

Mentorship in Terms of Professional Practice and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study adopted Ex-post facto design to investigate the influence of mentorship in terms professional practice on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the aim of this study, one hypothesis was formulated to direct the study. A sample of seven hundred and eleven teachers' was randomly selected for the study. The selection was done through the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The questionnaire titled Mentorship and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (MJPQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts in Research and statistics. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha reliability method and the reliability coefficient ranges from 0.71 to 0.88. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was adopted to test the hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that mentorship in terms of psychosocial support has a significant influence on teachers' job performance. Based on the results and findings of the study, it was recommended that mentorship should be adopted in school so as to develop a good learning environment that can help the teachers' to acquire more skills on teaching.

Keywords: mentorship, professional, practice, teachers, job, performance

Introduction

Education is seen as an instrument for national development. This is because every nation depends on the educational sector for its national development. It is a pivot on which development revolves around and about. The goals of secondary education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) is to develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their

local and external environments, acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society, promote and encourage scholarship and community service, forge and cement national unity, promote national and international understanding and interaction. Hence, the philosophy of education emphasizes social responsibility, political participation, job orientation, spiritual and moral values and also sportsmanship.

A study carried out by Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem and Nkama (2013) attributed students' poor performance to the organizational behaviour of the school where the teachers work. They opined that the administrative style of the head teacher can either influence teachers' job performance positively or negatively. Fehintola (2014) found out that teachers' behavioural characteristics such as demography, teaching process, teaching attitudes, job satisfaction exerts great influence on teachers' job performance which ultimately leads to improvement in students' academic performance.

Government has made several efforts in the past to improve the performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Nigeria. One of such efforts made by the government was to raise the minimum teaching qualification of teachers in secondary school from Teachers Grade 11 certificate to National Certificate in Education (NCE). The government has also introduced the National Teachers' Institute to enhance teachers' job performance.

However, these efforts of government have not achieved its aims as it is faced with a myriad of challenges. When the public secondary schools are in dire need of teachers, they resort to employing those who do not have requisite qualifications to teach in order to salvage the situation. On the hand, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) that was established as an alternative to traditional face to face education is not free from its own problems. Some students who enroll in this fail to complete the program, other students complain of non –easy access to tutors and other educational resources, hence, it is this that have motivated the researchers to look in the direction of mentorship variables that could enhance teachers' job performance.

Mentorship is the personal guidance teachers receive from other veterans in the profession. Anero (2012) stated that Cross River State Government within 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 academic sessions adopted teacher mentorship programme for both the primary and secondary school teachers to improve the job performance of teachers. Supervision is a collective process which is directed at improving teaching and learning. The goal of supervision therefore is to achieve improvement in the teaching and learning process. It helps to identify areas of strength and weakness of teachers and learners that should be improved (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2012).

The term mentoring can be viewed differently by individuals. Some persons may view individuals who have had a positive impact on their lives, for instance a boss, a teacher or a coach as a mentor. Bubb (2002) stated that the professional support given to teachers enhances their job performance in the classroom. The professional support received ranges from joint planning of lessons, improved pedagogy and subject matter and assessment of student units. Hargreaves and Fullam (2000) however pointed out that if mentorship is not properly conceptualized as a process of enhancing teachers' job performance, the objective of mentorship would not be achieved.

Ohia (2013) stressed the point that mentorship is all about sharing expertise and knowledge needed by other individuals in any given system. Uche (2008) explained the term mentorship as the development of a personal relationship between teachers that have different professional skills and experience for the professional instruction and guidance of less experienced. Lindgren (2000) opined that teachers need constant professional support to enable them perform their duty efficiently. The goal of mentorship, according to Lindgren, is to gain increased knowledge about the teacher's role and effective method. To ensure that this goal is achieved, the needs of the teachers should be clarified, questions should be raised about classroom interactions during the discussions. Lindgren further stated that the professional support given to teachers should be objective, the teachers should be prepared to expect and receive constructive criticism, and also the teachers should be made to reflect deeply on their lessons.

Bozeman and Feneey (2007) assert that mentorship is a process for the transmission of knowledge, social capital and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to his work/career, or professional development. Mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and for a sustained period of time, between a people who is presumed to have greater relevant knowledge and experience and a person who is presumed to have less knowledge.

Azman, Muhammad and Sebastin (2009) conducted a study in a public University in East Malaysia, using 1456 employees in the university to investigate the effect of mentoring on individuals' career development and psychosocial support. A sample size of 200 was drawn based on quota sampling. An explanatory factor analysis (EFA) used to assess results of the study showed that formal and informal mentoring acts as major determinant of individual's psychosocial support and individual's career advancement. The study concluded that informal and formal mentoring activities create a favorable working environment such as open communication, sharing of information and active involvement in the organization. One of the pitfalls of this study is the drawing up of the sample. The sample size of 200 was not a representative of the population of 1456. However, the finding that mentoring influences an individual's

career development and psychosocial support would be of a great benefit to individuals especially teachers.

Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2004) asserted that good teachers are teachers who take time to reflect on their job. The authors further stated that teachers do reflect on their job because they are continuously searching for opportunities to improve their own practice and raise questions about their practice to improve the academic performance of their students. Atkin and Murphy in Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2004) defined reflection as those intellectual and affective activities a teacher engages in to explore new experiences in order to gain new understanding and appreciate the subject matter. The authors went on to say that for the mentor to assist the teacher to engage in reflective practices, the mentor should employ questioning to lead the teacher to reflect on what transpired in the course of teaching. Lindgren (n.d) supported this view by explaining that the dialogue between the mentor and the teacher enables the teacher to gain insight on how they perform their duties in the classroom, and also facilitates the process of being able to describe their thoughts and ideas.

Mudzzielwana and Maphosa (2014) examined the helpfulness of school-based mentors in nurturing of students' teachers' professional growth on teaching practice. The study adopted a qualitative study design. 25 final year Bachelor of Education students in South Africa were purposefully sampled for the study. An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect data. The data gathered was analyzed using content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that school-based mentors assisted the participants to apply effective teaching approaches. The findings also established that mentors provided resources for the teacher to perform their duties. The study however revealed that student teachers experienced negative feelings towards their mentor. It was however recommended that the mentor develops a cordial relationship with students teachers to ensure effective collaboration.

Loizon (2008) carried a study to examine how teachers in Cypriots secondary schools develop professionally through reflective practice. The study was qualitative in nature and it adopted a semi-structured interview as a method for data collection. 18 teachers from Cypriot secondary schools participated in the study. The finding of the study revealed that the teachers viewed professional development as the gaining of new knowledge. The finding of the study also revealed that the teachers who reflected on their practice with their colleague had new ideas on how to teach difficult topics in class, and also stressed that they needed to trust the colleague with whom they are reflecting. The finding further revealed that the outcomes of a class test would cause a teacher to reflect on his/her lesson. The outcome may be poor, then the teacher examines his/her methods and content.

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant influence of mentorship in terms of professional practice on teachers' job performance in terms of (knowledge of subject matter, communication skills, classroom management and lesson presentation).

Methodology

The research design for the study was ex-post facto. The design, ex-post facto, was suitable because inferences about the variables were made without manipulation of the independent variables to produce an effect on the dependent variable. Cross River State is the research area for the study. The target population of the study is all teachers in public secondary schools in Cross River State. There are a total number of 7338 teachers in 898 public secondary schools in Cross River State as recorded by Cross River State Universal Education Board (2014). The researchers employed different sampling techniques for the study. Firstly, the researchers adopted a stratified random sampling technique. In using the stratified random sampling technique, the researchers stratified the schools into different education zones. The researchers then used a simple random technique to select 5% of the schools in each zone. This was done through the process of balloting. The sample size for the study is 366 teachers and 1444 students representing 5% of the entire population of teachers and students in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The instrument that was used is Mentorship and Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (MTJQPQ). The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A deals with the demographic data of the respondents, while section B used 12 items four points likert-type scale to measure mentorship and teachers' job performance. Copies of the questionnaire were face validated by three research experts in the University of Calabar. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using fifty (50) teachers who were not included in the real study. The data generated was analyzed to establish its internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Method. The result shows that the reliability estimates of the sub-scales ranged from 0.71 to 0.88 which indicated that the instrument is reliable. The collated data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant influence of mentorship in terms of professional practice on teachers' job performance in terms of (knowledge of subject matter, communication skills, classroom management and lesson presentation).

The dependent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' job performance with four dimensions, namely knowledge of subject matter, Communication skills, Classroom management and Lesson presentation. The independent variable was mentorship in

terms professional practice with three categories (low, moderate and high). To test this hypothesis, each of the three categories of mentorship in terms professional practice was compared with the four dimensions of teachers' job performance using One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Group means and standard deviation of the variables mentorship in terms professional practice

| Teachers' job performance | Mentorship | N | \bar{x} | SD |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Knowledge of subject matter | Low | 239 | 22.22 | 2.22 |
| | moderate | 283 | 21.67 | 1.87 |
| | high | 189 | 23.01 | 1.00 |
| | Total | 711 | 22.21 | 1.89 |
| Communication skills | Low | 239 | 20.59 | 1.50 |
| | moderate | 283 | 21.99 | .81 |
| | high | 189 | 23.75 | .43 |
| | Total | 711 | 21.99 | 1.60 |
| Classroom management | Low | 239 | 14.60 | 1.63 |
| | moderate | 283 | 19.33 | .75 |
| | high | 189 | 21.76 | 1.31 |
| | Total | 711 | 18.39 | 3.13 |
| Lesson presentation | Low | 239 | 21.20 | 1.47 |
| | moderate | 283 | 22.34 | .75 |
| | high | 189 | 22.76 | 1.30 |
| | Total | 711 | 22.06 | 1.35 |

Table 2: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of mentorship in terms professional practice on teachers’ job performance (N=711)

| Teachers’ job performance | Source of variation | SS | df | MS | F | Sig. of f. |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| Knowledge of subject matter | Between groups | 201.656 | 2 | 100.828 | | |
| | Within group | 2346.119 | 708 | 3.314 | 30.427* | .000 |
| | Total | 2547.775 | 710 | | | |
| Communication skills | Between groups | 1052.009 | 2 | 526.004 | | |
| | Within group | 757.940 | 708 | 1.071 | 491.346* | .000 |
| | Total | 1809.949 | 710 | | | |
| Classroom management | Between groups | 5832.344 | 2 | 2916.172 | | |
| | Within group | 1114.959 | 708 | 1.575 | 1851.772* | .000 |
| | Total | 6947.302 | 710 | | | |
| Lesson presentation | Between groups | 291.353 | 2 | 145.676 | | |
| | Within group | 995.671 | 708 | 1.406 | 103.587* | .000 |
| | Total | 1287.024 | 710 | | | |

* Significant at .05 level, critical $f=3.00$, $df=2,708$

The results of the analysis revealed that the calculated F-value for each dimension of the teachers’ job performance was higher than the critical F-value of 3.00, at .05 level of significance at 2 and 708 degrees of freedom as follows:

- a. Knowledge of subject matter dimension $F=30.427$, $df=2$ & 708 $P<.05$
- b. Communication skills dimension $F=491.346$, $df=2$ & 708 $P<.05$
- c. Classroom management dimension $F=1851.772$, $df=2$ & 708 $P<.05$
- d. Lesson presentation dimension $F=103.587$, $df=2$ & 708 $P<.05$

With these results, the null hypothesis is rejected at .05 level of significance. This implies that mentorship in terms professional practice significantly influence teachers’ job performance in terms with four dimensions, namely knowledge of subject matter, Communication skills, Classroom management and Lesson presentation dimension. The direction of this influence was examined using the Fishers’ Least significance

difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Fishers' Least significance difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of mentorship in terms professional practice on teachers' job performance (N=711)

| Dependent Variable | (I) Orientation | (J) Orientation | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Knowledge of subject matter | 1.00 | 2.00 | .5462* | .15992 | .001 |
| | | 3.00 | -.7877* | .17719 | .000 |
| | 2.00 | 1.00 | -.5462* | .15992 | .001 |
| | | 3.00 | -1.3339* | .17100 | .000 |
| | 3.00 | 1.00 | .7877* | .17719 | .000 |
| | | 2.00 | 1.3339* | .17100 | .000 |
| Communication skill | 1.00 | 2.00 | -1.4023* | .09090 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -3.1574* | .10071 | .000 |
| | 2.00 | 1.00 | 1.4023* | .09090 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -1.7549* | .09720 | .000 |
| | 3.00 | 1.00 | 3.1572* | .10071 | .000 |
| | | 2.00 | 1.7549* | .09720 | .000 |
| Classroom management | 1.00 | 2.00 | -4.7367* | .11024 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -7.1594* | .12215 | .000 |
| | 2.00 | 1.00 | 4.7367* | .11024 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -2.4227* | .11789 | .000 |
| | 3.00 | 1.00 | 7.1594* | .11215 | .000 |
| | | 2.00 | 2.4227* | .11789 | .000 |
| Lesson presentation | 1.00 | 2.00 | -1.1390* | .10418 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -1.5600* | .11543 | .000 |
| | 2.00 | 1.00 | 1.1390* | .10418 | .000 |
| | | 3.00 | -.4209* | .11140 | .000 |
| | 3.00 | 1.00 | 1.5600* | .11543 | .000 |
| | | 2.00 | .4209* | .11140 | .000 |

The results of the post Hoc test in Table 3 shows that teachers whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is low, are significantly different in their knowledge of subject matter from those with moderate and high mentorship in terms professional

practice. Also teachers who are moderate are significantly different from those who are high in respect of the dimensions of their teachers' job performance.

In terms of Communication skills, the result of Post Hoc shows that teachers whose mentorship in terms professional practice are low, are significantly different in their Communication skills than those who are moderate and high respectively. Also teachers who are moderate are significantly different in their Communication skills than those who are high in respect of teachers' job performance.

For Classroom management, teachers whose mentorship in terms professional practice is low significantly differ in their Classroom management from those whose mentorship in terms professional practice is moderate and high respectively. Also teachers whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is moderate are significantly different from those who are high.

For Lesson presentation, teachers whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is low significantly differ in their Classroom management from those whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is moderate and high respectively. Also teachers whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is moderate are significantly different than those whose mentorship in terms of professional practice is high.

The result of the hypothesis indicated that mentorship in terms of psychosocial support significantly influence teachers' job performance. The finding is in line with Bozeman and Feneey (2007) who assert that mentorship is a process for the transmission of knowledge, social capital and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work/career, or professional development, and that mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a people who is presumed to have greater relevant knowledge and experience and a person who is presumed to have less knowledge.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Based on results of the study, it was concluded that mentorship in terms of professional practice significantly influence teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that mentorship should be adopted in school so as to develop a good learning environment that can help the teachers to acquire more skills on teaching. The mentor should develop a cordial relationship with students-teachers to ensure effective collaboration.

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