



MENTORING STRATEGIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN AKWA IBOM NORTH-WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT

By

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the influence of mentoring strategies on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. The research design for this study was a cross-sectional survey. The population for the study was 3,533 secondary school teachers in 99 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District comprising ten local government areas. A sample size of 346 secondary school teachers was determined using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination Table while multistage sampling process of simple random sampling, systematic random sampling and proportionate random sampling techniques were used to sample the respondents. The data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Mentoring Strategies and Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire" (MSTPDQ). The trial test approach of reliability was adopted and the instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86 using Cronbach Alpha statistics. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were duly briefed on the administration procedure. Mean statistics was used to answer the research questions and independent t-test was deployed to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed that there is a high influence of goal setting and best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of mentoring strategies on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. It was concluded that goal setting and best practice modelling mentoring strategies highly influence the professional development of secondary school teachers irrespective of gender in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. It was recommended among others that Ministry of Education should organise training programmes that prioritise the demonstration and discussion of effective teaching strategies for mentoring teachers among Heads of Departments as this would help them empower teachers to adopt and adapt these best practices.

Key Word: Best practices, Development, Goal setting, Profession, Mentoring, Teachers

Introduction

The development of secondary schools (which is multifaceted and comprehensive) is a crucial factor in promoting economic and social progress within a region or country. According to United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2015), the development of secondary schools typically involves a comprehensive and coordinated approach that addresses these interconnected elements in the school system such as physical infrastructure, curriculum design, teaching and learning methodologies, teacher quality, professional



development, and the engagement and support of various stakeholders. A crucial component of secondary school development is the investment in the continuous learning and growth of teachers.

Teachers occupy a central position in any educational system; they influence to a great extent the quality of the educational output (Ukoh, Usoro and Ukoima, 2026). The role of teachers are crucial to effective and efficient learning and teaching process and it extends into lesson planning, effective delivery of lesson, proper monitoring and evaluation of students. Teacher's instructional ability is displayed into knowledge of the subject matter. This means that teachers need to be greatly empowered through professional development in order to carry out the enormous tasks of rendering quality services to the school and students. Professional development (PD) has become a critical component of the educational landscape, as it plays a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness and growth of teachers. In the ever-evolving field of education, the need for continuous learning and skill development among teachers has become increasingly evident. Professional development according to Defourny and Bardon (2019) fosters high-quality teaching and is the one of the important in-school factor influencing student achievement. Additionally, professional development can foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement within the teaching profession, as teachers share best practices, engage in peer learning, and explore innovative teaching methods (Dogan *et al.*, 2016). The concept of professional development encompasses a wide range of activities and initiatives including mentoring aimed at equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to improve their teaching practice and positively impact student learning outcomes.

Mentoring is a personal support a mentee (beginner) receives from a more knowledgeable person (mentor) with the goal of gaining more knowledge in a field. It is the process of encouraging a less experience person to achieve its professional goal. Mentoring according to Gontur *et al.* (2024) is defined as a relationship between a more experienced teacher and a less experienced teacher in which the more experienced teacher provides the less experienced teacher with support and guidance to accomplish a given task. Nolan and Tortorici (2019) noted that mentoring process enables experienced teachers to share their knowledge, skills, and best practices with less experienced colleagues, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment for professional growth. In the context of secondary education, mentoring programmes can help novice teachers navigate the complexities of the teaching profession, develop their pedagogical skills, and build resilience in the face of challenges (Gontur *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, mentoring can also benefit experienced teachers by providing them with opportunities for reflection, continuous learning, and leadership development. Therefore, there is need for context-specific approaches to mentoring such as goal setting and best practice modeling strategy that consider the unique cultural, social, and institutional factors that shape the teaching profession.

Goal setting according to Latham and Locke (2019) is the process of establishing specific and effective targets for task performance. Goal setting is a fundamental component of mentoring, as it provides a clear and focused direction for the mentee's professional growth. Goal setting defines outcomes or results by outlining steps required to reach the outcome and establish a timeframe for completion. In essence, goal setting gives direction to actualizing an objective by tracking the progress, identifying obstacles and making adjustment where necessary. Kandie and Kipsang (2023) found that a positive and significant effect between work goal setting and employee performance thus concluded that the absence of goal ambiguity and the presence of goal clarity will lead to multiple positive outcomes for an organization that will improve employee performance and thus, overall organizational performance. In addition, Cheruiyot *et al.* (2023) noted that goal setting practices has a significant effect on service delivery among public



secondary school teachers. Goal setting is an integral part of best practice modelling by enhancing clarity, motivation and adaptability in achieving goals.

The concept of best practice modelling in mentoring involves the mentor sharing their expertise, knowledge, and successful strategies with the mentee, providing a tangible example to emulate. Best practice is the action that produces the most desirable outcomes based on evidence and real life evidence. This is assumed that relationship plays a key role in any successful mentoring experience as evidence by the focus of the best practice themes as it pertains to the way it initiates, build, solidify, advocate or integrate the relationship (Jan *et al.* as cited in Reeves, 2022). Best practice in mentoring ensures development of strong beneficial relationship, incorporate constructive feedback to empower mentees and foster meaningful and productive mentoring relationship. Suchánková and Hrbáčková (2017) reported that the higher the level of mastery of professional coaching competencies that the teachers attain in their own opinion, the better mentors feel they are, the more they perceive mentoring as beneficial, and the more they use it in practice. Gontur *et al.* (2024) highlighted that mentoring significantly improves teachers understanding of subject content, classroom management strategies, and their engagement in professional growth activities. Providing constructive feedback is one of the best practices and is a crucial component of effective mentoring.

It is obvious that mentoring is a necessity for professional teachers' development in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District as providing comprehensive support, fostering skill-building opportunities, implementing structured performance monitoring, and cultivating strong mentoring relationships can empower educators to enhance their teaching practices, adapt to evolving educational demands, and ultimately contribute to the overall success of their mentee teachers and the school community. This study is geared towards empirically ascertaining the influence of mentoring strategies on the professional development of teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of mentoring in the development of secondary school teachers cannot be overemphasized. Effective mentoring programme can help new teachers navigate the challenges of the teaching profession, provide guidance and support in lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional strategies, and foster the development of essential teaching skills and competencies. Moreover, mentoring could contribute to teacher job satisfaction, retention, and overall professional growth, which are crucial factors in ensuring the quality and stability of the teaching workforce. Without adequate mentoring support, teachers may struggle to navigate the complexities of the teaching profession, develop essential pedagogical skills, and effectively address the diverse needs of their students.

Though mentoring is known to be important for improving secondary school teachers professional growth, many secondary schools seems to have difficulty putting mentoring programme in place. This difficulty include lack of professionalism and training among educators, lack of trust and communication between mentors and mentees, lack of instructional resources and inadequate organizational planning. These difficulty in mentoring programme seem to frequently fall short of their potential to improve secondary school teachers overall performance and teaching quality improvement. It therefore behoves of the researcher to determine if mentoring could ameliorate some of these challenges. This has prompted the curiosity to research on mentoring strategies and professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.



Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of mentoring strategies on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of:

- i. goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.
- ii. best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- i. What is the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?
- ii. Of what influence is best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the Study

The research design for this study was a cross-sectional survey design. According to Creswell (2018), the cross-sectional survey design is commonly used in educational research to gather information on the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a specific population. The survey-based approach, with a representative sample of teachers, enables the researcher to obtain findings on influence of mentoring strategies on the development of secondary school teachers that can be generalized to the broader population of teachers in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District, Nigeria. The Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District is made up of ten local government areas, namely Abak, Etim Ekpo, Essien Udium, Ini, Ika, Ikono, Ikot Ekpene, Obot Akara, Oruk-Anam and Ukanafun. The area was chosen for this study due to the limited research on mentoring strategies for secondary school teachers in the study area. By focusing on this area, the study can provide insights that may be beneficial to a broader understanding and application of effective mentoring strategies in secondary school settings.

Population of the Study

The population was 3,533 secondary school teachers (comprising 1696 male teachers and 1837 female teachers) in 99 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District comprising ten local government areas (Ini, Ikono, Abak, Etim Ekpo, Essien Udium, Obot Akara, Ika, Ukanafun, Oruk Anam and Ikot Ekpene) (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education, 2024).



Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 346 secondary school teachers was used. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination Table. The sample was selected for the study using a multistage sampling process. First, a simple random sampling technique was used to select four out of the ten local government areas in the senatorial district. Then, within each of the selected local government areas, a systematic random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each of the local government areas. Finally, a proportionate random sampling technique was used to select teachers from each of the sampled secondary schools, resulting in a total sample size of 346 secondary school teachers which constituted of 166 male teachers and 180 female teachers.

Instrumentation

The data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled 'Mentoring Strategy and Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire (MESTPODQ). The instrument was divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A elicited information on the respondents' demographic characteristics, Section B sought information on mentoring strategies while Section C obtained information on teacher's professional development. This was based on the scale of Very High Influence (VHI), High Influence (HI), Low Influence (LI) and Very Low Influence (VLI). The instrument was responded to by secondary school teachers in the study area.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was submitted to three experts for face validation, two from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, and one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, Faculty of Education, all in the University of Uyo. The experts scrutinized the items on the instrument by checking for the relevance, the wordings to avoid ambiguity and to ensure it is useable as well as measures what it is designed to measure.

Reliability of the Instrument

The validated instrument was administered on 30 teachers in the study area who were not part of the study for internal consistency. The trial test approach of reliability was adopted. Data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha statistics to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.86 which implies that the instrument had a high internal consistency and was useable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through the use of questionnaire which was administered by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were duly briefed by the researcher on the administration procedure. The researcher visited the selected secondary schools and distributed the questionnaires to the sampled teachers. The respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire and the researcher was available to provide any necessary clarification or assistance. To ensure a high response rate, the researcher established rapport with the school administrators and teachers, emphasize the importance of the study, and provide assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. Additionally, the 346 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the selected teachers and retrieved on the spot. This guaranteed 100% retrieval rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean statistics was used to answer the research questions and independent t-test was deployed to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The mean value was used to answer the research questions and to determine the extent to which the independent variable influences the dependent variable as follows:



Mean value	Interpretation
3.50 to 4.00	Very High Influence
2.50 to 3.49	High Influence
1.50 to 2.49	Low Influence
0.00 to 1.49	Very Low Influence

The decision for accepting a null hypothesis was that if $p > .05$, there was no significant influence, which means that the hypothesis were retained, but if $p < .05$ there was significant influence, which implies that the hypothesis was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean Statistics showing influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District
n = 346

S/N	Items on Goal Setting	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Mentor work collaboratively with newly recruited teachers to set clear professional development objectives	2.43	.83	Low Influence
2	Drawing an outline for mentoring involves regular discussions between mentors and newly recruited teachers	3.00	.82	High Influence
3	Newly recruited teachers are actively involved in the process of setting their own professional development targets	2.77	.78	High Influence
4	Mentor teachers provide guidance to newly recruited teachers in developing action plans to achieve their goals	2.78	.42	High Influence
5	The professional targets set for newly recruited teachers are aligned with the school's overall objectives	2.99	.82	High Influence
6	Setting targets helps newly recruited teachers identify their strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement	2.89	.88	High Influence
Grand Mean		2.81	.76	High Influence

The data in Table 1 indicate that setting professional objectives has the mean score of 2.43, drawing an outline for mentoring 3.00, active involvement of mentee in setting their professional development targets 2.77, guidance for development of action plans 2.78, aligning targets with school objectives 2.99, identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement 2.89. this implies that the mean score of five of the items are between 2.50 and 3.49 indicating high influence while mean score of one of the items falls within the range of 1.50 and 2.49 indicating low influence. The grand mean of 2.81 implies that there is a high influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.



Research Question 2

Of what influence is best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean Statistics showing influence of best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District
n = 346

S/N	Items on Best Practice Modelling	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Mentor teachers showcase effective instructional strategies for newly recruited teachers	2.78	.79	High Influence
2	Newly recruited teachers have opportunities to observe their mentors' lessons and learn from their best practices	3.11	.74	High Influence
3	Mentors provide constructive feedback to newly recruited teachers after observing their teaching practices	2.88	1.29	High Influence
4	Newly recruited teachers are encouraged to reflect on best practices modeled by their mentors	2.44	.96	Low Influence
5	Newly recruited teachers are given opportunities to co-teach with their mentors and receive immediate feedback	2.11	1.00	Low Influence
6	The adoption of best practices by mentors helps newly recruited teachers develop a deeper understanding of effective instructional techniques.	2.55	1.34	High Influence
Grand Mean		2.65	1.02	High Influence

Table 2 indicates that showcasing effective instructional strategies has the mean score of 2.78, opportunities to observe their mentors lesson 3.11, providing constructive feedback 2.88, encouragement to reflect on best practices 2.44, opportunities to co-teach with their mentors 2.11, developing a deeper understanding of effective instructional technique 2.55. It implies that the mean score of four of the items are between 2.50 and 3.49 indicating high influence while mean score of two of the items falls within the range of 1.50 and 2.49 indicating low influence. The grand mean of 2.65 implies that there is a high influence of best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District?

Table 3: Summary of Independent t-test analysis showing the difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers

Categories	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male Teachers	166	2.81	0.37	344	0.09	.928	Not Significant
Female Teachers	180	2.81	0.36				

Not Significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: (Field Survey 2025)



The independent t-test result in the above Table 3 shows that t-calculated is 0.09 and the p-value is 0.928 at 344 degree of freedom. Since the probability value of 0.928 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Table 4: Summary of Independent t-test analysis showing the difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of best practices on the professional development of secondary school teachers

Categories	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male Teachers	166	2.64	0.53	344	0.11	.909	Not Significant
Female Teachers	180	2.65	0.54				

Not Significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: (Field Survey 2025)

The independent t-test result in the above Table 4 shows that t-calculated is 0.11 and the p-value is 0.909 at 344 degree of freedom. Since the probability value of 0.909 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of best practices on the professional development of secondary school teachers.

Discussion of Findings

Influence of Goal Setting on the Professional Development of Secondary School Teachers

The findings of this study revealed a high influence of goal setting as a mentoring strategy on the professional development of secondary school teachers in the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. This finding highlights the substantial impact that intentional and structured goal-setting can have on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and overall professional growth of teachers within study area. This points to the fact that goal settings for mentoring programme fosters a sense of purpose, motivation and direction among mentee teachers as it helps them identify their strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement which are essential for continuous growth and improvement. The finding is in agreement with the finding of Kandie and Kipsang (2023) who found that a positive and significant effect between work goal setting and employee performance thus concluded that the absence of goal ambiguity and the presence of goal clarity will lead to multiple positive outcomes for an organization that will improve employee performance and thus, overall organizational performance.

The findings also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of goal setting on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. This implies that irrespective of the gender of mentor and mentee teachers, goal setting is vital and it triggers teachers' professional growth and development. The finding aligned with the findings of Cheruiyot *et al.* (2023) who concluded that goal setting practices has a significant effect on service delivery among public secondary school teachers. Thus, goal setting strategy in mentoring fundamentally provides direction for professional development of secondary school teachers.



Influence of best practice modelling on the Professional Development of Secondary School Teachers

The findings of this study revealed that there is a high influence of best practice modelling as a mentoring strategy on the professional development of secondary school teachers in the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. The findings may be triggered by the fact that the observational learning and replication of effective teaching practices can have on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and overall professional growth of recruit educators. Through best practice modeling mentee teachers are provided with access to innovative lesson planning, effective instructional strategies, opportunity to practice through co-teaching and evaluation of instructional process. This increases the knowledge and efficiency of mentee teachers in the discharge of professional service delivery. The finding corroborates with the finding of Suchánková and Hrbáčková (2017) who reported that the higher the level of mastery of professional coaching competencies that the teachers attain in their own opinion, the better mentors feel they are, the more they perceive mentoring as beneficial, and the more they use it in practice.

Findings also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female secondary school teachers on the influence of best practice modelling on the professional development of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. This implies that irrespective of the gender of mentor and mentee teachers, best practice modelling is necessary for professional growth and development of teachers. The finding aligned with the findings of Gontur *et al.* (2024) who established that mentoring significantly improves teachers understanding of subject content, classroom management strategies, and their engagement in professional growth activities. Hence, incorporating best practices into the mentoring programme would in no small measure foster professional development of mentee teachers.

Conclusion

Mentoring strategies particularly goal setting and best practice modelling highly influence the professional development of secondary school teachers irrespective of gender in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. Therefore, leveraging the power of mentoring strategies can contribute to the professional development of secondary school teachers, enhance the quality of instruction, and drive the overall improvement of the education system in the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Educational authorities and school administrators in the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District should prioritize the implementation of structured goal-setting frameworks within their mentoring programmes that foster a sense of purpose, motivation, and direction for the teachers' professional growth.
- ii. Ministry of Education should organize training programme that prioritizes the demonstration and discussion of effective teaching strategies for mentor teachers like Head of Department as this would help them empower teachers to adopt and adapt these best practices



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