

Assessing the Norms and Standards of School Mentors' Competences in the 1+1 Model of Initial Primary Teacher Education in Malawi: Implications for Mentor Development

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ABSTRACT The aim of this comparative cross-sectional study was to assess the competences of school mentors in the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) mode from the perspective of student teachers and headteachers. The study set out to find answers to the following research questions: (1) what are the competences of school mentors as perceived by student teachers? (2) What are the competences of school mentors as perceived by headteachers? (3) Is there a significant difference in the mean competence scores for student teachers and headteachers? (4) What are the implications of the findings for school mentor development? Ninety-two primary schools and 670 participants comprising 579 student teachers and 91 headteachers participated in a mixed methods research design in which a census survey was followed by a case study of two schools to observe the practices of mentoring for purposes of triangulation and complementarity. Data was analysed by employing descriptive analysis and calculating independent-sample t-test. The results revealed that at student teacher respondents generally confirmed that school mentors demonstrated competency in most of the mentoring aspects under investigation. Very few respondents indicated that mentors did not demonstrate the investigated competencies. The same results were revealed by headteachers about their school mentors. An independent-sample t-test revealed that there was no statistical significant difference in 28 of the 30 competence scores of assessment by the student teachers and headteachers. Significant difference was found in only two competences.