Criteria for evaluating a journal

Characteristics of a good research paper: All scholarly papers should be clear, concise and thoroughly proofread for any errors. It is apparent to note that writing is a key part of communicating scientific work and every researcher, be it an experienced or early career researcher, must strictly adhere some characteristics of a good research paper for scholarly publishing as displayed in Fig. 3.

Criteria for evaluating a journal: Publishing is the final step of the research process and there are several criteria for evaluating the quality of a journal, which goes beyond citations and impact factors. However, from different surveys and literatures reviewed[7-10], it was discovered that some predatory journals have high impact factors computed from ungenuine/unknown sources. Similarly, some predatory journals rarely use peer review and simply publish what is submitted to them; this approach will make some early career researchers lazier once they publish in such journals without hitch. Figure 4 shows the major criteria for evaluating a scholarly journal.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that a mentoring program is a prerequisite for novel and scholarly publishing for young and experienced academia for quality assurance and correct knowledge gap, which when followed extensively will improve young researchers writing skills and they can publish papers in any reputable journal of their choice and as well enhance the quality of practicum by making use of research-based knowledge, which will boost the quality performance in the education sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Young academia should submit papers to journals whose focus/scopes correspond to their field
- There should be training and retraining for academic staff at regular intervals to be abreast of the ever-evolving technology[11]
- Young academia should not be in haste to publish; this makes so many submit articles to fast-publishing predatory journals
- Young academia should check the reputation of a journal before submission of manuscript
- Young academia should explore additional resources on how to publish in reputable journals

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