SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF MENTORING PRACTICES: A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how secondary school management's mentorship programmes differed based on socio-demographic factors such as gender, professional background, academic degree, and work experience. The research used purposive sampling technique to sampled 200 teachers from fifteen secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa. The research used structured questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The findings from the study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference related to mentoring practices on the basis of gender, academic qualification and professional qualification. However, result from the research findings also depict a significant difference in mentoring practices on the basis of job experience. The findings revealed that teachers having experience from 5 to 6 years were more responsive towards the mentoring practices compared to teachers having less than 5 years of teaching experience. The study concluded that newly recruited teachers were not getting assistance in developing lesson plans, getting teaching materials and locating teaching aids. Following the results from the study findings, the research recommends that the secondary school management should allocate special week, days or hours specifically for the guidance of the newly recruited teachers in which they may interact with each other and with the senior members. The research also suggests that government, key stakeholders in private sector and non-governmental organizations in the study location should organized workshops for senior teaching staff and newly recruited teachers in order to facilitates mentoring practices in secondary schools.

Keywords*:* Mentoring Practices, Secondary School, Newly Recruited Teachers, Socio-Demographic Factors.

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is one of the most recent concepts in the field of education. Although in educational management this term is not a new one. However, the field of education in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africais always ignored with reference to the new innovations. When the education sector recruit new teachers they demand high level of motivation and loyalty from them. While the motivation, socialization and loyalty is not something that is produced in one day. Mentoring is actually a name of such effort from the organization to make the employees comfortable at the workplace. Anybody new in any situation needs help and guidance to learn and understand the organizational culture. Mentoring is actually that helping hand that enables the newcomer to stay and adjust within the situation. This helping hand can be provided by the senior employees formally or informally. Unfortunately, in South

Africa the system of education is the most ignored one. We try to apply such innovative ideas in other fields but the field of education remains silent in this regard. The educational organizations also need such type of practices for its teachers as employees. Especially in secondary schools, it is very important to develop our human resource by a proper planning. As the nation and the government has invested a huge amount for the education of its current and future generations. According to Boris and Sydani (2018) "Mentoring is a process for the formal and informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less. "The focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person and so the techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately" (Davanzo & Cherry, 2019). It is a helping hand provided to a newcomer in an organization that facilitates a person to learn and adjust in a given situation. Although formal youth mentoring is often perceived as a simple and inexpensive intervention, its success is likely to depend upon the degree of infrastructure and expertise that programs bring to the difficult task of creating strong, long-lasting relationships between two strangers (Freedman & Gabriel, 2018; Rhodes & DuBois, 2020).

Mentoring is a process in which a mentor guides and instructs the mentee in a planned manner. In mentoring the new employee, seeks, observes, and perceives the things about the new organization, to which he is going to join. It is a systematic process and has great positive effects on the mentee's personality. It is a process of social relationship with new inductees. Mentoring requires the guidance for the mentee. It gives the protégée a depth, support wisdom and knowledge about his field. A mentor should possess some abilities and qualities like leadership, reflect his own eloquent skills. Mentor can better view the policies, rules and regulations, functions, procedures, values and norms of the organizations (Rhodes & DuBois, 2018). Unfortunately, the field of education is ignored to be addressed from the point of view of human resource development and organizational behavior. Educational institutions are required to be more concerned about the mentoring and socializing of the teachers as teachers are the individuals who are dealing with the character, values and attitudes of future generation. So it is very important to provide mentoring service to secondary school teachers to increase their output and socialization. In this way their work efficiency will increase and ultimately it will affect the future generation.

It becomes more important while discussing about educational organizations in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa, especially the ministry responsible for secondary school education. The current research is designed to assess the mentoring services availability and to draw a comparison on the basis of gender, qualification and experience related to mentoring services provided to the newly hired teachers at the university level. In fact, the secondary school education in Pakistan is facing serious challenges such as unavailability of resources, funding, teacher training, management skills, lack of adequate leadership abilities, lack of co-worker support and socialization challenges. Thus form the area of Human Resource Management a key component "mentoring" had been taken to be discussed in the current research. As it had been observed that the new employees in organizations and especially in educational organization take enough time to get adjusted with the internal environment. That

effects on the work efficiency as well. Therefore, based on the above premises, this research seeks to provide answers to the following research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I. Is thereany significant difference in perceptions between male and female teachers with reference to the mentoring programmes practice in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa?
II. Is there any significant difference in perceptions of teachers on the basis of educational qualification and teaching experience with reference to mentoring programmes practice in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa?

The objective of this study is to investigate how secondary school management's mentorship programmes differed on the basis of socio-demographic factors of teachers such as gender, professional background, academic degree, and work experience. Therefore, the study explores the status of mentoring programme practices being used by secondary school teachers in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa and to propose some policy recommendations to the government of South Africa to overcome this problem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring is a process by which a novice individual gets assistance from senior person. According to Ward and Tikunoff (2021) to provide the mentoring services at organization level multiple strategies are followed such as assistance technical support is provided to the newly employed teachers for an early setting in the new environment. An orientation session and training is provided to the novice. There are some other strategies for mentoring of teachers. These strategies include trainings, assistance, workshops and seminars (Mickler, 2019; Varah, Theune, & Packer 2018). In the area of instruction, administrator takes different steps e.g assigning novices the easier classes or school (Rosenhold& Diamond, 2020). The newly employed teacher can be assigned the subject areas for which he is prepared well and with those students whose behaviour is less difficult to manage. Novice teachers are given opportunities to observe the demonstration of effective teaching practices by more experienced teachers. Monitoring is another strategy to assess the novice proficiency in the classroom (Hulig-Austin, 2020; Moffett &Isken, 2018; Varah& Packer 2021). The purpose for this is to provide constructive feedback. Different researches have recommended that monitoring and confidential coaching should be made frequently but this must be separate from evaluation. Team-building is the strategy which is utilized to help the beginners "fit into" the new working environment. By this, the mentee will be able to adjust him more speedily and to overcome the feelings of isolation and insecurity. Also, encouragement from educational administrators or peers and acknowledgment of their efforts are also used as to improve the self-confidence of novices (Moffett &Isken, 2018).

The potential benefits of mentoring must also be known for a researcher. These are some potential benefit of mentoring for mentees, mentors, schools and educational system. According to some researches mentoring is an important and effective form of supporting instrument for the professional development of beginning teachers (Carter & Francies, 2020). Mentoring is beneficial for newly employed teachers in reducing feeling of isolation, increasing confidence

and self-esteem professional growth and better problem solving capacities. In another development, Zachary and Thatcher (2018) has divided the process of mentoring into four stages. These stages are Preparing, Negotiating, Enabling and Coming to closure. They also suggested the Process skills that are needed as the skills of mentor. These skills are as follows: i) Asking questions; ii) Reformulating statements; iii) Summarizing; iv) Listening for silence and v) Providing feedback. Mqadi (2023a) employed quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as descriptive statistics to examine the effect of mentoring program on the teachers' teaching learners with learning difficulties in South Korea. The study found a significant relationship between teachers' mentoring and the teaching skills of teachers teaching the difficult to learn pupils. Also, Mqadi (2023b) equally employed a quasi-experimental non-randomized research design involving pre-test and post-test with a control group and ANCOVA to investigate the impact of teachers' mentoring programme on teachers' classroom practices and pupils learning outcomes in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. 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. Mqadi (2024) equally employed post-test control group research design to investigate the efficacy of STEM mentoring programs on the students' interest towards STEM in some selected secondary schools in in Ugu District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The research found that the level of all three aspects of interest towards STEM are moderately high and high with the mean scores between 3. 5 to 4. 3 which are within the threshold of 3. 0 estimated for this research. The study also found that the students' level of interest towards science is 'high' for both group and gender. Meanwhile, the level of interest towards mathematics indicated a different level in both group and gender. The study concluded that boys in treatment group shows moderate level of interest towards mathematics compared to the boys in control group with high level of interest towards mathematics while girls in the treatment group indicated high level of interest towards mathematics compared to the girls in control group.

previous studies (Mqadi, 2023a; Mqadi, 2023b; Zachary & Thatcher 2018) indicate that although results vary, investigated the effects of mentoring programmes on teachers' classroom practices and students learning outcomes, these studies did not deep dive into the mentoring programmes practiced in secondary schools. Therefore, this study attempts to close this knowledge by analysing the effect of socio-demographic factors on mentoring practices in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to explore the link between teachers' socio-demographic characteristics (such as gender, educational qualification, working experience) and mentoring practices in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa**.** The research sampled 200 teachers from fifteen (15) secondary schools in in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality through purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire based on three major sections was developed. The survey tool (questionnaire) started with socio-demographic information of the respondents with 5 Likert scale items in the second section of the questionnaire related to the mentoring practices and the third section was related to the areas where the teachers feel that there is a need for assistance. For the purpose of this analysis, t-test

statistics and ANOVA tests were mainly applied in testing the hypotheses developed from the research questions. A reliability test was conducted on the questionnaire items (mentoring practices) and the reliability index turns out to be 0.89, this shows that the survey tool is reliable and consistent to be used for data collection.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N:200)

Socio-demographics	Variables	N	%
Age-Group	20-35	93	46
	36-50	80	40
	51-65	28	14
Gender	Male	40	20
	Female	160	80
Year of Teaching Experience	0-4 years	22	11
	5-6 years	40	20
	7-9 years	25	13
	10-12 years	15	8
	13-15 years	35	18
	15 years +	30	15
Marital Status	Single	33	17
	Married	163	80
	Divorced	4	2
	Widowed	1	1
Education Qualifications	Bachelor of Education	106	59
	Diploma in Teaching	82	45
	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	6	1
	Others	7	2
Types of Schools	Public	157	86
	Independent	14	4
Class being taught	Foundation Phase	75	38
	Intermediate Phase	126	62

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 1 explains the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It shows that 20 % of the respondents were male and 90% were female. Majority of the respondents were having Bachelor of Education degree (59%) of qualification. While majority (20%) were having 5-6 years of experience that shows they were new in the field and quite appropriate for the topic of the research.

Research Question I: Is there any significant difference in perceptions between male and female teachers with reference to the mentoring programmes practice in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa?

Table 2: Analysis of the perceptions between male and female teachers with reference to the mentoring programmes practice in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa?

Variable		N	Mean	t value	df	Sig
Gender	Male	40	23.10	0.09	93	0.92
	Female	16 0	23.00			

*p<0.05, **P<0.01
Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 2 illustrates that there is statistically no significant difference (t=0.09) found between male and female respondents related to their perceptions about mentoring practices. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Rhodes and DuBois (2018).

Research Questions II:Is there any significant difference in perceptions of teachers on the basis of educational qualification and teaching experience with reference to mentoring programmes practice in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa?

Table 3: Analysis of the perceptions of teachers on the basis of educational qualification with reference to mentoring programmes practiced in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa

Variable		N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Academic Qualification	Bachelor of Education	106	23.59	1.32	90	0.26
	Diploma in Teaching	82	22.89			
	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	6	21.91			
	Others	7	26.33			

*p<0.05, **P<0.01
Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 3 depicts that there is no statistically significant difference (F= 1.32) found in the perceptions of the teachers on the basis of academic qualifications and mentoring practices. This finding corroborates the reports of Mqadi (2023a), Mqadi (2023b) as well as Zachary and Thatcher (2018).

Table 4: Analysis of the perceptions of teachers on the basis of teaching experience with reference to mentoring programmes practiced in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality of South Africa

Variable		N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Years of Teaching Experience	0-4	22	23.64	3.06	89	0.01
	5-6	40	25.25			
	7-9	25	21.52			
	10-12	15	21.00			
	13-15 35		20.33			
	15+ 30		17.50			

*p<0.05, **P<0.01
Source: Author's Computation (2024)

Table 4shows that statistically significant difference (F= 3.06) is found in the perceptions of the teachers on the basis of year of teaching experience. The teacher having 4-6 years of experience were having more positive perception regarding mentoring and its need. This result is in line with study conducted by Moffett and Isken (2018).

CONCLUSION

Following the analysis of the effect of socio-demographic factors on mentoring practices in secondary schools in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa**.** The study found a significant difference on the basis of years of teaching experience and mentoring practices among respondents. The teacher having 5-6 years of experience advocated the need for mentoring services compared to teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I.   The study recommends that the management of secondary schools across eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality should allocate special week, days or hours specifically for the guidance of the newly recruited teachers in which they may interact with each other and with the senior members at a tea party or in an informal get together.
II.   Special training sessions are also required for the senior teaching staff as well. So that they mentor newly recruited teachers.
III.   The study also recommends that government, key stakeholders in private sector and non-governmental organizations should organized workshops for senior teaching staff and newly recruited teachers in order to facilitates mentoring practices in secondary schools.

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