



ENHANCING QUALITY TEACHING THROUGH MENTORING IN OSUN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the role of mentoring in enhancing quality teaching in Osun State secondary schools. This study was occasioned by the continuous poor performances of students in School Certification Examination in the State. It was a descriptive survey design which aimed at eliciting information from the teachers on how they perceive the adoption of mentoring in the system. One hundred and fifty five teachers (155) were purposively selected from thirty and one Local Government Council area in the State (31) (LGA). That is five (5) new teachers from each local Government Council. Questionnaire tagged, Teachers Perception of Mentoring (TPQM) was the instrument used to elicit information from the respondents. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentages and means. Findings showed that teachers welcomed the idea of adopting mentoring system in the schools. It was recommended that experienced teachers, principals and school administrators can serve as mentors for the newly recruited teachers. The idea of mentoring can be incorporated into the in-service programme for teachers in the state.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is very essential for socio-economic and technological advancement of any modern nation. This is why Nigerian as a nations invest heavily on education for its citizenry. In recent times many states government embarked on renovating, constructing new schools, classrooms and libraries. This is with the aim of providing quality education for the students. Osun state government is not an exemption.

Huge renovations of primary and secondary schools were embarked upon by the State so as to increase student enrolment especially at the lower level. The state was not left out in providing meals and uniform for the students. However it was observed that poor quality of teaching and schooling were exhibited in the schools. Adedeji et al (2003) noted that there was increased rate of absentee and ineffective teachers in schools and the

inability of students to read and write effectively. The reason for this was that there was no clear policy on continuing development of teachers, and realignment of teachers education curriculum to the needs of the 21st century. Obanya (2004). This has adversely affected the performance and quality of output of the middle and upper basic education levels. Research findings showed that the level of performance of student in public Examinations such as West Africa Examination Council and National Examination council (NECO) was poor. Some graduates of these levels of education could not read and write. Ukeje (1996) confirm that teachers poor knowledge of ICT and their inability to integrate it in teaching has affected graduates ability to access the knowledge driven economy. He further noted that education unlocks the door to modernisation. It is the teacher who holds the key

to that door. Quality teachers is the desire of every nation not only because they implement the curriculum but they positively affect the student they teach. Quality teaching is imperative for student performance. The teacher must have sound pedagogic content and a good personality. He should be involved in the task of promoting teaching and learning. It has been observed that most new teachers do not possess the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in teaching, this is because, in most colleges of education, management of teaching practice which is critical to the professional development of pre-service teachers is done haphazardly. Nwangwu (2003) described the poor management of teaching practice in these colleges.

This implies therefore, that no teacher should be thrown into a classroom without the support he or she needs to be successful as a teacher. One of the ways of assisting new teachers to grow in their choosing profession is through mentoring. Teachers that serve as mentors are usually experienced and skilled who are able to quickly diagnose the needs of new teachers and can consistently relate to and support them. Helping them to improve their instructional strategies and skills, help them to develop the curricular and offers other forms of professional help.

The term mentoring refers to someone who imparts wisdom to and shares knowledge with a less experienced individual/colleagues. In the 1970's the word mentor gained wide popularity in the business world. Other professionals later began to promote it in education, it is used to support teachers who are less experienced or novice. This is to reduce attrition rates but its use as an ongoing in-service activity to help new teachers acquire professional skills and improve their quality of teaching has not being greatly explored especially in Nigeria. The current hues and cries in the society over the poor academic performance of students calls for new educational reforms mentoring can be an effective way to train new teachers to adopt to new practice and learn to network with others in order to improve the quality of teaching. Uche (2006) noted that mentoring is a new motivational and supervisory device used by organisations to induce high productivity in their staff, especially the new and less experienced ones.

Teacher mentoring is the establishment of a personal relationship between teachers with different levels of professional skills and experience, for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance for the less experienced and the professionally incompetent one. Thus the main objectives of teacher mentoring include helping beginner teachers to expand their techniques,

improving their teaching skills and learning classroom management and providing the opportunity for the mentors to pass their expertise on to new teachers. A sense of collegiality makes less experienced teachers feel safe to make mistakes, study themselves and share learning with each other to create excellence in their delivery (Peretomade 2001).

Mentoring has far greater potential to reform the educational system especially when the mentoring is to support and encourage new and experienced teachers to maximise their potential skills, improve their performance and become what they want to be. Mentoring provides the mentees with all opportunity to think about career options and progress. Mentoring for newly employed teacher served as a source of empowerment for the new job. In spite of the advantages of mentoring in the educational system, it has been observed that the technique has not been rightly utilised. Educational administrators failed to make use of it in the classroom system. It is on this premise that this paper examines the use of mentoring for effective teaching in Osun State middle and Senior secondary schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The poor academic performances of students in public examinations in recent times was of concern to many education stakeholders. Parents blamed the teachers while teachers also blamed the government and parent. However, teachers quality determines the quality of instruction. It is therefore necessary to mentor the newly recruited teachers for optimal performance. To develop them professionally and for quality teaching in the classroom. They need to be mentored. This study therefore sets out to examine the role of a mentor in preparing new teachers for quality teaching and learning in the classroom.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

Why teachers mentoring in Osun State State secondary schools?

Who are the mentors?

What are the impacts of teachers mentoring on teachers professionally skill and development.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to assess the perceptions of teachers to the new innovation of teachers mentoring for quality teaching in the school. To assess the major objectives of mentoring. The impact it will have on teachers development and skill in teaching in the classroom settings.

METHODS

The descriptive survey is the research design adopted for the study. This is because the study involves collecting data from the staff of various selected secondary schools in Osun State. This is through a carefully designed questionnaire.

The study population consisted of all teachers in both the middle and senior public secondary schools in the state. There were thirty Local Government Councils and one Area Council in the state. One hundred and fifty five (155) teachers were used for this study. The teachers were purposively selected from each Local Government area. Five newly recruited teachers were selected from each Local Government Area. This was with the aim of assessing their perceptions on the ideas of mentoring in the school system in Osun State.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the respondents for the study. The criterion was for all teachers who have just received letter of appointment in the schools selected in the Local Government Council. This would allow them to express themselves whether they need mentoring or not.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was in two parts. Part A contained items on Biodata of the respondents. Part B contained items that sought to find out the perceptions of teachers on why teachers mentoring in Osun state secondary schools is necessary? Who are these mentors? What are the main objectives of teachers mentoring? What are the impacts of mentoring on teachers professional skill and development?

The questionnaire was tagged Teachers' perception of mentoring (TPMQ).

In conducting the reliability of the questionnaire, a test re-test on the items was used at interval of two weeks and this yielded a reliability of 0.73 which was deemed fit for the study.

Face and content validation of the instrument was done through vetting by the researchers colleague and experts in tests and measurements. The respondents were to express their views through the use of 'Agree' and 'disagree'

The instruments were personally administered by the researchers and research assistants. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

Results

What are the perceptions of teachers on mentoring in schools?

Table 1: Teachers perceptions on mentoring in schools

	Variable	N	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Mentoring is another techniques for staff development	155	155	100	-	-
2	A new motivational and supervisory device for staff	155	110	70.9	45	29.1
3	The experience teachers did not need mentoring	155	40	25.8	115	74.2
4	The newly recruited teachers need mentoring	155	130	83.8	25	16.2

Table 2: Who are the mentors?

	Variable	N	Agree	%	Disagree	%
	Who are the mentors	155				
	Retired teachers		90	58.1	65	41.2
	Experienced Teachers but not retired		135	87.1	20	12.9
	The Principals		85	54.8	70	45.2
	The head of Department		95	61.2	60	38.8
	The Vice principals		70	45.1	85	54.9
	Ministry of Education Officials		80	51.6	75	48.4

Table 3: What are the advantages or impact of mentoring on teacher's performance in the classroom

	Variable	N	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	To provide emotional and psychological support to the mentee but in the context of a work relationship	155	134	86.5	21	13.5
2	Provides an opportunity for role modelling for the less experienced teachers		145	93.5	10	6.5
3	Helping beginner teachers to expand their techniques of teaching		130	83.8	25	16.2
4	Improving their teaching skills and learning		150	96.7	05	3.3
5	Providing opportunity for the mentors to pass their expertise on to new teachers		150	96.7	05	3.3
6	Enhance quality of teaching		112	72.3	43	27.7
7	Identifies both strength and weakness of the mentee		90	58	65	42
8	Assist Teachers to render educational services in the most appropriate manner		140	90.3	15	9.7
9	Assists the new teachers in the management of classroom		138	89	17	11
10	Creates opportunity for growth and increased competence and productivity		123	79.4	32	20.6

As indicated in table 1. The findings showed that 100% of the respondent agreed that mentoring is another new technique in staff development. The teachers (83.8%) agreed that newly recruited teachers need mentoring and mentors are not posted to schools. 90% disagreed.

Table 2: Who are the mentors from Table 2, the teachers perceived that, experienced teachers but not retired are to serve as mentors. 87.1% of them indicated this 61.2% of them indicated Head of Department while 58.1% suggested retired experienced teachers. 51.6% of them indicated Ministry officials. 45.1% of them suggested Vice principals as mentors.

Table 3: What are the advantages of mentoring on teachers performance in the classroom.

In table 3, the findings showed various response rate in respect of each of the variables examined 96.7% of the teachers perceived that it improved teachers teaching skill. 93.5% agreed, it provides opportunity for role modelling for the less experienced teachers. While 83.8% agreed that it helps beginner teachers to expand their techniques of teaching. 72.3% agreed, it enhances the quality of teaching. 89% agreed that it assists new teachers in the management of classroom.

DISCUSSION

The foregoing showed analysis of data collected for this study. Several findings were made in the analysis. One salient finding was in respect of the need for mentoring for the newly recruited teachers by the Teaching Service Commission to teach in the middle and

senior secondary schools. This findings was consistent with the findings made by other researcher (Uche 2006). The findings also showed that experienced teachers can be used as mentor for the new teachers and less experienced ones. The findings highlighted the advantages of mentoring in the schools. That, it enhances the teaching skill of new teachers and provide opportunity for role modelling for the less experienced teachers.

CONCLUSION

Since student outcomes depend greatly on teacher quality, government and school managers need to foster teachers' continuous professional development in order to cope effectively with the ongoing changes and improve the quality of education. Professional development through mentoring is an important prerequisite for addressing a continuous stream of changes in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study. The following recommendations were made that:-

- Mentoring system should be incorporated into the in-service programme for teachers.
- Experienced school administrators, retired teachers who are not tired can be employed to assist new teachers in the classroom. This is to enhance their professional and personal development in the art of teaching and learning. Some states in Nigeria have done this it can be adopted in Osun State.

- ↻ Team teach which encourages mentoring where teachers can networking to improve teaching should be encouraged at all levels of educational system in Osun state.
- ↻ Principals and senior teachers should be friendly and cooperate with the new and less experienced teachers.

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