TEACHER ATTITUDE AND MENTORING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the attitude of teachers towards mentoring in Public secondary schools in Imo State. The descriptive survey design was adopted by the study. One research question guided the study and one hypothesis was tested. The population of the study consisted of all the Public Secondary Schools in Imo State. There were two hundred and eighty three[283] in number. The respondents were all the 283 principle and 10,378 teachers, giving a total of 10,661 respondents. The sample size of the respondents was 400 (72 principles and 328 teachers). The instrument for the study was a questionnaire which was validated and tested for reliability with Cronbach Alpha, a reliability index of 0.71 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question. The study revealed that theattitude of teachers towards mentoring is quite discouraging. It was therefore recommended among others that there should be more awareness created by the administrators on the need for teachers to put up right attitudes towards mentoring to enhance mentoring programs in these schools.

Keywords:

Introduction

Life they say is a school that teaches man different lessons at various times. The lessons taught by life can be termed to be Education thus Education is said to be obtained throughout one's life time. Education is a critical instrument for human capacity development, it provides the necessary manpower for national development O'connor in Osaat (2011) stated categorically that Education is a process by which a society through schools, colleges,universities and other institutions deliberately transmit their cultural heritage. This informs us that education is a quality media to translate the beliefs and reasons for these believes to members of a community. It is important to mention that the quality of education in a country determines the quality of their labour force and subsequently the level of development in such a country. Education could be formal or informal, formal education is done with appropriate planning and structure usually in schools while informal education could happen anywhere and anytime with anybody. Anyone or country that overlooks education can scarcely achieve their goals.

Following the different developmental stages in man, formal education, is divided into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels. Children still developing their reasoning capacity start from the primary level,as they grow in age and develop their reasoning abilities, they move to the secondary level then to the tertiary level. Nigeria has various secondary schools in different states of which Imo State is one. These secondary schools are responsible for the preparation of individuals into the tertiary level of education where they make decisions regarding their career. It is clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) that the broad goals of secondary education is to prepare individuals for useful living within the society and higher vocation. It also stated that irrespective of sex, social status, religion and ethnic background, secondary education provides primary school leavers with the opportunity for development and growth. This elaborates the fact that secondary school level of education is the intermediary between the lower and higher education levels in Nigeria. Therefore the quality of secondary

school leavers to a large extent determines the end product of university graduates who make up the labour market of any given society or country. To this effect, secondary education must be given the optimum attention through planning and delivery to achieve greatness and development of our country Nigeria.

As important and valuable education is, at the centre of it is the teacher. This is because the teacher translates the required information to members of the society in form if concepts that they are familiar with for better understanding and implementation. A teacher is someone who is professionally trained and certified to impact knowledge and to facilitate teaching – learning process. A teacher must be well informed and knowledgeable in his or her area of specialization. Keziah (2007) noted that a teacher is a formally trained person who helps a learner to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes through a variety of ways of which one inter – turned. A teacher can be referred to as the god of education, this is because he/she is expected to know it all hence should guide, lead and direct all those under him. Guham in Nwadeechi 2003 stated that what a child hears thinks and feels today, influences what he learns, thinks and feels tomorrow. This explains the fact that the influence of the teacher who speaks continuously to the learner today determines his tomorrow which also determines the future of the society.

Every formal education has objectives and goals, the teacher is the tool for achieving these objectives and goals. He is the expert that has full knowledge of a subject matter and transfers same to the learner who is termed to be a novice is the said subject matter. No wonder Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006) posited hat students are raw materials in the hands of the teachers ready to be processed and transformed. They further state that students are likened to crude mineral deposits which are in their natural form until they are extracted and refined by the petroleum engineer to get kerosene, diesel etc. The teacher stands as the petroleum engineer that refines the so to say illiterate or ignorant students to become educated as well enlightened persons useful to both themselves and the society. Hanushak (2011) stated categorically that a student is likely better off in a bad school with a good teacher than in a good school with a bad teacher. This is because the teacher determines the end product quality delivery of education. Hanushek began studying teachers in the late 1960, he tried to understand the influence of the teachers on the students and the school at large. He discovered that of all the elements in the schools, teachers matter mostly he noted that more than the class size, the curriculum and the amount of money spent per student, the teacher is the most important element. The question now is, how can we achieve having good teachers in our schools? It is expedient to ensure that teachers who teach in our schools have the right knowledge and qualifications needed to operate in the offices they occupy. This can be achieved through teacher professional development programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences, peer group activities, mentoring amongst others. The focus of this work is on mentoring.

Mentoring is a developmental relationship programme involving a more experienced and knowledgeable person and a less experienced one. It is a professional development programme that facilities the growth and improvement of less experienced personnel in a profession. Bloom (2002) noted that mentoring facilities learning towards a long term goal. In mentoring, there exist the mentor and a mentee. The mentor is the experienced and more knowledgeable professional who influences a less experienced professional colleague with an aim of developing the colleague while the mentee is the one with less professional experience, knowledge and skill is ready to study and learn from a more experienced colleague. In a mentoring relationship, the mentor is the teacher while the mentee is the learner. Kram (1988) wrote that a mentoris a coach who facilities the development of the junior person. He described the mentor as a coach and the mentee as the junior person, this implies that the mentor acts a guide, coach, director and encourager to the less experienced personnel, he is the teacher that possess the skill of being a good coach, listener and encourager. To achieve this, he must be ready to spend reasonable timewith the mentee in counselling to obtain constructive feedback from the outcome behaviour of the mentee, mentoring programme encourages continuity and effectiveness in a profession, giving room for improved knowledge and avoidance of errors and mistakes, infact it helps to save cost for the management of the organization.

Bryne (1991) noted that two important features of professional mentorship are conscious visibility criteria and its criterion based on target of young new managers. This implies that the mentor and the mentee must constantly meet together for coaching and practice, with the mentee constantly watching the mentor, this will enhance the learning of new skills and building of confidence by the mentee. We must note that mentoring needs sacrifice of time and trust from both the mentor and the mentee. Thomas in Jones and George (2013) stressed that effective mentoring is more than providing instruction, offering advice, helping build skills and sharing technical expertise he added that development of high quality close and supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee is equally important.Because mentoring helps to transfer values, knowledge, skills and styles from one generation to another it is expedient that teachers adopt mentoring programme for furtherance of excellent quality in the delivery of education.

Teacher mentoring is a relationship involving a more experienced and a less experienced teacher. In this relationship, the more experienced teacher who is the mentor coaches leads and directs the less experienced teacher on the best way to achieve effective and quality educational delivery. Uche (2008) posited that teacher mentoring is the establishment of a personal relationship between teachers with different levels of professional skills and experience for the purpose of professional institution and guidance of the less experienced and the professionally incompetent ones. It is important to state that through mentoring, both the more experienced and the less experienced teacher acquire understanding and concrete skills that will enhance students' learning abilities as several experiences will be shared and gained through their interaction. Teacher mentoring will also help to avert poor working attitude of some teachers especially when they realise that there is a more experienced teacher somewhere supervising their work. A teacher is faced with multiple task of teaching, data recording, classroom management, attending meetings etc. Teacher mentoring is a practical way for an upcoming teacher to learn from his mentor how best to handle and cope with these multiple tasks effectively.

Teacher mentoring will help the less experienced teacher to get familiar with the concrete realities of teaching. The efficiency and retention of new teachers is made possible through teacher mentoring. To a large extent, teacher mentoring brings about positive changes in the school system. It is critical to note that teacher mentoring makes it possible for the mentee to develop professional confidence and competence through the cycle of Observation – Assessment – Practice - Assessmentas stated by Uche [2008]. A well Developed teacher is likely better than his counterpart without training Emechebe [2009] hence, if the school system looks forward to having a well Developed teacher, teacher mentoring is a programme that should be adopted.

Statement of Problem

The Teacher is critical to teaching and learning process, he is the facilitator in these processes and the implementer of curriculum for the realization of set educational goals and objectives. However, a close look at some schools reveal that there are some teachers who have not been very effective in this statutory responsibility. This manifest in some areas such as poor human relationship; teacher to teacher relationship, teacher to student relationship and teacher to principal relationship. Poor classroom management is another area of concern, the classroom is the main "theatre" in the school environment where the main business of teaching and learning take place. Hence, classroom management is critical to the teaching and learning process. Some teachers are ineffective in this all important responsibility with its attendant negative consequences on the achievement level. Also, it has been observed that some classroom teachers are not very effective and efficient when saddled with some administrative responsibilities, especially when promoted to administrative positions. Obviously, this ugly scenario has a negative consequence on the overall process of attaining set educational goals and objectives.

For these, reasons, the study is curious to investigate the attitude of teachers towards mentoring in public secondary schools in Imo state.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitude of teachers toward mentoring in public secondary schools in Imo state.

Research Question

This research question guided the study.

Research Question One: What is the attitude of teachers towards mentoring?

Research Hypothesis

The mean responses of principals do not significantly differ from that of teachers with respect to the attitude of the teachers towards mentoring.

Method

The design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the two hundred and eighty three [283] public secondary schools in Imo State. The respondents were all the principals and teachers in these schools. The sample size of the respondents was four hundred [400], [72 principals, 328 teachers]. Stratified random technique was used and each zone in the state served as a stratum. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled Administrative Provisions for Teacher Mentoring Questionnaire [APTMQ]. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions, while Z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The instrument was validated and a reliability index of 0.71 was obtained.

Research Question: What is the attitude of teachers towards mentoring?

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation on the attitude of teachers towardsteacher mentoring.

S/No	Questionnaire	Teachers $N_1 = 328$		Principals $N_2 = 72$		Mean set		Rank order	Decision
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2	X_1	X_2		
1.	Teachers are Enthusiastic About Mentoring	2.51	1.12	2.32	1.13	2.42		4th	Disagreed
2.	Lack of respect is Less exhibited among the less experienced Teachers	2.45	1.34	2.51	1.12	2.48		3rd	Disagreed
3.	There is a class attitude Among the teachers	2.80	1.25	2.56	1.12	2.68		2nd	Agreed
4.	Teachers are committed to Mentoring programme	2.52	1.11	2.44	1.12	2.48		3rd	Disagreed
5.	Some experienced teachers Are judgemental when relating With experiences teaches	2.91	1.12	2.48	1.12	2.70		1st	Agreed
6.	Teachers manifest lack of trust For one another	2.25	1.15	2.38	1.12	2.32		5th	Disagreed

The table above shows that the attitudes such as being enthusiastic about mentoring, respect, commitment that should project and encourage mentoring are not being put up by the teachers but attitudes like lack of trust, class that do not encourage mentoring are being put up by teachers.

Hypotheses:

Ho: The mean response of principals do not significantly differ from that of the teachers with respect to the attitude of teachers towards mentoring.

Table 2: Z-test of differences on the mean responses of principals and teachers on the attitude of teachers towards mentoring

Respondents	N		SD	df	Z-cal.	Z-critical	Level of significant	Decision
Teachers	328	2.59	1.12	398	0.69	1.96	0.05	Ho was
Principals	72	2.49	1.11	0				accepted
Total	400							

From Table 2 above it is clear that there is no significant difference between the mean response of the principals and teachers (2.49 and 2.59 respectively). The Z- calculated of 0.69 is lower than the Z- critical of 1.96 thus the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed the fact that the attitudes of teachers towards mentoring have significant effect on the success of mentoring programme in public secondary schools in Imo state. Attitudes such as disrespect, lack of trust, class were major negative attitudes that militated against the success of teachers mentoring in these schools. It was very apparent from table 1 that teachers are not committed to mentoring programme thus do not give it enough time. Trust that is a cementing force in every relationship had the lowest mean of 2.32 stressing the fact that the teachers do not trust themselves thus do not see the need to depend on one another for improvement. Also the result of the hypothesis clearly revealed that both the teachers and the principals agree that the attitude of the teachers towards mentoring is not encouraging.

It is important to note that despite the importance of mentoring in professional development, it has not been given any serious attention in Nigerian educational policies.

Conclusion

On the strength of the findings, the study therefore concludes that the attitude of teachers towards mentoring is quite discouraging. This has led to epileptic mentoring in these secondary schools and subsequently affected the development of the teachers who are at the centre of the delivery of education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward to encourage the attitude of teachers towards mentoring.

i. There should be more awareness created by the administrators on the need for teachers to put up right attitudes towards mentoring.
ii. The less experienced teachers should learn to respect the more experienced teachers.
iii. The more experienced teachers should learn to tolerate the less experienced teachers by being less judgemental while relating with them.
iv. School administrators should encourage trust amongst the teachers by involving them in group works (both formal & informal).

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