Development and Psychosocial Support to Trainee Teachers by Mentors during Teaching Practice in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT Facilitation of career development and provision of psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice can be a challenge. The interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach and case study research design were employed in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select 27 participants which included 6 mentors, 15 trainee teachers and 5 college lecturers. Data were obtained through face to face interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The study revealed that mentors performed both career development and psychosocial support roles during teaching practice. It emerged that there was lack of qualified school mentors resulting in inadequate provision of career development and psychosocial support. The participants indicated that, mentors and trainee teachers encountered various challenges which hindered the effectiveness of the mentorship programme including financial constraints. The study also recommended a mentorship policy that fuses global and national trends and considering alternative mentorship models from secondary teacher-training colleges in Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the teacher education programme is to produce quality teachers who can perform adequately in the world of work, and meet the present-day challenges (Avidov-Ungar and Forkosh-Baruch 2018). Thus, teacher education programmes should consist of different dimensions such as the content and pedagogy of the formal curriculum as well as the hidden curriculum (Glazer 2018; Johnson and Golombek 2020). Most teacher education programmes include different components like general education, subject matter studies, foundation of education studies, method studies, and field experience-which is commonly known as teaching practice (Chernikova et al. 2020). It is through teaching practice that trainee teachers, supported by mentors, experience the normal classroom situation (Dunn and Doolittle 2020;

Limeri et al. 2020). This paper examines mentors' practices in facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine mentors' practices in facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice in one teachers' college in Zimbabwe. The findings of the study were used to develop a framework for mentoring of trainee teachers during teaching practice.

Background

Trainee teachers are expected to learn worthwhile content (theory) before going for teaching practice. They need to know their subjects in pedagogical perspectives, familiarise themselves with a range of good curricular materials, models and approaches (Pacpaco et al. 2019). However, in order to address these experiences and to ensure that trainee teachers obtain the

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required skills during teaching practice, mentors become a crucial aspect (Shumba et al. 2012). Trainee teachers are allocated mentors who support and work with them during this period. Hobison (2009) define mentoring as the:

One-to-one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession (in this case, teaching) and into the specific local context (p.201).

During teaching practice, trainee teachers are expected to get assistance from their mentors; including social and emotional support considering the students' exposure to the new environment (Mitchell et al. 2017). Shumba et al. (2016: 71) outline the roles of the mentor as psychosocial development and career or educational development. This was also observed by Maphosa et al. (2007) who state that there are two types of mentoring functions during teaching practice, namely; career development functions and psychosocial functions. They outline five elements in the career development category which are sponsorship, coaching, protection, challenging assignments, and exposure and these role must be performed by the mentor (Shittu 2017). In career development, the mentor, as an instructional coach, is expected to help the trainee teacher by providing pedagogical, technical and organisational skills. This also includes the skill of integrating teaching styles into classroom methods, evaluating instructional practices, and providing constructive feedback to improve the methods and techniques of trainee teachers (Merriam and Grenier 2019). The psychosocial functions are divided into role modeling and social support functions (Hudson 2017). By performing these roles, mentors help the mentees to develop a sense of professional self, acceptance and confirmation; they become role models for the mentees (Maphosa et al. 2007). Thus the role of the mentor is to help trainee teachers, who may have some difficulties, in adjusting to the new environment and to develop trust, collaboration, and maintain constant communication between mentor and mentee.

More clarity on the mentor's role in career development and psychosocial support was expressed by Ford (2017) who suggested two broad functions of a mentoring relationship (p.17) which are career functions and psychosocial functions. According to Ford, the career function involves the mentee advancing professionally, and includes sponsorship. The mentors give the trainee teacher some responsibilities, where the trainee teacher is promoted for advancement in the school (Alasad and Leadership 2017). There is also exposure and visibility when the trainee teacher is introduced to learners and staff members, and the latter can assist him or her during teaching practice. Coaching is also another career function in which the mentor helps the trainee teacher to navigate the profession and grow professionally (Middendorf 2010). The mentor protects the trainee teacher from potentially damaging contact with others, and from challenging assignments (Alkhawaldeh 2017). The mentor also "guides the mentee through challenging and profitable work that he/she might not be able to accomplished alone" (Ford 2017: 17).

Furthermore, Ford (2017) suggests that psychosocial functions of the mentor involve encouragement and friendship. This can take the form of role modelling of trainee teachers by the mentor and acceptance and confirmation, as well as showing continued support, encouragement and appreciation to the trainee teacher (Elmahdi et al. 2019). Counselling is another function whereby the mentee understands and negotiates personal and organisational concerns (Middendorf 2010). Finally, mentor/mentee relationship allows the mentor to demonstrate interest in the trainee teacher's life beyond the workplace (Mukeredzi 2017). The mentor can, therefore, guide the trainee teacher in both career functions and psychosocial functions because of greater experience and knowledge in the field, and through inter personal relationships that grow from trust and closeness between the trainee teacher and the mentor during the teaching and learning process (Klassen and Kim 2017; Alkhawaldeh 2017; Nkambule and Mukeredzi 2017).

The mentor performs both the psychosocial support and career development, and support, advice and generally enhance the experience of the new trainee teacher (Ford 2017; Farquhar et al. 2018). All trainee teachers are assigned to a mentor. Mentors provide a welcoming environment at orientation, also act as positive role

models where by the trainee teacher observes the mentor and copies some of the good characteristics and behaviours or traits thereby improving orientation and transition from being a student at college to a trainee teacher or experienced teacher at a particular school. The orientation process connects trainee teachers to sources of help in a timely manner (Makkawi 2017; Samkange 2015).

In this study, the researcher focused on the 3.3.3 model which is one of the current models in secondary teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe (Makura and Zireva 2011). This model allows the trainees to learn for the whole year at college, then they go for teaching practice for a year, and return to college for the final year in which they will sit for their final examinations (three terms in, three terms out, and three terms in), before final examination (Ngara et al. 2013; Samkange 2015). This study focused on the teaching practice component where the mentor is the most prominent figure in the development of the mentee's expertise (Blasé and Blasé 2006). Each teacher training college in Zimbabwe has its own indicators for teaching practice supervision, although generally, they all are guided by such aspects as personality, dress, conduct, attitude, mannerisms, documentation, lesson planning, lesson presentation, classroom management and the quality and amount of work given to learners. Mentors' assessment of mentees is based on the same guidelines. Mentors use the same documents to assess the mentees and send these assessment documents to their respective colleges. On teaching practice, mentoring is implemented differently in various secondary schools in Zimbabwe, and there are cases where the mentees teach several classes. During teaching practice, trainee teachers are put under the supervision of an experienced teacher who guides and mentors their teaching. Maphosa and Ndamba (2012: 76) state that "the major role of the mentor is to supervise the trainee teacher during teaching practice." The experienced teacher becomes the mentee's supervisor throughout the teaching practice phase (Musingafi and Mafumbate 2014). Initially, the mentee observes the mentor before he or she engages in the practice of conducting lessons. This is done to instil confidence in the trainee teacher. Nyaumwe and Mavhunga (2005) in Maphosa and Ndamba (2012) note that train-ee teachers are assessed by mentors for diagnostic purposes related to strengths and weaknesses. Trainee teachers also apply teaching methods they have learnt in college, evaluate their teaching and reflect on their instructional practices. One third of the final teaching practice mark comes from the mentor's assessment. Concerns and even arguments have been raised by some stakeholders in the media that there is a barrier between teachers' colleges and schools, and a lack of coherence in learning on these two sites (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2017).

Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014) further state that these problems are compounded by the fact that "practice in schools does not influence theory in colleges and theory in colleges is not fully embraced in schools" (p.51). For instance, sometimes the trainee teachers fail to apply the theories they have learnt practically because what they are expected of in schools will be totally different (Bukari and Kuyini 2015; Musingafi and Mafumbate 2014; Tshuma and Ndebele 2015). Furthermore, Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014) note that negative teaching practice experience has been reported by trainee teachers where supervision by lecturers in colleges is based on theories of teaching and learning from various authors, whereas in schools, mentors base their supervision on practical experience. Thus, the mismatch between the two leaves trainee teachers in a dilemma as to whether they should conform to the mentor / headmaster model or to college tutor model (Musingafi and Mafumbate 2014).

Other concerns raised by stakeholders are lack of appropriate skills in the preparation of records and lesson delivery. Some records and supervision forms from the teaching practice office showed that many trainee teachers get frustrated when entering the classrooms to take up teaching tasks in unfamiliar environment (Bukari and Kuyini 2015). Martin et al. (2016) observes that mentees need help in areas such as planning, timetabling, teaching strategies, questioning skills and assessment. Given the above concerns and observations there has not been comprehensive research in the area of mentorship of trainee teachers during teaching practice. The paper addresses the missing link in research in the context of mentors' practices in

facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice.

Literature Review

According to Patterson and Davis (2017: 485) "mentoring is typically characterised by the relationships developed between a less experienced and an experienced professional." Mentoring is also described as a relationship between the mentor and the trainee teacher. This view is reinforced by Alkhawaldeh (2017) who defined mentoring as one-on-one relationship in which an expert or a senior person who is the mentor voluntarily gives time to teach, support, and encourage the trainee teacher. Many authors have suggested various roles of mentors in teaching practice such as fostering pre-service teacher's personal and professional development, and providing support, direction and feedback regarding career plans (Hudson 2017; Krishna et al. 2019). However, Maphosa and Ndamba (2012) and Shumba et al. (2016), writing from a Zimbabwean context, stated that the role of mentors entails counseling, coaching, guiding, disciplining and advising trainee teachers on pedagogical issues. Mentors help trainee teachers by providing career development functions which facilitate the trainee teacher's advancement in the organisation (Cheng et al. 2010). They also provide psychosocial functions which contribute to the trainee teacher's personal growth and professional development. The four psychosocial functions of mentors are:

- helping trainee teachers to develop a sense profesional self (acceptance and confirmation) (Tidmore 2018).
- providing problem solving and sounding boarding (friendship) opportunities (Gunn et al. 2017).
- providing identification and role modeling (role modeling) (Jyoti and Sharma 2015).

Mentors are expected to perform all these functions. The relationship of the mentor and the trainee teacher is classfied under two major categories which are formal and informal mentoring relationships (Mukeredzi and Mandrona 2013). A conclusion drawn by both (Ragins et al. 2000) is that there are distinct differences between formal and informal mentoring relationships that may impact the mentor's functions and the career outcomes of the relationship. These differences involve the way the relationship is initiated, the structure of the relationship, and the processes involved in the relationship.

The above authors analysed the issue of relationships in mentoring and found that in informal mentoring relationship, the relationship develops on the basis of mutual identification and the fulfilment of career needs (Israel et al.2014; Scull et al. 2020). Trainee teachers select role model mentors and their relationship with the mentor end up being a parent - child relationship. Mentoring relationships usually develop on the basis of perceived competence. The mentor will select high performing trainee teachers who in turn, select mentors with desired expertise (Johnson 2015). Thus, they both select partners they enjoy working with (Deleña and Resurreccion 2018; Arora and Rangnekar 2015). In formal mentoring relationship, the programme coodinator is the one who is responsible for assigning the members to their mentors. Therefore one can say he or she is responsible for establishing or developing that formal mentoring relationship.

Sugimoto (2012) suggests that, role modeling, and inter-personal support do not play a role in the development of formal relationships.It is imperative to say that psychosocial functions of role modeling,friendship,and counseling may be less in formal than in informal mentoring relationships since formal mentoring relationships are also less likely to be found on mutual perceptions of competence (Arora and Rangnekar 2015). This judgement is made by the programme coodinator rather than the trainee teacher. Spooner-lane (2017) adopts a much stronger position when he gives a comparison of mentor functions with an agent that provokes a reaction or speeds up a reaction that should have taken place in the future. Thus, the present study sought to identify the career and psychosocial roles performed by the mentor during teaching practice, and how these mentors perform them with a view to improving the mentor's practice during teaching practice.

In the teaching and learning situation career functions are defined as "a process in which the mentor teaches the protégé how to learn the basics within the organization" (Kram 1985a, cited

in Vanderbilt 2010: 11). For instance, in this context, the mentor teaches the trainee teacher how to teach secondary school learners, cited in Fowler and O'Gorma (2005), and Severina et al. 2016 suggest that mentors provide career support (sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments) and psychosocial support (role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship) to their protégés. Furthermore, mentorship moves through four phases which are:

- Initiation phase: Initiation is where by the mentor and the trainee teacher admire, respect and trust one another (Bukari and Kuyini 2015).
- Cultivation phase: cultivation involves development of the trainee teacher's competence and confidence from the career development and psychosocial support by the mentor (Jyoti and Sharma 2015).
- Separation phase: At separation stage, the trainee teacher is experienced and can now become independent and empowered to do most of the given work without mentor assistance. This stage agrees with the theoretical framework on Adult learning theory by Knowles (1980), Hudson's five factor model of mentoring (2010), and Grays's developmental model of mentoring (1994). This is because trainee teachers need to be assisted to a certain extent before they become independent and empowered (Fowler and O'Gorman 2005).
- Reshaping phase: The last phase shows that the mentor and trainee teacher's relationship is reshaped to meet more collegial need, for example; receiving internal and external assessors, involvement in co-curricular activities, and also solving some of the psychosocial problems alone (Kramer and Otr 2018).

The above phases which were also noted in the background of this study are important in guiding the mentor in the whole mentorship process during teaching practice. The present study sought to find out the extent to which the Zimbabwean secondary school mentors perform their mentor roles and the impact of their performance on the provision of careerdevelopment and psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice. This is with a view to improving the way mentors perform their duties.

METHODOLOGY

The study was located in interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm was the most appropriate because of its subjectivity in exploring views, experiences, perceptions and meanings of participants in relation to the practices of mentors, in career development and psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice (Steyn and Tonder 2017; Thanh and Thanh 2015). Moreover, interpretivists portray a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing (Steyn and Tonder 2017). Consequently, a qualitative approach was adopted in this study, where the researchers studied the events and individuals in their natural state (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2017). Findings by Thanh and Thanh (2015: 25)show that interpretivists usually tend to use qualitative designs such as case studies and ethnography which provide rich reports or information to fully understand contexts. The study adopted a case study design.

Participants and Settings

This study selected mentors as key informants for in-depth interviews, according to categorisation of secondary schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Annual Statistical Report (2013: 8-9). It also sampled those who were experienced and had served for over 5 years as mentors and had a good reputation of mentoring. Secondary schools are categorised for purposes of paying per capita grants as, S1 schools in low density suburbs, S2 schools in high density suburbs, and S3 schools in rural areas. Six mentors were selected, 2 from each category. Focus group interviews were held with 15 trainee teachers selected from the three school categories that is, 5 from each category. Others who were selected were 5 college lecturers, 2 from teaching practice office who worked with trainee teachers during teaching practice and 3 senior lecturers in charge, who were experienced selected from three departments namely; physical education, science and mathematics. The sample also included 1 university lecturer who

was a link person between the college and the Department of Teacher Education. Therefore, the total sample of the study was 27 participants.

Instrumentation

The researchers chose different data collection methods for the purpose of triangulation. Barbour (2014) defines triangulation as the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or extend inferences drawn from, the data. Face to face one on one interviews were held with mentors, lecturers from teaching practice office, senior lecturers in charge of Mathematics, Science and Physical Education and Department of Teacher Education Link Person. Focus group discussions were held with teacher trainees who did their teaching practice in the three sampled schools. Different documents were analysed, namely; reports by teacher trainees, mentors and lecturers in charge of teaching practice, letters written by schools, teacher trainees and college lecturers in charge of teaching practice and supervisors, minutes of meetings which took place in schools and college and assessment instruments used to assess teacher trainees.

RESULTS

The responses of participants to the research question on career development and psychosocial roles of mentors during teaching practice, showed that there were various career and psychosocial roles being performed by mentors during teaching practice. The responses indicated that the career roles performed by mentors were as follows: assisting trainee teachers in classroom management; providing pedagogical skills to trainee teachers; providing technical and organisational skills and coaching which focused on learning and teaching activities like planning, timetabling, teaching, classroom control, giving instructions, problem solving, and giving feedback. The participants also revealed that the psychosocial roles were being properly performed and they looked at mentors as role models. The following is a response from participant trainee teacher from focus group FGTS1F who acknowledged that;

My mentor helped me a lot especially with documentation. He used to supervise my teaching practice about twice a week so that after supervising my file, he sits down with me making some adjustments on the areas which needed to be given special attention and to be revisited, especially on daily lesson plans and lesson plan evaluation. On another issue, he just empowered me to feel that I knew what I was doing, especially on lesson delivery. He motivated me.

Participant trainee teacher from focus group FGTS1T, stated:

My mentor, acted as a role model in terms of guiding trainee teachers in terms of how they should behave at the school and manage the classroom. We copy some of the things done by the mentor. I got experience from my mentor. He guided me on how to manage the class and how to behave.

Trainee teachers from focus group FGTS2E shared the same view by saying,

As for me, the mentors are very important because they instil confidence in us and also supervise, counsel us and also, we could confide in them some of our burdens, like financial constraints and lack of resources, and they would assist us by providing guidance and advice.

Participant from focus group FGTS3J said,

My mentor used to help me a lot during my teaching practice, especially on the issue of challenging assignments; to write the assignment, especially those from Theory of Education. She taught me how to respect others, the headmaster and the deputy master and the rest of the staff. She supervised me each and every week, demonstrating on how to scheme, how to interpret the syllabus, and how to interact with the learners.

Participant from focus group FGTS2G highlighted that,

My mentor helped me on planning, scheming and lesson development. He also taught me how to socialise with anyone in the school and the code of conduct in terms of how to report the issues to the mentor and the Head of Department.

On the same issue, trainee teacher participant from FGTS2R responded by saying,

My mentor welcomes me to a school which was a new environment to me since I was coming from a rural back ground. She taught me to

be responsible, and to stick to the main objectives of preparing my documents and to teach learners.

From the above responses by the trainee teachers, it was clear that mentors were performing the career roles more than the psychosocial roles. Probably, the mentors thought that their main duties were mainly focused in the classroom. A trainee teacher from focus group FGTS3C agreed to the above views by saying,

Mentors help teachers to be competent in their career. My mentor could accompany me to the lessons such that I could watch him teaching to promote professionalism. Then, I could also do the same in teaching by just copying what the mentor had been doing. On psychosocial development, he used to have some regular counselling sessions on stress issues.

Some mentors also showed understanding of their roles and how they were to be performed. They gave responses which concurred with the trainee teachers from the three focus groups, showing how they perform both the career roles and the psychosocial roles during teaching practice. Their responses are captured below.

Mentor MS1A indicated that,

As a mentor, I will teach my trainee teacher to scheme, how to break down the content, formulating objectives and preparing their documents like record books and pupils' register. I give them guidance and counselling, and give some sort of motivation.

Mentor MS1B also said that,

The career roles which I perform as a mentor are to lead the trainee teachers by taking them to the lessons and showing them how a good lesson is structured. We also look closely at their schemes of work, interpretation of national syllabus, and career development as a whole.

Mentor MS2A added that

Mentors are role models to their mentees. Mentees learn through observation. Thus, mentors should be friendly and approachable by creating a conducive environment. They provide counselling if the mentee faces any problem or any challenge, be it social or also psychosocial, providing some guidance and counselling.

Mentor MS3A further explained that,

Role modelling is important in attaining practical and leadership skills. I play a more like 'in loco parentis'. When they come to this school, professionalism is part of my duty as a mentor to tell these trainee teachers how to dress professionally, how to behave, since they are crucial in the development of their country at large.

On the other hand, it came out from the participants' responses that some mentors had no idea of the career development and psychosocial support provided by the mentors to trainee teachers during teaching practice. The mentors and trainee teachers appealed for enlightenment and explanation on mentors' career role and psychosocial roles. It also came out that most participants thought that the mentor was supposed to do his or her duties during working hours only.

Among them was the trainee teacher participant in focus group FGT1Tb whose response was "*I do not quite understand what you mean by career roles and psychosocial roles of the mentor, may you please explain.*" Participant in focus group FGT3Tn said that, "W*e are not quite sure about the career and psychosocial roles performed by the mentor. "*Mentor participant MS1aechoed the same sentiments when she responded, "*I am not sure of what I was supposed to do as a mentor. Can you explain to me?*"

It emerged from the responses that the major challenges encountered were; lack of respect on the part of trainee teachers and the children they were teaching, poor communication strategies, gossip among trainee teachers and mentors, poor choice of teaching methodology, lack of proper supervision, lack of resources, absenteeism from duty, lack of guidance and mentorship skills, work overload, lack of time, cheating, sexual abuse, drunkenness, malpractices by trainee teachers, social problems, financial constraints, unavailability of electrical power. The researchers found that challenges were also confirmed from the documents analysed as also shown in the participants' statements below. The participants' responses on challenges are captured below.

Participant in focus group FGTS1Tk said that,

The problem I faced was lack of respect on the part of mentors and learners. They never respected us as trainee teachers. They considered trainee teacher as useless and I was also overloaded with work, assigned to be a class teacher. I had some documentation to do, and I was expected to perform duties of being a class teacher. So to me, it was overloading.

Participant from focus group FGTS3Ch stated,

My mentor was an old teacher who was trained years back when these learner-centred methodologies were not yet applicable. So, when I went with the issue of media like charts and laptops for printing, my mentor could not accept that, so we fought a battle to explain to the mentor the importance of using some charts. However, the mentor kept on resisting saying that it was time consuming to the learners. In actual fact, he encouraged the use of lecture method which he said was a faster method of teaching.

Mentors identified some challenges they faced during mentorship which they believed were disturbing them in facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice. Some documents analysed by the researchers were in agreement with all what the participants stated below. Mentor participant MS1B explained that,

The major problem is the issue of resources. They try hard to monitor progress but if there are no resources, it will be difficult to monitor progress. There is also the new curriculum. We are facing shortages of textbooks. When the college comes to pay visit to the school, they might find me absent because I may not always be at the school. Sometimes I attend other meetings.

The above was supported by documentary evidence from a letter written by a trainee teacher to the teaching practice office. Participant teacher trainee DALMd wrote a letter saying,

I am willing to change the school for teaching practice due to a number of reasons that are as follows; the schools not providing resources such as stationery, manila sheets, bond paper and printing facilities.

Mentor MS2A also noted that*;*

There are some challenges, for example the issue of resources. For example, the mentee would require me or would want me to help in a certain way but because of the shortage of resources, I cannot assist the mentee. Yes, I have time but it is a bit limited. Sometimes I have other duties to perform.

Mentor MS2B observed that,

We do face a lot of challenges considering that we are just the mentors in business. There's no remuneration. I have more than forty five lessons per week. Mentorship is another addition.

We are not paid for being mentors. We are told that you're going to be a mentor and you're not consulted. So, I feel I am being overburdened. We need support in terms of financial support. So, if we are not being given incentives the mentors become demotivated.

Mentor MS3B noted that,

The school is facing a challenge on the issue of giving us incentives. It is difficult to work without being paid money as incentive. Personally I cannot do work, as it is required by the college or by the school, without money because it's a burden. It's an overload. So, mentors should be paid for mentorship.

The researchers discovered that the challenges encountered during mentorship were also confirmed by the information from documents analysed. For instance, supervision report dated 18-01-16 reported that,

The student had serious problems as regards to documentation, such as stating of objectives, evaluation, and record of marks, social record book and other record books.

Results from the current study revealed that poor performance by trainee teachers reflects also the mentors' performance. It shows that the trainee teachers were ill prepared due to lack of proper supervision by mentors. Some mentors were not supervising trainee teachers. Instead, they were off loading their burden on trainee teachers who were not yet able to teach. This caused some trainee teachers to absent themselves from school, fail or withdraw from the teaching practice. The responses of the mentors are indicated below.

Mentor MS1A said,

Trainee teachers also encounter some challenges with staff members at the school in terms of communication. They might not have good communication skills, so I tried by all means to give them direction or the correct way to talk to their HODs and to the headmasters when they come across challenges. They should talk to the mentor first, then to the headmaster.

Mentor MS1B noted that,

The problem is that, if lady trainee teachers get approached by the senior male teachers, they might feel shy and afraid to refuse. If they say no to that, it might affect their course because of being victimised. I try very hard to counsel on such matters even though there might be

some difficulties. Those are psychosocial problems that our trainee teachers normally bring to us.

In support of the above, DAC, a lecturer in charge, wrote a letter to the teaching practice officer reporting unprofessional conduct of another trainee teacher saying,

...the trainee teacher has rejected advice/corrections/counsel offered by the head of department. The teacher has been persistently and habitually reported late for lessons.... The trainee teacher doctored marks i.e. recorded marks for work she had not given and marked..... Following the meeting on 16/07/18.........made learners write several exercises during the night backdating it to 26/06/18.

The research findings have also shown that some of the negative behaviour which was being portrayed by both the mentor and the trainee teachers was a result of the poor mentorship systems. However, documents analysed, such as memos, letters and reports, revealed that some trainee teachers requested to be deferred due to illness or injuries, maternity leave, purported negligence of duty and some failed because they absented themselves on the day of external assessment. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that some trainee teachers were withdrawn from host schools as a result of misconduct related to bad language and physical violence. This is shown by a letter dated 22 March 2018 to college from school. This could be a result of poor mentor practices. Mentors are supposed to be very alert, monitoring the trainee teacher's activities during teaching practice.

It also emerged from the study, through documentary analysis, that trainee teacher DALEn in a letter dated, 02/03/18 asked for permission to transfer to another school due poor accommodation, unhealthy food and poor living conditions. A letter dated 18/05/2018 written by trainee teacher DARLey refuted the allegations that he was incompetent. Instead, he gave what he thought were valid reasons for his shortcomings. These were financial constraints, lack of co-curricular activities, and implementation of the new curriculum. Furthermore, the trainee teacher suggested that the school should adjust to technological changes and give remuneration. Below are the views of lecturers in charge.

Lecturer LICS pointed out that,

Some mentors had to assess trainee teachers but they were not assisting them in any way. They are not worried about what is happening in the classroom. They just leave the class in the hands of trainee teachers. The trainee teacher has to fend for apparatus they want to use alone. Mentors are not worried because they don't even get into the classroom to assess what is happening, such that when we go out there, we will find out that they will be scheming wrongly showing that nobody was checking their work.

A letter written by a trainee teacher DALPr, to the teaching practice office, dated 05/03 2018 said,

I am asking for permission to visit the college for discussion on my Teaching Practice load.

The study found that in some cases, trainee teachers went to the college because they were not discharging their duties well. Some were found wanting, like some trainee teachers had situations whereby they had problems from home and even the mentor was very supportive to the student but the extent of the support was actually disadvantaging the student because they ended up failing dismally. Lecturer LICS said;

Everybody was saying she was around. She could not see the lecturers because the file was empty. So, why should the mentor keep a student like that? And worse still, the head of the school would have known that. Unfortunately, looking at the file, it showed that the mentor was not looking at the file, the headmaster was not looking at the file, and the HOD was also not helping the student. But why did she fail? It was about social problems.

The lecturers in charge from the colleges' mathematics, science and physical education departments agreed with the trainee teachers from the focus groups and the mentors that there were challenges which needed immediate attention in facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice.

Lecturer LICM said,

Some of the challenges that you know, the scheme formats requested by our college may differ with that one which you see in school.

School heads and administrators insist that our students do their planning according to their school and not according to the college format.

Lecturer LICS asserted that,

Sometimes it is difficult if the mentors themselves are not professional in nature. It is difficult for the college to really tell that this mentor is the rightful person to do the mentoring job. So mentor selection has become a haunting issue in schools.

Lecturers who is the Teaching Practice Officer (TPO1) said,

As I said, lecturers from colleges visit trainee teachers maybe once or twice a term. So, as a result, that is the only time maybe we interact with the mentors, and we have very short discussion with the mentors. Time is not enough, and we also do not have the leeway to go into the schools specifically to look at the mentors. We just talk to them when we go for teaching practice. So, I think that time is not enough time for supervision during teaching practice.

Lecturer who is the TPO2 observed that,

We used to invite mentors for workshops, but due to economic challenges, we no longer do that. We will find ourselves really farfetched if we are to talk of having workshop of that sort. So, those are the main challenges before we attempt to go there. Thus, it is difficult and we are no longer in touch with our mentors due to financial constraints or economic situations that have arisen.

The data presented above revealed that although the DTE, teachers' college lecturers supervise trainee teachers during teaching practice, there are still a lot of problems which need to be addressed for the mentors to improve their practices in facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice. The participants in this study indicated that at times the trainee teachers were overloaded with work by the mentors, and some of them were still young enough to be bullied by the learners they taught. Another challenge was that they were also looked down upon by some teachers and they faced sexual harassment from some teachers and mentors at the schools they were attached. It emerged from the findings that some trainee teachers blamed the mentors for the challenges they encountered and, at the same time, the mentors saw the trainee teacher as culprits. It emerged from the study that the whole mentorship programme was to blame since there were some loopholes in the way the programme was being implemented.

DISCUSSION

The study examined whether participants understood the concepts of career development and psychosocial support. The findings of the study revealed that most of the participants were able to distinguish between career development and psychosocial support roles of mentors, although some participants were not clear on the meaning of the two concepts (Limeri et al. 2020).The findings were similar to those of Hudson (2017) and Matsko et al. 2020).This was shown by participants' request for explanation of the concepts of career development and psychosocial support. The majority of them were able to identify career development as the assistance given to the trainee teacher by the mentor during teaching practice in order to accomplish his/her role of teaching the learners. Similarly, Shumba et al. (2016) identified psychosocial support as the help given by the mentor during and after working hours which is of a social, emotional and psychological nature.

The results of the findings also agree with those of Patterson and Davis (2017) that most of the participants understood that the roles behind the concepts of career development and psychosocial support are complementary, since the mentors could perform both roles during mentorship concurrently. Sometimes, it was difficult for the mentor to separate the two roles during the career development and psychosocial support. The findings of the study showed that there are two major types of mentoring namely; career development functions and psychosocial functions (Maphosa et al. 2007). More clarity on mentors' roles on career development and psychosocial support was given by Kram (1988), cited in Ford (2017), who suggested "two broad functions of mentoring relationship", which are career functions and psychosocial functions. The findings of the study concurs with Kram cited in Ford (2017)who concluded that career functions involve the mentee being assisted professionally. The functions include sponsorship, whereby the trainee teacher is

promoted for advancement in the school (Alasad and Leadership 2017).There is also exposure and visibility. The trainee teacher is introduced to key people and advocates for the mentee (Sandilos et al. 2018). The results of the study agree with Alkhawaldeh (2017) who said that coaching is also another career function whereby the mentor will be helping the trainee teacher to navigate the profession and grow professionally and protects the trainee teacher from potentially damaging contact with others and challenging assignments. Similarly, Ford (2017:17) concluded that the mentor also guides the mentee through challenging and profitable work that might not have been accomplished alone (Ford 2017: 17).

The findings of the study are also consistent with reviewed literature by Vinales (2015) on the roles of the mentor who stated that the mentor has the responsibility to expose the trainee teacher to various situations at the school, to get familiarised to the schoool environment and to adapt to the prevailing situation to achieve his or her goals as a trainee teacher inorder to creat a good relationship (Ford 2017). The study results are in line with the reviewed literature in that the role of the mentor is to protect the mentee, to foster career development, and provide psychosocial support (Sandilos et al. 2018). As shown in the theoretical framework by Grays' (1994) Developmental Model and Hudson's (2017) Five Factor Model, the mentor and the trainee teacher must have a collaborative relationship.This will assist in the development of career and psychosocial skills during teaching practice.

The findings of this study concur with a study carried by Shumba et al. (2016) which concluded that "mentees need more cooperation from mentors who denied them assistance and either postponed or never gave feedback at all" (p.76). It also came out from this study that some mentors were not doing their work appropriately. They absented themselves from schools, giving the whole teaching load to the trainee teacher. It was also confirmed that their negative attitude was a result of lack of necessary mentorship skills (Wexler 2020). However, the information given by the three theoretical frameworks spell out how the mentors should perform their career development and psycho-

social support roles (Vinales 2015). For example, Hudson's (2017) five factor model of mentoring stipulates that the system requirement assists both the mentor and trainee teacher to have necessary information required in the career development and psychosocial support to trainee teachers during teaching practice (Kwatubana and Ebrahim 2020). Again, mentors can provide pedagogical knowledge about assessment and effective teaching practices that link curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (Ferdig et al. 2020). The theory by Gray (1994) stresses that the experienced mentor is expected to guide the trainee teacher properly through the guiding mentoring style, shifting from imparting information to trainee teacher so that he or she gains experience of the teaching and learning process (Brockett and Hiemstra 2018).

The findings of the study, however, differed slightly with what happens in the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany where the role of mentor is more diverse and can be located within different conceptual paradigms which are reflected in three models of mentoring, namely; apprenticeship model, competency model and reflective model (Hudson 2017). In these two countries, the apprenticeship model entails that the trainee teacher observes the mentor and learns from him or her, whereas in the competency model, the mentor gives the mentee feedback about performance and progress. In the reflective model, the mentor assists the trainee teacher to become a reflective practitioner (Kwan and Lopez-real 2017). In the case of Zimbabwe, the apprenticeship model is more prevalent in the sense that most trainee teachers learn by observation.

The researchers found that mentors did not care about giving their mentees feedback, and they rarely assist their mentees to be reflective. In addition, reviewed literature indicates that England and Germany have their focus more on the mentor's role in terms of advisor, trainer, partner, friend, and assessor, and how they influence the pedagogical development of the trainee teacher during teaching practice (Patterson and Davis 2015). The findings of the study revealed that mentors dwell more on career development roles instead of balancing career development and psychosocial roles. It is essential for mentors to balance the provision of both career development and psychosocial support

to trainee teachers during teaching practice for effective mentorship.

If mentors are not properly trained on career development and psychosocial support roles, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be able to perform their role effectively (Fitchett et al. 2018). For instance, reviewed literature in support of mentor training states that recent studies have shown that mentors are often not sure about their roles (Shumba 2016). A study by the University of South Africa (UNISA)(2016) on school based mentorship showed that only 37percent of mentors had received training on mentoring against 68 percent who had not attended professional development programmes for effective mentorship (Maphalala 2013: 126). Thus, it is important for the mentors to undergo mentorship training to enable them to do their duties effectively. The study revealed that training of mentors has been constrained by lack of funding. This has implication in selection of mentors as there was no criteria for selection and anyone could become a mentor (Shumba et al. 2016). It was also evident from the information obtained from the participants that mentors gave priority to other duties which they felt were more important to them and would overwork trainee teachers by giving them extra teaching duties. This indicates that there was lack of commitment on enhancing professional development and psychosocial support among trainee teachers (Deleña and Resurreccion 2018). Lack of commitment was also shown by the fact that some mentors felt they had to be remunerated for mentoring the trainees who were actually taking over their teaching load (Shumba et al. 2016). Some trainee teachers were sexually abused and harassed by teachers from the schools they were placed for teaching practice. While this is serious crime if it proved to be true, it is also the time when victims required a lot of psychosocial support. Having mentors who were not well equipped with the required skills and also lack of motivation disadvantaged the trainee teachers and made them vulnerable. These might have attributed to the trainee teachers either failing the programme, wanting to change schools or dropping out.

There were other issues regarding mentors which were evident for the information obtained from the participants. Supervisors from the college were not able to meet mentors during supervision meetings due to lack of proper communication between mentors and college lecturers (Kálmán et al. 2020). Such meetings are very crucial because that is the time when mentors and college lecturers could address or agree on one format to be used at school by trainee teachers. In this study schools insisted that trainee teachers follow the one that is used by them and not the one they were taught in the college. In one case a student teacher could not use modern technology because the mentor who had no training in the area would not allow her to do so. All the above issues posed some challenges on the provision of career development and provision of psychosocial support to trainee teachers by mentors.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the mentors performed both the career development and psychosocial support roles in assisting the trainee teachers although the provision of psychosocial development was minimum. It emerged from the findings of the study that mentors performed the following duties; sponsorship, coaching, supervisor, role modelling, social support, induction of mentees, orientation of trainee teachers, helping trainee teachers to adjust to the new environment, imparting pedagogical and technical skills, collaboration, being a friend to give advice, as well as guidance and counselling.

The study indicated that some mentors responded positively to their duties but others had negative attitude. Facilitating career development and providing psychosocial support to trainee teachers was constrained by the following factors: shortage of teaching and learning resources; lack of training on the part of the mentor; work overload for trainee teachers; a congested school timetable; the low priority given to trainee teachers; lack of funding for staff development and training programmes; poor relationship among the supervisors, mentors and trainee teachers; poor communication between the school and the college; absence of mentorship reviews lack of support by the school and colleges, as well as lack of government funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary for the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Tertiary

Development (MOHTESTD), Ministry of primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE), colleges and schools to consider coming up with mentorship policy which match the current situation globally for example the new curriculum in Zimbabwe and current economic situations which emphasises on mentor selection and training. Colleges should consult all stakeholders when crafting the trainee teachers' codes of conduct so that they produce codes of conduct that are acceptable to all stakeholders. Involving all stakeholders will result in them developing a sense of ownership, which would encourage the stakeholders to support the implementation of the codes of conduct. Department of Teacher Education (DTE), colleges and schools should also support mentors during teaching practice. The colleges and schools should constantly review their codes of conduct so that they are relevant to the prevailing situation. There is need for initiation of the mentor training, staff development and in-service training programmes for school mentors since some of them are not trained. The effectiveness of this programme is depended on a fully functional and trained mentors so that trainee teachers are developed holistically. The MOPSE and schools should reduce the workloads of mentor teachers so that they can focus more on provision of career development and psychosocial support.

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