

## **THE ROLES OF MENTORSHIP IN DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CLASSROOM IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE**

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**Abstract** - The study examined the roles of mentorship in developing effective teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom in Nsukka Education Zone. The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 4376 teachers in Nsukka Education zone. The sample of the study was 400 teachers. Instrument for data collection was Roles of Mentorship in Developing Effective Teacher Questionnaire (RMDETQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher. The instrument was made up of two sections; namely section A and section B. Section A was made up bio- data which elicited information on the personal details of the respondents. Section B was made up of two clusters. Cluster A contained 10 items which elicited information on the extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom while cluster B contained 9 items on extent mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. The instrument was structured in 4 point rating scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha method to determine its internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained which was considered appropriate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The decision rule was 2.5, any item with mean score of 2.5 or above was accepted while any one with mean that is less than 2.5 was rejected. The study found to a high extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom through updated on best practices and research based teaching strategies, support to manage challenging classroom Situations, communicating with the students well, professional development, awareness to weakness, identification of areas of improvement, improvement of teaching, development of innovative lesson, management of teaching related stress and boosting of confidence. The recommended that schools should invest in mentorship programs that provide teachers with the support and guidance needed to improve their instructional practices.

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**Keywords:** Roles, Mentorship, effective teacher, 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom

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### **Introduction**

The education in 21st century is undergoing extraordinary changes driven by technological developments, new learning paradigms and diverse class environment. To navigate this rapidly changing educational landscape, teachers need to have necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes. More specifically, they are expected to gain 21st century skills which enable them to be flexible, innovative, and adaptive to changes. This innovative knowledge will make the teachers an effective one. Effective teachers are no longer just expected to be subject matter experts, but also the ones who can adapt to changing learning environments, use technology to engage, motivate and promote meaningful experiences for students with various needs (Sabiha, 2023). The need for effective teacher in 21st century goes beyond the classroom as they play a pivotal role not only in shaping schools, but also fostering academic, social and emotional development of

students. This is because effective teachers are at the core of student success (Özerbaş & Zhanbolotova, 2023).

An effective teacher makes the learning process motivating and interesting. Effective teachers are expected to motivate, inspire, engage and guide the students (Islahi & Nasreen, 2013). An effective teacher is one who demonstrates a strong commitment to teaching and learning, has a deep understanding of the subject matter, and is able to create an environment that is conducive to learning (Danielson, 2013). Darling- Hammond (2010) observed that an effective teacher is one who is able to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment, has a deep understanding of the subject matter, and is able to use a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. In Nsuuka Education Zone, the challenge of developing effective teachers is particularly pressing. With a large number of new teachers entering the profession, there is need for targeted support to ensure that they are equipped to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is a learning environment that prepares students for success in today's rapidly changing, interconnected world. In the view of Sahlberg (2019), the importance of fostering a sense of community and social responsibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom demands a focus on equity, inclusivity, and student well-being. Hargreaves (2019) argues that the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom should prioritize creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. The author emphasizes the need for teachers to be creative and innovative in their practice. According to World Economic Forum (WEF, 2018), the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is a flexible, personalized, and technology rich learning environment that prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world. It therefore means that 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is significant because it requires teachers to adapt their instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners. As a result, the teachers need to be mentored effectively to be ablaze with the trend of educational delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mentorship is crucial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, where teachers must adapt to new technologies, pedagogies, and diverse learner needs. Mentorship has long been recognized as a key strategy in teacher development. By pairing experienced teachers with new educators, mentorship program provides a platform for knowledge sharing, skill development, and emotional support. Ugwuanyi (2011) observe that no institution can exist without older and more experienced members passing on wisdom acquired over years to new members. Mentorship is a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievements, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés (Holienka, 2016). Daka (2019) define mentorship as a one to-one relationship between an experienced person (a mentor) and a less experienced person (a protégé or mentee) that provides a variety of developmental and personal growth functions. Mentorship plays a vital role in the development and growth of individuals, especially in academic and professional settings. Scholars emphasize its importance in various aspects of life. Mentorship helps build confidence, creates employability, and fosters personal growth. It provides a platform for individuals to reflect on their values, goals and aspirations (Meier, 1993). According to Mertz (2004), mentorship helps students and teachers develop research skills, academic writing and critical thinking. Mentors provide valuable feedback, guidance, and support, enabling students and teachers to achieve their academic goals. Mentorship is essential for professional growth. It helps individuals develop leadership skills, networking, and career advancement (Jacobi, 1991). Studies have shown that mentoring can help teachers develop

necessary skills to teach content effectively, manage classroom efficiently and growth professionally ( Gelatu, 2023).

The theoretical foundation for this study was Kram's (1985) mentor role theory. According to Kram (1985), the mentoring relationship is structured under two functions. The first is career function and second is psychosocial function. In particular, a mentor has been expected to provide guidance and support regarding a protégé's career as well as act as a role model providing counseling and friendship. The psychosocial aspects of mentoring are associated with "activities that influence the protégé's self-image and competence. According to Kram (1985) the career function activities generally emerge first followed by the psychosocial aspects. The theory focuses on the career and psychosocial development of protégés (mentees) through mentoring relationships. Kram's theory emphasizes the importance of career functions in mentoring relationships. In relation to this study, career functions such as exposure, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments are crucial in helping novice teacher develop their teaching skills and confidence. Scholars have explored mentorship study in various form. Lai and Christine (2018) studied the impact of mentorship on teacher self- efficacy among novice teachers. The results showed that mentorship had positive impact on teacher self- efficacy. Rachel and Jiaxiu ( 2020) did a systematic review examining the relationship between mentorship and teacher retention. The results showed that mentorship was positively related to teacher retention. Another scholar, Chang and Ching- Hsiang (2019) examined the impact of mentorship on teacher pedagogical skills among novice teachers. The study showed that mentorship had positive impact on teacher pedagogical skills. Oladele and Akindele (2020) emphasize the role of mentorship programmes in promoting a culture of continuous learning and professional growth among university lecturers. Mentors provide mentorship tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of mentees, helping them identify and capitalize on opportunities for career development and advancement. Through mentorship, teachers gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to excel in their roles and contribute meaningfully to their academic communities. These studies are related but none actually studied the roles of mentorship in developing effective teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom in Nsukka education zone. The above gap created therefore justifies the need to embark on this present study.

### **Statement of the problem**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom demand effective teachers who can navigate the complexities of modern education, leveraging technology, diverse pedagogies, and a deep understanding of their students' needs. Ideally, mentorship programs in Nsukka Education would be robust, well structured, and tailored to the specific needs of teachers. These programs would provide new and experienced teachers alike with opportunities to learn from seasoned educators, share best practices, and receive constructive feedback on their teaching method. Mentors would be trained to offer support, helping mentees to develop their skills, manage classroom effectively, and integrate technology into their teaching practice. However, the current reality in Nsukka Education Zone paints a different picture. Many schools lack formal mentorship program, leaving teachers to navigate the challenges of the profession with minimal support. Even where mentorship programs exist, they may not be adequately structured or supported, resulting in a lack of consistency in the quality of mentorship provided. Many teachers lack the necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively teach diverse learners. This sometimes results to poor student achievement, low teacher morale, and a lack of confidence in the education system.

Indeed, many novice teachers in Nsukka Education Zone lack access to quality mentorship programs, leading to a lack of support and guidance in their teaching practices. Many teachers have limited access to quality professional development opportunities, leading to a lack of knowledge and skills in teaching and learning. In addition, many teachers in the Zone often lack the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices, leading to a lack of engagement and motivation among students. The above problems necessitated this study to investigate the roles of mentorship in developing effective teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms in Nsukka Education Zone.

### **Purpose of the study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the roles of mentorship in developing effective teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms in Nsukka Education Zone. Specifically, The study aimed to:

1. To investigate extent mentorship enhances teachers' development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.
2. To explore the extent mentorship enhances teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does mentorship enhance teachers' development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom?
2. To what extent does mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom?

### **Methodology**

The study examined the roles of mentorship in developing effective teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom in Nsukka Education Zone. The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 4376 teachers in Nsukka Education zone. The sample of the study was 400 teachers. Instrument for data collection was Roles of Mentorship in Developing Effective Teacher Questionnaire (RMDETQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher. The instrument was made up of two sections; namely section A and section B. Section A was made up bio- data which elicited information on the personal details of the respondents. Section B was made up of two clusters. Cluster A contained 10 items which elicited information on the extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom while cluster B contained 9 items on extent mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. The instrument was structured in 4 point rating scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha method to determine its internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained which was considered appropriate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The decision rule was 2.5, any item with mean score of 2.5 or above was accepted while any one with mean that is less than 2.5 was rejected.

## Results

**Research Question One:** To what extent does mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom?

**Table 1: Mean responses of teachers on the extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.**

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	I stay updated on best practices and research based teaching strategies.	3.27	.87	HE
2.	I receive support to help me manage challenging classroom Situations.	3.39	.67	HE
3.	I have been trained to communicate with the students effectively.	3.45	.73	HE
4.	Through mentorship, I set goals for my professional development	3.39	.74	HE
5.	I have developed a greater awareness on my weakness as a teacher	3.34	.75	HE
6.	I have been encouraged to identify areas of improvement in the class	3.27	.79	HE
7.	My teaching has improved through mentorship	3.33	.75	HE
8.	I can develop innovative lesson plan as a result of mentorship.	3.40	.63	HE
9.	I can manage stress related to teaching through mentorship	3.10	.45	HE
10.	I feel more confidence in my ability to integrate technology	3.30	.55	HE
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>HE</b>

Key (HE= High Extent, VHE= Very High Extent, LE= Low Extent and VLE= Very Low Extent).

The results in table 1 showed that all the items from 1- 10 had scores above the criterion mean of 2.5, with grand mean and standard deviation of 3.32 and 0.42 respectively. This implies that to a high extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom through updated on best practices and research based teaching strategies, support to manage challenging classroom Situations, communicating with the students well, professional development, awareness to weakness, identification of areas of improvement, improvement of teaching, development of innovative lesson, management of teaching related stress and boosting of confidence.

Research question two: To what extent does mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom?

**Table 2: Mean responses of teachers on extent mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.**

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Mentorship has helped me develop more Effective lesson plans.	3.38	0.64	HE
2.	I have improved the ability to differentiate instruction			



for diverse learners since working with a mentor	3.20	0.51	HE
3. My mentor has helped me develop more Effective classroom management	2.97	0.56	HE
4. I feel more confidence in my ability to teach Complex concepts since working with a mentor	3.33	0.49	HE
5. My mentor has helped me develop a growth mindset and view challenges as opportunity for growth.	3.07	0.56	HE
6. I am more likely to take risks and try new teaching Strategies since working with my mentor	3.41	0.61	HE
7. I have seen an improvement in my students' academic Achievement since working with a mentor	3.09	0.53	HE
8. My mentor has helped me to develop strategies to support students with diverse learning needs	3.22	0.64	HE
9. I have seen an improvement in my students' engagement and motivation since working with a mentor	3.12	0.69	HE
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>HE</b>

The results in table 2 showed that all the item statements from 1 - 9 had mean scores above 2.5 criterion mean of acceptance with grand mean of 3.19 and 0.58 stand deviation. This indicates that to a high extent mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. The respondents agreed that mentorship helps in developing effective lesson plan, improve ability to differentiate instruction, develop effective classroom management, boost confidence in the ability to teach, develop a growth mindset among others.

### Discussion

The result from the finding showed that to a high extent mentorship enhance teacher development for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. This could be enhanced through staying updated on best practices and research based teaching strategies, receiving support to help me manage challenging classroom Situations, training to communicate with the students effectively, setting goals for my professional development, developing a greater awareness on teachers' weakness, and encouraging identifying areas of improvement in the class. The finding is consistent with the existing literatures. Studies have shown that mentorship can provide feedback and support to the teacher ( Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). This is also in line with the work of Joyce and Shower (2002), who found that mentoring, can lead to improved teaching practice. The study is consistent with the study of Young and Lamme (2007) who believed that mentorship enhance teacher self- efficacy and confidence.

The result also showed that to a high extent mentorship improve teachers' effectiveness for 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. The finding support the work of Danielson (2013) who stated that an effective teacher is one who demonstrates a strong commitment to teaching and learning, has a deep understanding of the subject matter, and is able to create an environment that is conducive to learning. the finding is also in line with study of Hedner, Abouzeedan, and Klofsten (2011) who suggest that mentoring can help develop entrepreneurial resilience, enabling the overcoming of challenges and adversities.

### Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it can be concluded that mentorship has a positive impact on teacher development, particularly in terms of improving instructional practices, increasing teacher confidence and self- efficacy, and supporting diverse learners. The

finding suggests that mentorship has a significant and positive impact on teachers' effectiveness.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommended the followings:

1. Schools should invest in mentorship programs that provide teachers with the support and guidance needed to improve their instructional practices
2. Mentorship should be an ongoing process with teachers receiving regular feedback, coaching and support throughout their career.
3. Schools should foster collaborative learning communities that encourage teachers to share their expertise, reflect on their practice, and learn from one another.

### **Contribution to knowledge**

The study contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the following ways: The study builds upon existing research on mentorship and teacher effectiveness, providing further evidence of the positive impact of mentorship on teacher instructional practices. The study provides contextual insights into the experiences of teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers in this context. The study contributes to the development of effective mentorship models, highlighting the importance of ongoing support, feedback and coaching in promoting teacher effectiveness.

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