Teachers In-Service Training and Mentoring: The Silver Bullet for Improving Educational System in Nigeria

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Abstract: Workers' chances of landing a good job with a good salary are improved because of education and development activities. Teachers have the greatest impact on students' learning. If they are unmotivated, disinterested, uninteresting, insipid, lazy, unenthusiastic, etc., the whole country's educational system will suffer. Teachers who do not know what they are talking about and who spread false information are not only unnecessary but potentially harmful to students and the educational system as a whole. The faculty works together as a unit, with each member contributing to the whole. When schools successfully implement mentorship programmes, instructors' natural tendency to share what they have learned with one another improves the educational experience for everyone. Training and mentorship programmes for teachers have a favorable impact on student learning and motivation, as well as teacher retention and work satisfaction. This report examined the impact of Nigeria's in-service training and mentorship programme for teachers on student achievement.

Index Terms - **Teachers, In-service Training, Mentoring, Skills, Quality Education.**

INTRODUCTION

Education is enormously vital to both the individual and the nation at large. Implicit here is that education of the individual has a multiplying effect on the generality of the national existence. This is because it is only an educated individual that can adequately contribute to the growth and development of the nation. According to Akpokinovo (2022) Education entails the development of knowledge, character and skills of the learners. Its key purpose is to make a person learn about how best to be at par with the social order by budding intellect, empowering one to cope with the veracity life possess and by easing the recognition of self-worth and hidden endowment of a person. Edification implies training and erudition of unambiguous skills, well brush up intelligence (Syeda, Nighat & Syeda 2012). A winning teacher is perceived as being grounded with the attribute like professional training in a reputable institution, mastery of subject content, sound health, dedication and perseverance to his profession, amongst others. It is imperative to state that, a teacher in the present time, is a person who devote his or her time to knowing and understanding the general attributes of the child, that is, his or her cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of knowledge.

Considering the crucial roles of teachers in the academic and general improvement of the pupils, it is vital that a teacher in the school setting should have virtues like command of subject being taught, ethical and intellectual alertness, affection for the job and ability to execute his responsibilities for the actualization of the educational goals. According to Akpokiniovo (2022), a teacher assumes diverse function in an educational

setting with a view to making sure that the stated objectives are achieved. He undertakes tasks concurrently as the boss depending on the situation being faced with in addition to playing the role as a confidant and as a parent when the need arises. In this light, a teacher metamorphosed from supplier of understanding and knowledge in the classroom to a person concerned and engrossed in the total improvement of learners. Against this backdrop, a teacher should possess some attributes like expertise and aptitude in the course content, moral uprightness, and possession of physical and intellectual fitness, amongst others. Thus, for these attribute to take place in the life of the teacher, there is need for in-service training and mentoring.

Staff improvement via in-service training, mentoring, amongst others; offer the most encouraging means of enhancing classroom teaching. It is a way to assisting the instructors towards enhancing their teaching methods, approaches, handle latest improvised classroom materials and techniques that are needed for valuable lesson delivery. According to Wong and Asquith (2002), staff improvement programmes are structured by institutions, a corporate bodies, Associations and Government agencies and normally lasts for short periods of time. An action in this regard that happens overtime is what in-service training entails. It is a situation whereby employees already engaged in the teaching career undertake additional schooling on courses programme in a bid to bring up to date the scholarly and specialized dexterity that are indispensable in the discharge of duties more capably (Newberry, 2017). Hence, the imperative of enhancement and continuous training for instructors/teachers plays a vital role in actualizing a successful education transformation. Also, it serves as a link between potential and experienced teachers to abreast them in steering learners in the direction of enhanced principles of erudition and self-improvement symposium also increase teachers' creativity and productivity.

Educating teachers has a multiplying effect; as when they are educated, their pattern of living is likely to improve, since they are empowered to access creative ventures, which will ultimately lead to development in their living. The place of education consequently, is not just to pass on understanding and dexterity that enable the recipient to function as social change instrument in the public, but also to pass on principles, attitude and ambition imperative for the development of the country. The connection between education and development programmes for staff is thus the enhancement of skills, which by extension enhances prospects for a well-paid employment. This enables the people of a country to fully develop their abilities positively. Udofia and Ikpe (2012) in their perception on personnel management in the educational setting observed that, teachers in Nigerian are whack by the same public the teacher labours and strives to mould. The majority of government declaration with regards to the interests of instructors (teachers) can best be described as hoax promises. Teachers are the main determinant of quality education. If they are indifferent, uninterested, insipid, lethargic, unenthusiastic, etc, the entire nation's education is doomed. If they display ignorance in their discipline and impart erroneous knowledge, they become not only superfluous, but dangerous to the entire education system. It is on this background that this opinion paper x-rayed teacher in-service training and mentoring on the quality of education in Nigeria.

Concept of Teachers

Teachers are those who work in regular classrooms and educate students (Okeke, 2006). A teacher is someone who has received formal education and training to educate students in a formal educational setting (Akpokiniovo, 2018). According to Nakpodia (2008), a teacher is "a person who has been professionally prepared to execute the curriculum in education" by providing students with experiences and direction aimed to enhance learning. A trained individual who offers, leads, and supervises the activities and resources to facilitate learning in a regular classroom is, thus, a teacher in the context of this research.

In-Service Training

Professionals get training and have the opportunity to discuss their work with their peers as part of an in-service programme. According to Nakpodia (2008), "in-service training" encompasses a wide variety of activities designed to enhance staff members' knowledge and abilities in order to better execute their jobs, as well as boost morale, productivity, and employee retention (staff development policy). So say the researchers Gusky and Huberman (2015). In a nutshell, this is why teacher training is so crucial:

i.   To encourage a setting that promotes individual development, organizational success, individual innovation, and collective revitalization.

ii. To support the main objectives of the educational system, which are the improvement and attainment of high-quality education for all pupils?

iii. To create practical and significant programmes that encourages system staff to collaborate in pursuit of system objectives and individual aspirations for success, fulfillment, and happiness.

According to Eric (2013), in-service training is a method of enhancing educators' knowledge, skills, and outlook. The capacity to generate, assess, store, and disseminate new information via study is highlighted.

Concept of Quality Education

Since quality has so many different interpretations, there is no one, agreed-upon definition that applies to all contexts. Nwizu (2011) has provided one of these descriptions of excellence. She defines quality as the extent to which a product or service satisfies or exceeds customer expectations. According to Ibezim (2004), it is a measure of how well an activity, investment, or initiative has performed in terms of its intended goals. Based on these criteria, it follows that quality is, first, a value judgment about the features of a service or product and their capacity to meet certain demands. Thirdly, quality implies the usefulness and applicability of a product to its consumers, and secondly, it refers to the standard of a product, service, process, or results in terms of how excellent or poor they are. According to Mgbodile (2017), pupils who get a high-quality education gain invaluable life lessons and abilities. Nwizu (2011) echoed this sentiment, arguing that a nation's people' engagement in its growth is directly proportional to the quality of the education they get. After reading this, it should be obvious that schools cannot provide great education by itself. Rather, it needs well-managed human resources and safe, supportive classroom settings.

Concept of Mentoring

Several distinct meanings of "mentor" have been proposed. Numerous studies have highlighted problems with the mentorship system. Mentoring is a multifaceted approach to helping inexperienced teachers succeed in their careers as educators. According to Vesely, Saklofske, and Leschied (2013), mentoring is "the process through which an experienced individual develops a close personal and professional relationship with a less experienced or less talented person." There is a substantial distinction between mentoring and coaching, however they have certain similarities in the context of education. Helping another educator hone their own set of methods and ideas for the classroom is one example of coaching, sometimes known as peer coaching. It is a crucial step in any good mentoring programme. According to research conducted at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (2014), mentorship expands a professional's horizons whereas coaching focuses on honing a narrower set of skills and knowledge in the classroom. Mentoring, as described by Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013), is "the one-on-one assistance of a beginner or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner" (mentor). The term "mentoring" was used by Roff (2012) to describe the relationship between a more seasoned educator and a newer educator in which both benefit from the other's expertise in various areas of the teaching profession.

Purposes of In-service Training/Mentoring of Teachers

The primary goal of in-service training and mentorship for teachers is to help new teachers cope with classroom challenges. It has been noted that the early years of a teacher's profession are always the most challenging. New teachers need access to in-service training and mentorship to help them cope with the difficulties of the job and stay in the teaching profession. In-service training and mentorship programmes may provide new educators the confidence they need to stay in the field, as well as the skills they can use in the classroom and the joy they seek from their jobs, claim Ingersoll and Strong (2012). In-service training and mentorship, according to Jones (2012), are essential for new educators because they allow them to critically evaluate their practice and develop as professionals. One strategy for keeping good educators in the classroom is to provide them with mentors. According to Grossman and Davis (2012), in order to help new teachers, retain them in the field, and boost their instructional effectiveness, schools should tailor their mentorship programmes to each new teacher's specific experiences, goals, and requirements. The shift from student to teacher is sometimes a rocky one, but in-service training and mentorship may help smooth the way (Stock & Duncan, 2010). Teachers' careers benefit greatly from ongoing professional development opportunities like mentoring and mentorship programmes. According to the research of Nakpodia (2008), a mentor's primary role is to foster a sense of community and provide emotional and practical support as they assist a new teacher gain confidence and experience in their role.

Challenges of Teachers In-Service Training/Mentoring Process

There are times when mentoring falls short of its goals because of impediments. To provide only a few illustrations:

❖ The inability to provide enough training and the reluctance of mentor instructors might be problematic. No amount of senior instructors' unwillingness or inability to mentor their junior colleagues can possibly lead to the development of competent educators.

❖ Potential mentees may have a hard time locating suitable mentors to assist them. Unprofessional and immature mentoring may do more damage than good, therefore the mentee has to know that their mentor is being honest and has reached an appropriate level of maturity (Kafle, 2008).

❖ Mentoring might be difficult because of time constraints and a lack of time management skills. One difficulty that many first-year educators have, as noted by Ingersoll and Strong (2012), is a lack of time and pressure that prevents them from spending enough quality time with their mentor.

❖ An additional difficulty in mentoring is peer disagreement. The lack of mutual support and competing views between the senior mentor instructors and the younger mentees, as well as the unfavorable attitudes of beginning teachers toward their colleagues, all pose challenges to a productive mentoring relationship. Some current problems in the mentoring process, including things like the apathetic attitude of senior instructors, a lack of training and professionalism, a lack of time, disagreement among colleagues, etc., all have a negative impact on the effective implementation of mentoring programmes.

Teachers In-service Training the Road map to Quality Education

After a candidate has been carefully vetted and placed, the next stage is to mould him to fit the organization's long-term needs. This kind of metamorphosis is accomplished via on-the-job learning and improvement. Each business must have a reliable, competent, and skilled workforce if it is to achieve its aims and objectives. The implication is that people are an essential component of every institution, serving as the foundation and support system upon which the success or failure of an organization rests. According to Resis (2013), the people who form businesses are responsible for and drive all of their operations. According to his analysis, the plants, automated equipment, and other technology used by a modern corporation are all ineffective without the input of human effort and guidance. Therefore, he reasoned, the competency and efficiency of a company's people are crucial to the success of the company as a whole.

According to Onuka's (2016) research, a nation's wealth is found in its educated and skilled workforce. Employee performance in terms of achieving organizational goals and successes is thus a function of the amount of relevant skills and knowledge, and positive work attitude they have been able to acquire through constant personnel improvement programmes, such as committee/on-the-job training, in-service training programmes, or out-of-work training courses.

Training and development have been brought to everyone's notice by Ajibade (2013) and Akintayo (2015); both of whom have emphasized their immense worth. They say it is a way to expand one's horizons, learn something new, and grow one's ability to adapt to the ever-changing environment in which one lives and works. To this end, it seems that training is crucial not only for the development of people but also for the enhancement of the productive competence of the workforce and, by extension, the organization as a whole. Training is not about convincing educators to perform their jobs; rather, it is the process of developing institutional mechanisms that will motivate staff to improve productivity and instruction quality. Kayode (2011) claims that training is the answer to many issues with staff that prevents them from performing at their best. Among the many difficulties and issues is the need to:

i. Boost effectiveness and productivity;

ii.   Strengthen both the standard and output of your Labour;

iii.   Motivate and inspire your staff to greater success;

iv.   Plan for future leadership and enable smooth transitions in office.

The goal of teacher development, as stated by Balogun (2016), is to increase knowledge and competence in order to affect a shift in mindset (Mullins, 2009). Also, as pointed out by Mullins, bettering the performance of employees may lead to the following gains:

Staff morale, productivity, and commitment may all be boosted by creating a culture where employees feel valued and respected, have many opportunities for professional development, and get positive reinforcement for their efforts.

Staff members benefit greatly from in-service training, which also boosts the quality of education provided to them. Premeditated human resource management must include an evaluation of teacher training and development, two interrelated words whose importance cannot be overstated.

Teachers mentoring the headway to Quality Education

Staff development at higher education institutions relies heavily on mentoring relationships. In order to properly orient themselves in the workplace, newer and younger workers are encouraged to form collaborative relationships with older and more experienced personnel (mentors). Improving the caliber of the organization's human resources allows for more efficient use of both internal and external resources. Mentoring is a strong instrument for personal growth and empowerment, and the company is dedicated to creating a working environment where professional advancement is recognized as a continual process, so that all employees may grow their skills and abilities to better serve the company's interests.

As more and more people become aware of its advantages, it is growing in popularity as a means of advancing one's career. Mentoring is a kind of guidance and counsel between two persons (mentor and mentee) who are usually in the same area of employment or have had comparable life experiences. It is a beneficial connection built on sharing secrets and being honest with each other. One of the best ways to make a difference in an organization is via their mentoring programme. Supple and untainted (2015). As a kind of social learning, mentoring emphasizes the power of praise to motivate action (Bandura, 2017).

Mentoring is a social learning strategy that incorporates both cognitive and stimuli-based reinforcement into the teaching-and-learning process. The term "mentoring" is often used to describe the practice of guiding an apprentice or a peer in the same profession. When it comes to training and developing employees, mentoring may take several forms. It has been noted that developmental relationships, such as that between a mentor and a protégé, may be potent stimulants for change and teach (Smith, 2005). Those involved in the programme, both veteran educators and their mentees, report feeling empowered in the classroom and energized about their careers as a whole.

The term "mentoring" may mean many things depending on whom you ask. Schooley (2010) defines mentoring as "an official or informal relationship between an experienced professional who has knowledge and a strong desire to assist others progress in their careers and the person being mentored." Mentoring, as described by Moorhead and Griffins (2004), takes place when more seasoned professionals guide those with less experience in their careers toward greater success via the exchange of knowledge, skills, and wisdom.

Similarly, a mentoring relationship includes two people, one with greater seniority in the organization and the other with less (Ismail and Arokiasamy, 2007). A mentor is someone who helps guide, advise, and teach another person (s). According to Olasupo (2011), a mentor in the academic world is often an experienced professor who provides counsel to a younger colleague on how to improve their professional standing via scholarly means. "Lowering stress for newbie instructors, orienting to content, and supporting the establishment of stronger norms of collegiality and teamwork" are all things that mentoring has been shown to help with (David, 2008). It aids in problem-solving, making progress toward professional objectives and advancement more likely. The social learning theory that "behaviour is learnt by interaction with others," particularly when those people serve as models, provides a foundation for mentoring's positive effects (David, 2008).

A positive mindset may be passed on via mentoring since mentors can instruct mentees on the organization's goals and guiding principles, assist them in dealing with the stresses of their careers, and guide them in making ethical decisions on the job (David, 2008). While mentoring is inherently a social connection, the motivation behind it may vary depending on whether or not the mentoring is formally structured as part of an institution's mentoring programme or is more of a casual friendship. The goals of informal mentoring programmes are often communicated to mentees and mentors via a set of guidelines or through training opportunities provided by the organization. Mentoring is an organizational strategy that helps employees with their "psychosocial" needs in the workplace such as communication, conflict resolution, and team cohesion (Harvard Business Essentials, 2004). Mentoring as an organizational approach might be seen as appealing and desired by candidates for employment. As a bonus, it helps improve organizational retention and knowledge transfer among staff.

Conclusion/Policy Recommendations

It is clear from the literature that the goal of in-service training and mentoring for teachers is to encourage and nurture the next generation of school administrators. There are further gains associated with in-service training and mentorship programmes for educators. New teachers benefit greatly from in-house training and mentorship programmes at their schools, particularly in the areas of teacher retention, classroom teaching, and student outcomes. Although the mentoring process is not without its problems, it might significantly improve schools if given a chance. In-service training and mentorship programmes for educators provide mutually beneficial opportunities for professional development. When veteran educators provide systematic support and guidance to their novice colleagues, they get opportunities to grow professionally. The quality performances of instructors may be ensured by in-service training and mentorship, which can be a potent weapon for bringing about change. Mentoring from educators has a significant impact on students' ability to reach long-term growth goals. When employed in educational settings, it has the potential to help students grow into productive members of society. Therefore, it is imperative that each state's education department and the federal department of education work together to provide at least three days of in-service training every academic year for educators. And administrators in both public and private schools should require veteran educators to act as mentors to their younger colleagues if they want to make a difference in the classroom.

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