ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' MENTORING PROGRAMME ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND PUPILS LEARNING OUTCOMES IN KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The low learning outcomes and poor classroom practices at primary school grades in the Ugu district municipality of South Africa is acknowledged as a challenge. This is may be attributed to low mentoring activities and pedagogical content knowledge among primary school teachers from the stated district. Therefore, this research investigated the impacts of teachers' mentoring activities on classroom practices and pupils' learning outcomes in 25 selected primary schools in Ugu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The study employed a quasi-experimental non-randomized research design involving pre-test and post-test with a control group to study the research problems in the study location. The research sampled 200 teachers (20 males and 180 females) from twenty-five selected primary schools from the identified district. The sampled teachers were divided into three groups; control group, moderate intensity teachers' mentoring group (MIPAG) and high intensity teachers' mentoring group (HIPAG) through balloting. While all the groups were exposed to 80 minutes/week of teachers' mentoring concepts for a period of four weeks, the MIPAG was further exposed to 60 minutes/week of teachers' mentoring activities to determine the baseline teachers' mentoring activities impacts on classroom practices and pupils' academic performance and those with too high or low scores were not included in the study. The reliabilities of the instrument were ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and gave alpha values of 0.79, 0.90 and 0.98 for mentorship, classrooms practices of teachers and pupils' learning outcomes. The post-test was done twice weekly after every teachers' mentoring programme. The datasets collected from the field survey were analyzed using descriptive (Mean and Standard Deviation) and inferential statistics (ANCOVA). The results of the findings reveal that MIPAG recorded the highest mean 15.98±1.58, followed by HIPAG (13.41) compared to the control group (8.21). The study found significant differences among the means of the three groups $F(2,11) = 10.397$, $p = 0.001$. The research also found significant positive relationship $r(58) = .514$, $p < .003$ among teachers' mentoring activities, classroom practices and pupils learning outcomes in the study location. The study concluded that teachers' mentoring activities has significant impacts on classroom practices of teachers and pupils' learning outcomes in the sampled primary schools in Ugu district municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Therefore, based on the results from this survey, the research recommends that education policy makers in the education sector in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa should intensify efforts in planning for effective, efficient and sustainable teacher mentorship programmes as a strategy for teacher professional development for improvement of teachers' quality and classroom practices in order to facilitates pupils' academic performance.

Keywords: Teachers' Mentoring, Classroom Practices, Pupils' Learning Outcomes, Adult Education, Inclusive Education, Educational Psychology

1. INTRODUCTION

The low learning outcomes and poor classroom practices at primary school grades in the Ugu District Municipality of South Africa is acknowledged as a challenge. This is may be attributed to low mentoring activities and pedagogical content knowledge among primary school teachers in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (Renbarger & Davis, 2019). In attempts to address this challenge, an intervention was implemented in Ugu district municipality that aimed at improving teacher classroom practices, and pupils' learning outcomes. A key component of this intervention is teachers' mentoring to improve their classroom practices. Mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual helps another person develop his or her goals and skills through a series of time-limited, confidential, one-on-one conversations and other learning activities (*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019).* Mentoring is an interactive process that helps individuals acquire teaching skills based on lesson designs, methods of delivery; stimulating interests in the subject and motivating students to learn more effectively and efficiently thus improve classrooms learning practices and students learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2021). This process of assisting teachers when well executed often leads to students' achievement in Government-aided primary schools. The practice of apprenticeship and transferring generational knowledge, so prevalent in craft societies of past centuries, draws heavily on the concept of mentoring (Kennedy & Modupe, 2022).

As a professional development tool, mentoring has direct relevance to teacher classrooms practices and students learning outcomes (Maready et al., 2021). As a tool for addressing social exclusion, it means that teachers need to liaise with mentors to gain inclusion in the body of professionals. Mentoring is essential as it brings about changes in pedagogical practices. Through mentoring teachers are guided, supported and taught to transform their classroom practices. This transformation improves mentees preparations, teaching quality and learning environment leading to teacher effectiveness. Mentoring transforms mentees' classroom practices compared to those who are not mentored (UNICEF, 2021). This is supported by Ogbuanya (2022) who explain that mentors rated that the mentoring experiences they had are more helpful as compared with those mentees who were not provided mentoring support.

Mentoring process guides mentees to develop their talents, skills, knowledge and to change attitudes towards teaching. It is a liberating approach to teaching couched in an act of cognition not in the transfer of information. According to UNESCO (2023), the most valued mentoring skill is giving encouragement. This includes giving your mentoring partners recognition and sincere positive verbal feedback. As mentees are guided, supported and taught, they transform the way they teach (John & Matthew, 2019). The observations, interactions and practices they make improve teacher effectiveness. Mentees who are not mentored will continue to teach the same way they were taught in the universities, meaning they will not be transformed into effective teachers as their classroom practices will not be improved (UNICEF, 2022).

Mentees who have not undergone transformation largely use transmission methods of teaching, which lack the 21st Century teaching approach (Handrianto, Jusoh, Syuraini, Rouzi & Alghazo 2022). Many teachers who have not taken part in mentoring programmes place too much emphasis on academic learning and passing examinations at the expense of appropriate

knowledge and skills needed for solving real life problems (Handrianto et al., 2022). A strong strand in the mentors' perception of their role was that of looking at themselves as learners who would also grow as a consequence of the mentoring interactions (Kennedy & Modupe, 2022). However, the aim of this study is to establish the link among teachers' mentoring programme, teachers' classroom practices and pupils' learning outcomes in some selected primary schools in Ugu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Most beginner teachers join the teaching profession with passion and enthusiasm, but in most instances this optimism is abruptly curtailed because of the unrealistic expectations of the profession, often without adequate support. Hence, the introduction of a formal and well-structured mentorship programme could be a possible strategy in supporting existing and beginner teachers during the beginning of their careers. Therefore, it is against this backdrop, this study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

I. What is the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on classroom practices among primary school teachers in Ugu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province-South Africa?
II. What is the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on primary school pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa?

An understanding of these issues can help policy makers in formulating educational policies that will revolutionized the classrooms practices of teachers in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impacts of teachers' mentoring programme on teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The research is structured as follows: The literature review and research methodology are presented in the subsequent section. The empirical findings and discussion of the findings are presented in part four, while the implications for educational psychology, conclusion and recommendations are presented in sections five and six.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of practical teacher training, a mentor is typically an experienced teacher assigned to a less experienced teacher (the mentee) entrusted with the task to "support the mentee's learning, development and well-being" (Abetang, Oguma & Abetang, 2020), as well as "to observe and provide the new teacher with instructional support and feedback" (Ally & Libent-Mabagala, 2022). Instructional support aims at enhancing a broad set of skills prospective teachers rely on to successfully manage lesson planning, classroom interactions, diagnostic assessment, and other job-related tasks (Botha & Rens, 2018). Distinguished from psychological support (i.e. confidence building and buffering mentees' self-esteem against ego threats, negative experiences, and isolation; Gold, 1996) and role modeling (i.e. the shaping and development of a professional identity; Richter et al., 2013), instructional support represents one of three central goals of teacher mentoring. To foster professional competence and buffer against emotional strain, the quality of instructional support and feedback is crucial (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2019), and may even be of higher importance than its frequency (Ewing, 2021). Several theories on teachers' mentoring have been advanced in educational psychology which include Constructivism, Socio-Cognitive Theory, Socio-Cultural Theory and Transformative theory. However, this research is guided by transformative theory developed by Dalzo (1986) because

Transformative theory can help us understand in more detail the learning processes, teachers' mentoring and changes in meaning perspectives that must take place (Bruice & Henshaw, 2018). The transformative theory is considered appropriate for this study because it is a theory of existence that views people as subjects not objects. People are constantly reflecting and acting on the transformation of their world so that it can become a more equitable place for all to live (Daloz, 1986). The goal of transformational theory is social transformation by explaining reality, where the oppressed develop critical consciousness. Mentoring helps mentors (Senior teachers), guide and encourage mentees (Junior teachers) to become more effective in the teaching process. Transformational theory is the centrality of critical reflection with the purpose of rediscovering power and helping mentees to develop an awareness of the urgency to transform society and their own reality. Daloz's (1986) model locates mentees growth as a teacher within a context of support and challenge and identifies that development can help the mentor guide, challenge, support and illuminate the way ahead.

The model is based upon the view that where support is low, there is little opportunity for any challenge to occur and the mentee may withdraw from the mentoring relationship. Conversely, if support is high, new knowledge and images of teaching become possible for mentees. In this case, Daloz's (1986) concept of mentoring is not only concerned with developing cognitive competence but more importantly in fostering the personal growth of a mentee to be effective in a teaching practices and learning environment. Personal development is facilitated by the relationship between mentors and mentees. Through a mentoring relationship consisting primarily of one-to-one interactions, mentee and mentor construct meaning and make sense of their respective world (Prickel & Awe, 2018). Mentoring as a professional tool thus improves teachers' effectiveness on classroom practices in that inexperienced teachers (mentees) are paired up with experienced teachers (mentors). Therefore, mentoring has been accepted as an effective method of preparing the mentees to enter the teaching profession (Mqadi, 2023).

Empirically, several authors have analyzed the effect of teachers' mentoring on classroom teaching practices globally using diverse methodologies but thus far, the exact nature of the relationship is not settled and the degree of the association between these two variables have been the subject of an ongoing discourse in the literature of educational psychology. For example, Mqadi (2023) examined the effect of mentoring on the teachers teaching learners with learning difficulties in South Korea using descriptive statistics and mixed research methods. The study found significant relationship between teachers' mentoring and the teaching skills of teachers teaching the difficult to learn pupils while Maready (2021) employed a longitudinal study to analyzed the exploration of mentoring practices in contributing to new teacher retention, the study found significant relationship between predictive and non-predictive mentoring practices for new teacher retention. Also, Hobson 2018 equally used thematic design to present a new framework for mentoring beginner teachers that has the potential to forestall and combat Judgementoring, the study establish link among the nature, reach, causes and consequences of Judgementoring as a national and international phenomenon. In addition, Kennedy and Modupe (2022) employed a descriptive survey research design to examined mentoring and job satisfaction, as predictors of teachers' retention in public secondary school in Benin City, Nigeria. The findings that emerged from the study showed that the retention rate of teachers was high, and the level of mentorship and job satisfaction of teachers was also high. The research also revealed that mentorship and job satisfaction predict teachers' retention significantly, and

the experience of teachers increases the likelihood of teachers' retention in secondary schools. In another development, Sydnor, Daley, Davis, Ascolani, (2023) adopted a longitudinal qualitative research method and Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to explored novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in elementary schools in the United States whose critical first years occurred amid a global pandemic. The research found association between deprioritizing mentoring, and inconsistencies in mentoring among the study participants. Ally and Libent-Mabagala (2022) also used quantitative and qualitative research methods, a case study design and descriptive statistics to examined the Effectiveness of mentoring process in developing teaching competencies of secondary school novice teachers in Mbeya Region of Tanzania. The study findings revealed that mentoring programs resulted into confidence and command among novice teachers where mentors cultivate specific ideas among mentees in facilitating teaching and learning. The research also reported that mentoring programs contributed to the professional development of novice teachers with personal support to cope with their new work environment. It was concluded that mentorship effectively develops novice teachers' competencies.

Meanwhile, Botha and Hugo (2021) equally explored the impact of an effective mentoring program at primary schools in the province of Mpumalanga, South Africa to support and improve job satisfaction among beginner teachers entering the profession. The study employed a quantitative research approach, consisting of a Likert-scale questionnaire. The research found that the development and implementation of a mentoring program in the province of Mpumalanga had positively impacts on beginner teachers' job satisfaction, thus indicating a definite need for such a mentoring program in the study location. Also, Zoutendijk and Mpisi (2022) adopted qualitative research method to examined mentorship programmes in public primary schools Ugu district of KwaZuluNatal, South Africa. The study revealed that beginner teachers experienced challenges with administration, classroom management and adjusting to the school environment. The research concluded that existing informal mentorship programmes failed to adequately address these challenges and meet beginner teachers' professional needs.

To this end, there have been a large numbers of evidence from South Africa and globally that have examined the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on teachers' classroom practices and pupils learning outcomes but to the best of knowledge only a few empirical studies (Ogbuanya, 2022 & Botha & Hugo, 2021) have used quasi-experimental non-randomized research design to examine the impact of teachers' mentoring on classroom practices and pupils' learning outcomes. However, the studies of Ogbuanya (2022), Botha and Hugo 2021 did not follow the sequential procedures of quasi-experimental non-randomized research design as it is being examined in this present study. Therefore, this study fills this knowledge gap by disaggregating the sampled teachers into three groups; control group, moderate intensity teachers' mentoring group (MIPAG) and high intensity teachers' mentoring group (HIPAG) through balloting. While all the groups were exposed to 80 minutes/week of teachers' mentoring concepts for a period of four weeks, the MIPAG was further exposed to 60 minutes/week of teachers' mentoring activities to determine the baseline teachers' mentoring activities impacts on classroom practices and pupils' academic performance, these procedures were actually lacking in the studies conducted by Ogbuanya (2022), Botha and Hugo 2021. However, the thesis in this research is to analyzed the impact of teachers' mentoring activities on teachers' classroom practices among primary school teachers in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa and to examine the impact of teachers' mentoring activities on primary

school pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa which the large chunks of the empirical works reviewed in this study have not analyzed. Although, Zoutendijk and Mpisi (2022) conducted a study in Ugu district on teachers mentoring but their analysis did not use a scientific approach in testing the study hypotheses as it is being carried out in this study. The findings are critical and could provide a basis for policy formulation and implementation in improving teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' academic performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quasi-experimental non-randomized research design involving pretest and post-test with a control group to study the research problems in the study location. The population of the study include all public primary school teachers in Ugu district of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Twenty-five schools in Ugu district with approximately 8 teachers each were sampled to form the sample size of this study. In all, a total of 200 teachers (20 males, 180 females) participated in the study. The schools' permission was sought and permission granted for the study to be conducted, the participants also signed consent forms. Teachers in the sampled schools were trained in the specific tasks to be carried out. Mentoring Activities Achievement Test (MAAT) was used to evaluate the classroom practices of the study participants. The reliability of the survey instrument was determined using split-half procedure and the reliability coefficient was 0.90. The Mentoring Activities Achievement Test (MAAT) consists of 30 multiple answers questions and each correctly answered question attract one mark, the maximum obtainable mark for each participant is 30 marks.

A structured self-developed questionnaire was used to measure the relationship between teachers' mentoring activities and pupils' learning outcomes. The reliabilities of the instrument were ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and gave alpha values of 0.79, 0.90 and 0.98 for mentorship, classrooms practices of teachers and pupils' learning outcomes. The sampled teachers were divided into high intensity mentoring activities, moderate intensity mentoring activities and control group through balloting and each group consist of 8 participants. Pre-test was done to determine the baseline performance of the teachers by subjecting all the groups to Mentoring Activities Achievement Test (MAAT). Teachers that scored too high or too low were not included in the study. Thereafter, the groups were exposed to 40 minutes' classroom teaching on the concept of teachers' mentoring twice in a week and the whole study lasted four weeks. While this lasted, only the experimental groups which is the moderate intensity and high intensity groups had mentoring activities session, the group control was exempted from the mentoring activities session. For the moderate intensity mentoring activities group, the mentoring activities session includes 5 minutes goal setting for classroom practices followed by 30 minutes of pupils' learning outcomes classrooms activities sessions.

The high intensity physical activity group follows same pattern but the number of repetitions of the mentoring activities increased. The difference between the moderate intensity group (60minutes/week) and the high intensity group (120 minutes/week) is the duration of the mentoring activities performed. The post-test was administered on both the experimental and the control group twice in a week after each classroom teaching. Data were analyzed using

descriptive of frequency count, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (*Obs*=200)

Socio-demographics	Variables	N	%
Age-Group	20-35	93	47
	36-50	79	40
	51-65	28	14
Gender	Male	20	10
	Female	180	90
Year of Teaching Experience	≤10	99	50
	>20	101	51
Marital Status	Single	33	17
	Married	163	82
	Divorced	3	2
	Widowed	1	1
Education Qualifications	Bachelor of Education	80	40
	Diploma in Teaching	60	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	50	25
	Others	10	5
Types of Schools	Public	168	84
	Independent	3	2
Phase being taught	Foundation Phase	75	38
	Intermediate Phase	126	63
Working with Primary Schools where mentoring activities are organized for teachers	Yes	50	25
	No	151	76

Source: Author's Computation (2023)

Table 1 shows that out of 200 sampled respondents, a majority (47%) were between 20 - 35 years of age while 82% of them were married. The analysis revealed that majority (40%) of the teachers had qualification of Bachelor degree in Education, and 84% of them were teaching in public schools. Also, the majority (63%) were intermediate phase teachers. The analysis also revealed that 76% of the study participants were working in primary schools which had no

organized mentoring programs to enhance teachers' classrooms practices and positive pupils' learning outcomes among the sampled primary schools in Ugu district.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on classroom practices among primary school teachers in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa?

Table 4.2.1: Analysis of Covariance which correlate teachers' mentoring programme with teachers' classrooms practices

(Obs=200)

Group	Mean	SD	Std Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bond	Upper Bond
Control	12.21	.83	0.25	11.69	12.72
Moderate	15.98	1.58	0.26	15.46	16.51
High	13.41	1.14	0.56	12.90	13.92
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group	135.959	2	67.979	52.94	.000
Error	71.919	56	1.284		

R Squared = .677 (Adjusted R Squared = .660)

Source: Author's Computation (2023)

Table 4.2 shows the summary of analysis of covariance of classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes of control group, moderate intensity mentoring activities group and High intensity mentoring activities group. From the table, teachers exposed to moderate intensity mentoring activities have the highest mean score 15.98±1.58, followed by high intensity mentoring activities group with mean score of 13.41±1.14 and control group with mean score of 12.21±0.83. Also, from the table a significant $F(2,11)=10.397$, $p=0.003$ was recorded between the classrooms practices of the control, moderate intensity and high intensity group. This implies that mentoring activities have significant impact on teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes in the study locations.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What is the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on primary school pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa?

Table 4.3.2: Association between teachers' mentoring programme and pupils' learning outcomes

(Obs=200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Mentoring activities	200	2.13	.89	.514	.001
Pupils learning outcomes	200	13.67	1.94		

Source: Author's Computation (2023)

Table 4.3.2 shows that there exists a positive significant relationship r (58) = .514, p < .001 between teachers' mentoring activities and pupils' learning outcomes in the sampled primary schools in Ugu district.

DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the impact of teachers mentoring on classroom practices and pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The findings of this study reveal that teachers' mentoring activities have significant impact on classrooms practices and pupils learning outcomes in Ugu district municipality. Teachers who participated in the mentoring experimental activities group performed better than their counterparts in the control group. Mentoring activities lead to increase classroom practices and pupils' learning outcomes. This result lends credence to the assumptions that mentoring activities increase teachers' performance during classroom activities (Farmer, 2020).

Also, Handrianto, Jusoh, Syuraini, Rouzi and Alghazo (2022) asserted that a single of moderate-intensity mentoring activities has increase neural and behavioural concomitants associated with the allocation of attention to a specific cognitive task. Similarly, Fagbemi and Aborishade (2022), stated that teachers who participated in 30 minutes physical teachers' mentoring activities cognitively outperformed who watched television for the same amount of time. Kelly, Cespedes, Clara, and Danaher (2019), also reported that participation in teachers' mentoring programme has a significant positive relationship with classrooms practices. The positive r-value implies that the more participation in teachers' mentoring activities, the higher classrooms practices and pupils learning outcomes tends to be. Kennedy & Modupe (2022), stated that a well-designed teachers' mentoring curriculum has shown to improve teachers' classroom activities and pupils' learning outcomes. Mahabeer (2020) found significant differences between teachers who engaged in mentoring activities and those who did not in their performance in classrooms management. Contrarily, Makoa and Segalo (2021) found that teachers' mentoring activities do not improve learning outcomes of students. They reported no significance difference in classrooms activities of teachers exposed to mentoring activities and their counterpart that were not exposed to any teachers' mentoring activities.

Also, result from this research reveals that the level of intensity of teachers' mentoring activities also have effect on the teachers' classrooms activities. Teachers exposed to moderate intensity activities performed better than teachers exposed to high intensity mentoring activities. The reason for the low performance of the high intensity group compared to their counterpart could be as a result of fatigue due to the rigorous activities. Fatigue has been documented to reduce concentration and mental alertness. Maready, Cheng and Bunch (2021) found in their research that the intensity and duration of mentoring activities were linked to the improvement of cognitive thinking. This result contradicts the report of Ogbuanya (2022), which reported no significant difference in the academic performance of female teachers exposed to moderate intensity exercise and those exposed to high intensity exercise of teachers' mentoring. Finally, result reveals that teachers' attitude toward participation in mentoring programme has positive relationship with better classrooms practices among the participants. Knowledge translates to practice; the knowledge of mentoring activities improves their participation in classroom management and general teaching methodology. This result corroborates the study conducted by

Renbarger and Davis (2019), who reported that teachers' attitudes toward mentoring activities has significant positive relationship with participation in academic school activities. This indicate that the higher the higher the teachers' attitudes towards mentoring activities, the higher their engagement in classroom activities.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Mentoring support during the demanding transition from university life to a full teaching position has been shown to buffer against teachers' emotional exhaustion (Kelly et al., 2019). In line with this, mentoring has been found to reduce attrition rates among beginning teachers (Maready et al., 2021), as leaving the profession has been viewed as a consequence of high exhaustion (Renbarger & Davis, 2019) and lack of mentoring support (Handrianto et al., 2022). In contrast, mentors can also affect early career teachers' well-being negatively, by provoking rather maladaptive face-saving reactions by their mentees via critical feedback (Ogbuanya, 2022), by being generally unavailable for their mentees ((Farmer, 2020)), or engaging in judgmental and overly critical forms of feedback (Kennedy & Modupe, 2022). Adding to these ambiguous findings, results of a mixed-method study by Maready, Cheng and Bunch (2021) were twofold: incidents of miscommunication, expression of high expectations and negative feedback were linked to increased stress levels among prospective teachers in a teaching practicum, whereas positive assistance and informational help was valued (Mahabeer, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from the findings of this research depicts a positive relationship among teachers' mentoring programme, teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes in Ugu municipality of KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. By implication, school-based mentoring programme will help improve teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes in the study location. Also, participation in moderate intensity mentoring activities better improve teachers' classrooms practices and pupils' learning outcomes compared to high intensity mentoring activities. Hence, based on the results from the findings of this research, the following recommendation are made:

I. Education policy makers in the education sector in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa on should intensify efforts in planning for effective, efficient and sustainable teacher mentorship programmes as a strategy for teacher professional development for improvement of teacher quality and classroom practices. The mentorship programme should ensure that the teachers and mentors have sufficient time for engagements. Meanwhile, in order to ensure sustainability of the mentorship programmes, a formal structure should be established in teacher management for formal recognition of teacher mentors with commensurate compensation for this role. The programme should also include capacity building of the mentors to effectively deliver on their role.

II. Education development partners and practitioners including teacher trainers and teacher training institutes should focus on ideas for programming in the implementation of teachers' professional development. Specifically, the findings from this study reveal a pathway for the implementation of strategies particularly on the need to incorporate a comprehensive teacher

mentorship component in every teacher professional development programme, and also the pre-requisite factors that need to be put in place as well as the challenges they are likely to encounter, and potential solutions in addressing them.

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