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ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES: A STUDY OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, RESOURCE AVAILABILITY IN FEDERAL NEURO PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the Assessment of social worker services: a study of years of experience, resource availability in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, Calabar, Cross River State. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. This study utilized a survey inferential research design; data were collected through structured questionnaires were used to acquire quantitative data from a representative sample of social workers. The researcher employed a mixed sampling technique, systematic sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and accidental sampling technique for the study. Purposive sampling technique was employed to sample a total of 48 social workers in federal neuro psychiatric hospital who participated in the study. One research instrument "Assessment of social worker services: a study of years of experience, resource availability in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital Questionnaire" (ASWSSYERAFNPH) was used to elicit information from the respondents; the instrument also underwent content validation by different experts. The hypotheses were analysed using Pearson products correlation as statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between years of experience and social worker services; the result of hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between availability of resources and social worker services. The findings highlight that while experienced social workers often demonstrate greater competence and resilience in managing complex mental health cases, their performance is significantly constrained by systemic resource limitations and institutional challenges. The study concludes that for social workers to function optimally within neuropsychiatric settings, there is a pressing need for improved institutional support, targeted investment in professional training, and a more enabling work environment. Finally, it was recommended that well-equipped resources should be provided to Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, Calabar and also there should be annual training for social workers for effective service delivery.

Keywords: Assessment, social worker, years of experience, resource availability, hospital

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1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social workers provide a wide range of services ranging from social services, career services, guidance services, within and outside the hospital setting (Adams, et, al. 2022). These various services provided by social workers may be affected by various factors, like demographic factors, psychological factors, social factors, environmental factors, political factors etc. this demographic factor like educational qualification, income level and years of experience this variable is needed for effective guidance services. Naicker and Botha (2023) the decisions made by social workers rendering foster care services should be made explicitly based on professional knowledge and sound reasoning using robust assessment tools and empirical evidence (Taylor 2022; McCafferty, Duffy and Hayes 2021). Ojua and Akwa (2024) asserted that social rehabilitation focuses on helping individuals reintegrate into their communities, regain social connections, and participate meaningfully in society. However, despite the increasing pressure on social workers to be more transparent about their decision-making, it seems that they may have little conscious awareness of how and why they make decisions the way they do (Taylor 2022). The hospital social worker's responsibilities also include educating patients about various resources at their disposal and interviewing patients to understand their uniqueness. (Kirkman and Melrose 2014) Ultimately social worker also accesses each patient's unique condition, combining data from medical diagnosis and personal interviews, they also develop a comprehensive plan to help patient adjust to medical diagnosis and transition from one health system to normal life. They provide necessary support for each patient according to the health status, personal strength and weaknesses, emotional state and additional factors, but you find out that patients and their loved ones are left to go in search of services to help patients with their problems, they are abandoned by the social worker and other health practitioners after diagnoses have been made, giving excuses like they are poorly paid, they have not eaten or there are no machines, drugs or even personnel to carry on treatment on the patient.

In today's complex business life, employee performance is believed to be an important subject not only in achieving organisational objectives but also in maintaining competitive advantages over other enterprises (Yilmaz, 2015). To enhance employee job performance all organisations are required to encourage positive work attitudes like helping customers to resolve problems, cooperating with co-workers, trying to prevent unexpected incidents and sustaining quality standards of the organisation in order to ensure customer satisfaction (Yilmaz, 2015). Appropriate experiences on the job also enhance job performance over time but to what extent is employees" performance influenced by experience on the job. It is assumed that work experience will enhance job performance over time. Operating on this premise may hold sway over sometimes only, for caution must be taken as over generalization may be defective in some situations as diminishing returns may set in later after work experience and age may have topped which may reflect a non-linear relationship or no relationship at all between job experience and employee's performance. Ojua and Akwa (2024) opined that Rehabilitation involves the process of restoring or improving the health, well-being, or functioning of individuals who have been affected by illness, injury, disability, addiction, or other challenges. The rehabilitation centre provides therapy and support to help individuals recover from substance abuse and reintegrate into society.

Rice, (2020), examine the impact of years of work experience on job performance of managers in hospital settings in Nigeria. There is paucity of information on the topic; however, a worker having good work experience in his job can become a leader due to his special gift of experience he acquired during the course

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of his work. This is in accordance with the common adage practice makes a man perfect. Apart from the professional and academic knowledge, it is commonly believed that experience might play important roles on the performance of individuals. In many cultures, the myth is that people get wiser due to more exposure and experience. For example, in African culture, experience is considered as a priority for leadership positions in different organisations (Bhargava and Anbazhagan, 2024).

Bhargava and Anbazhagan (2024) viewed that leadership styles and performance of individual differ from culture to culture and country to country depending upon life patterns, beliefs and value system or otherwise on the knowledge and experience of the people. Findings from research by Bhargava and Anbazhagan (2024) on education and work experience influence on the performance of employees indicate that the performance of the employees gradually increases with their experience and after an experience of 20 years the performance is again getting lower. However, effective guidance practice also depends on training and practice received by social workers in hospital. In the same vein, (Yilmaz, 2015) recommends that social workers active participation and authorities support to ensure effective provision of guidance services in hospital. The researcher also concludes that it is important for the provision of guidance services but much of the effort depend on Social worker's experience to put in place activities to promote guidance services (Yilmaz, 2015) and concluded that the years of experience of Social workers inform their abilities to provide or implement effective guidance services in hospitals and confirm that training of Social workers helps in the provision of healthy environment where guidance activities can prevail and added that effective provision of guidance services large depend on the appropriate skill and psychological knowledge gain by the Social worker during their practice

Bhargava and Anbazhagan, (2024) asserted that Social workers year of experience does not have impact in the delivery of guidance services, but the age serves as a compliment to experience and maturity on how the Social worker should handle situation in hospitals and However, it was agree that planning and assessment of patients are more difficult when social health workers are supervising more than one health centers, and suggested that the qualified Social workers with good demographics background, increasing or improving facilitation of guidance services in hospitals. This state of empirical review shows that social workers demographics have impact on how guidance services are being run in hospitals. The study carried out by Kissi-Abrokwah, et, al. (2021), investigates how years of experience influence the provision of guidance services in hospitals in Ghana. The study was underpinned by a positivist philosophical viewpoint where a quantitative approach and the descriptive survey were used to assess how hospital based social worker's demographics influence their provision of guidance services. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. A total of a hundred and thirty-six (136) respondents was selected on a purposive base. The study found out that there was a significant difference between the years of experience have an influence in the provision of guidance services in hospitals in Ghana. In a study carried out by Ani &Igwe (2018), suggests that social workers work experience do influence their Guidance services in the long run. How this happens in the hospital setting is still unknown and this work was undertaken to understand that relationship. Data for this study came from a cross-sectional survey using self-administered questionnaire distributed amongst one hundred and twenty-five (125) social workers in twenty-five (25) hospitals and the response rate was 83.2%. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16) was used as the analysis tool. Though there were no significant relationships between length of social workers work experience and guidance service delivery. Education has long been

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seen as an important predictor of the performance of people at work. For many years, university graduates with bachelor's or master's degrees have been in high demand in the employment market.

The study carried out by Kissi-Abrokwah, Aboyom, Aidoo, Mensah and Akoto-Baako (2021), investigates how educational qualification influence the provision of guidance services in general hospital in Ghana. The study revealed that there were significant differences between academic qualifications have an influence in the provision of guidance services in hospitals. Another study was conducted in Tanzania by Eliamani, Richard, & Baguma (2023), social workers educational qualification and its influence on guidance services in public health centers". The findings revealed that guidance and counselling services are influenced by the social workers educational qualification. The study is related to the present study because it examined effective guidance services by patients which was considered in the present research. Onyango, Aloka, & Raburu (2018) carried out a study on the effectiveness of guidance services has a significant relationship with educational aspiration of social workers in Kenya. Mixed method approach with concurrent triangulation design was used for the study. The population of the study was composed of 431 social health workers in the public sector, 40 social workers in the private hospitals and 40 social workers in the health centers. Stratified random sampling technique was used.

Wambui (2015) conducted a study to investigate if effective guidance services are influenced by social workers educational qualification in Nigeria: A Case Study of Zaria Kaduna state. This study was conducted in Zaria, Kaduna State. The state had a total of 12 health Centers which formed the target population, The results showed that there was and social workers educational qualification significantly influence their level of guidance service delivery. Similarly, Salgong et al. (2022) carried out a study on the influence of years of experience on guidance services in private hospitals in Ghana. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of educational qualifications on guidance services in private hospitals. Findings indicated that educational qualifications significantly influenced guidance services among social health workers in private hospitals in Ghana. It is against this backdrop that the researcher intends to investigate assessment of social worker services taking into consideration variables such as study of years of experience and resource availability.

1.1. Statement of the problem

In Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital today, some patients are abandoned as a result of inability to make payment on time, chronic health conditions, inadequate professional and inadequate equipment. This arises from the fact that the patient needs and expectations are not met. This has given rise to increase of death cases and elongated health conditions etc. Inability to provide quality social services creates frustration which leads to prolonged health complications.

Social worker plays a critical role in the delivery of mental health services, particularly in specialised institutions such as neuropsychiatric hospitals. In the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Calabar, the effectiveness of social work services is influenced by a combination of factors, including the years of professional experience of the social workers, the availability of institutional resources, and the systemic challenges encountered in service delivery. However, despite the recognised importance of social workers in mental health care, there is limited empirical research assessing how these variables interact to affect the quality and consistency of services rendered. Anecdotal evidence and preliminary observations suggest that many social workers in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital Calabar operate under resource constraints, experience professional burnout, and

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face administrative bottlenecks that hinder effective practice. Moreover, variations in years of experience among social workers may influence how they navigate complex client needs and institutional limitations. Yet, the extent to which these factors impact service delivery outcomes remains underexplored in the Nigerian mental health context.

The menace of poor-quality health services in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, has become a public concern and worry to government, and other institutions, even the Non-governmental Organizations, stakeholders in both federal and state ministry of health, ministry of humanitarian affairs, social welfare agencies and concerned citizens who have, at different times, tried to identify the possible causative factors such as inadequate salary remuneration, inadequate finances among others. Concentrated effort has been made by past governments since 1999 and other health organisations to curb the dangers of poor social work services in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, Cross River state. Whereas, all coordinated efforts made to tackle this poor social work services in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital and its dangers have proved abortive as the problem keeps increasing on a quarterly basis due to the health record. It is against this backdrop that the researcher intends to investigate assessment of social worker services taking into consideration variables such as study of years of experience and resource availability.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study the following research questions pose to guide the research.

1. There is no significant relationship between years of experience and social worker service federal Neuro psychiatric hospital.
2. There is no significantly relationship between resource availability and social workers service federal Neuro psychiatric hospital.

2.0. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a survey inferential research design; data were collected through structured questionnaires were used to acquire quantitative data from a representative sample of social workers. The researcher employed a mixed sampling technique, systematic sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and accidental sampling technique for the study. The systematic sampling technique was used to select admin staff in Neuro-psychiatric hospital, while purposive sampling technique was used to select social workers in social welfare unit, accidental sampling technique was used to select social workers that were present at the time the data was collected. The collection of data lasted for three days because of different duty shifts in the social welfare unit. Out of a total population of 104 workers in Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, 48 social workers responded to the research study, presenting a response rate of 46.2%. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The quantitative data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis; the statistical tool used was Pearson product correlation. To ensure ethical compliance, the research gained approval by the administrative staff of Federal Neuro psychiatric hospital, Calabar and also consent from all participants. Strict confidentiality protocols were established to safeguard the anonymity and privacy of the participants.

- **Ethical Considerations:** The researchers ensured that ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Before data collection, administrative permission was obtained from head of social welfare unit Neuro psychiatric hospital Calabar. The social workers were informed that the participation was based on informed consent. The social workers were informed that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

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They were informed that their responses provided would be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

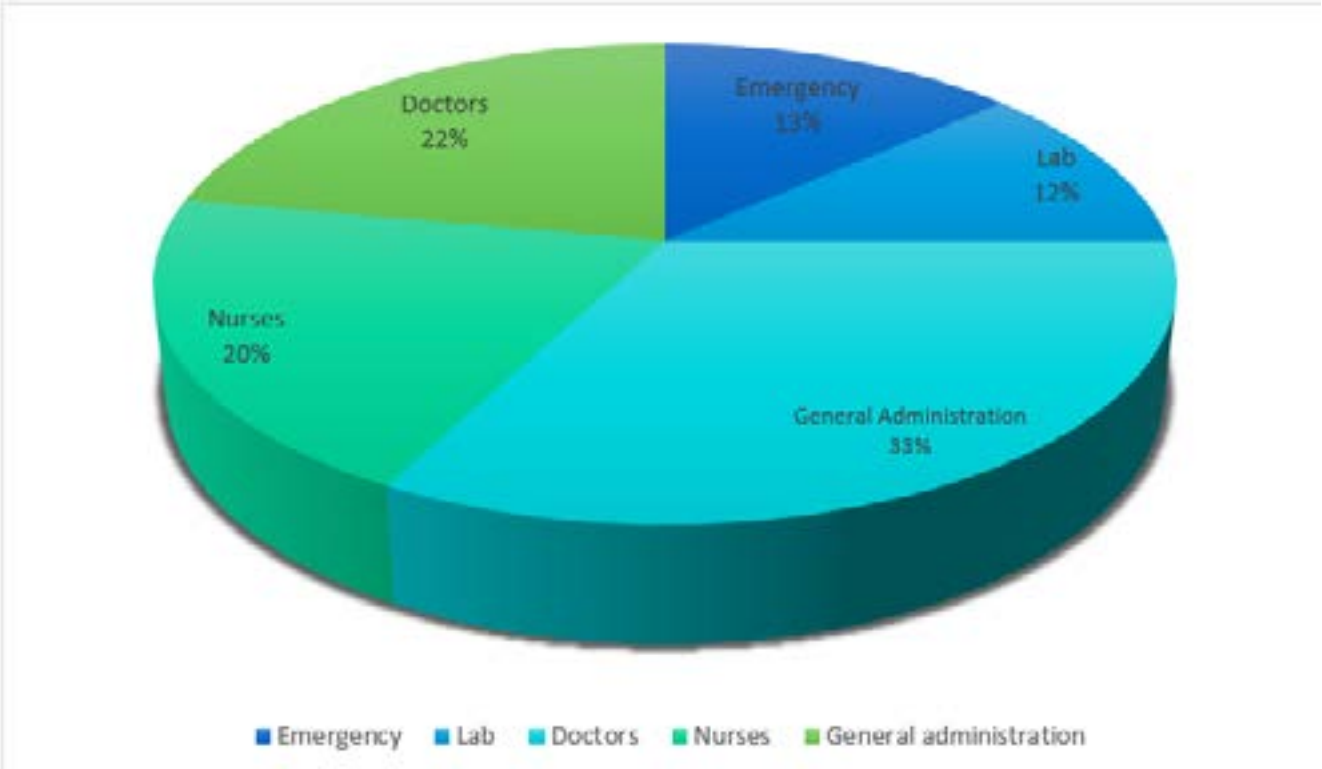


Figure 1 – Pie chart showing Distribution of staff in percentage in FGPHC

Table 1: Population table showing the population of staff in Federal neuro psychiatric hospital

S/N	UNITS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Emergency	8	6	14
2	Laboratory	3	9	12
3	General administration	19	15	34
4	Nurses	10	11	21
5	Doctors	16	7	23
	Total	56	48	104

Source: Record Unit, FGPH Calabar. (2026).

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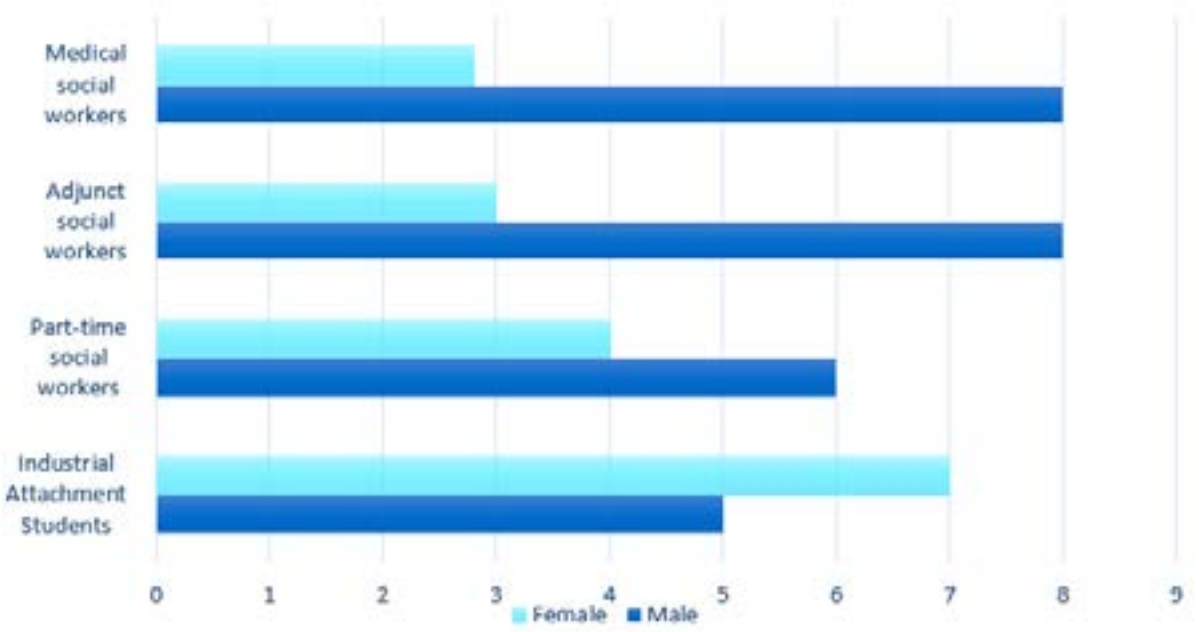


Figure 2 – Bar chart showing category of social workers

Table 2: Sampling frame of the study

S/N	CATEGORIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Industrial Attachment Students	5	8	13
2	Part-time social workers	6	4	10
3	Adjunct social workers	8	3	11
4	Medical social workers	8	6	14
	Total	27	21	48

Source: Field Survey, (2026).

3.0. RESULTS

The responses obtained from the participants were analysed based on the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between years of experience and social worker service federal Neuro psychiatric hospital. To test this hypothesis, years of experience was correlated using Pearson Product moment correlation. The result of the analysis is presented below.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis for the relationship between years of experience and social workers service (N=48)

Variables	x	SD	r-ratio	p-level
Years of experience (X)	11.69	3.90		
Social workers services (Y)	43.82	5.80	.323*	.025

*Significant at .05; df=46; p<.05.

The result in Table 3 revealed that the mean score obtained by the subjects about years of experience was 11.69 with a standard deviation of 3.90 while the mean score obtained by the subjects about social workers

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services with a standard deviation of 5.80. The result also showed that the correlation between years of experience and social workers services produced a statistically significant r-ratio of .323 with a p-value of .025, since the p-value is less than .05. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between years of experience and social workers service was rejected. Therefore, this implies that years of experience has a significant positive relationship with social workers services to patients in Federal Neuro psychiatric, Calabar, Cross River State.

Hypotheses two: There is no significant relationship between years of experience and social worker service federal Neuro psychiatric hospital. To test this hypothesis, resource availability was correlated using Pearson Product moment correlation. The result of the analysis is presented below.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis for the relationship between resource availability and social workers service (N=48)

Variables	x	SD	r-ratio	p-level
Resource availability (X)	12.10	2.99		
Social workers services (Y)	43.82	5.80	.317*	.025

*Significant at .05; df=46 p<.05.

The result in Table 4 revealed that the mean score obtained by the subjects about resource availability was 12.10 with a standard deviation of 2.99 while the mean score obtained by the subjects about social work services was 43.82 with a standard deviation of 5.80. The result also showed that the correlation between resource availability and social work services produced a statistically significant r-ratio of .317 with a p-value of .025, since the p-value is less than .05. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between social workers resource availability and social work services was rejected. Therefore, this implies that the resource availability has a significant relationship with social worker services.

4.0. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study with respect to hypothesis one indicated that years of experience has a significant positive relationship with social workers services this result is in line with the result of the studies carried out by Bhargava and Anbazhagan, (2024) asserted that Social workers year of experience does not have impact in the delivery of guidance services, but the age serves as a compliment to experience and maturity on how the Social worker should handle situation in hospitals and However, it was agree that planning and assessment of patients are more difficult when social health workers are supervising more than one health centers, and suggested that the qualified Social workers with good demographics background, increasing or improving facilitation of guidance services in hospitals. This state of empirical review shows that social workers demographics have impact on how guidance services are being run in hospitals.

The findings of this study with respect to hypothesis two indicated that availability of resource has a significant positive relationship with social workers services. This result is in line with the result of the studies carried out by Wambui (2015) conducted a study to investigate if effective guidance services is influenced by social workers in Nigeria: A Case Study of Zaria Kaduna state. The results showed that a significant influence between social workers and guidance services in Zaria.

5.0. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the critical components influencing the effectiveness of social worker services in the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Calabar,

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focusing on years of professional experience, availability of resources, and service delivery challenges. The findings highlight that while experienced social workers often demonstrate greater competence and resilience in managing complex mental health cases, their performance is significantly constrained by systemic resource limitations and institutional challenges. The study concludes that for social workers to function optimally within neuropsychiatric settings, there is a pressing need for improved institutional support, targeted investment in professional training, and a more enabling work environment. By addressing these issues, mental health institutions like the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Calabar, can strengthen their social service systems and improve outcomes for both practitioners and patients.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made by the researchers in order to enhance the effectiveness of social worker services within the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Calabar.

1. **Increase Funding and Resource Allocation:** Government and hospital management should prioritise adequate funding for social work departments to ensure the availability of essential materials, office infrastructure, transportation, and other tools needed for effective service delivery.
2. **Strengthen Workforce Capacity:** Efforts should be made to recruit more qualified social workers to reduce workload and burnout. Additionally, task distribution should consider years of experience, ensuring that complex cases are matched with seasoned professionals while junior staff receive appropriate support and mentorship.

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