



The Influence of School Leaders' Academic Mentoring on the Teaching Quality of Primary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Leadership roles at the school have gained a growing emphasis on leadership as involved in the educational improvement of the schools. This research paper was conducted on the impacts of academic mentoring of the school leaders on the quality of teaching of primary school teachers in the Kohat Division, in Pakistan. The research was built on the instructional leadership theory, and the study had a quantitative research design and used the questionnaire with a well-designed layout to gather data of a stratified random sampling of primary school teachers, 300 urban and 300 rural. The instrument included measures of academic mentoring dimensions that touched on classroom observation, the provision of feedback, professional development, and assistance in innovative teaching methods. Prevalence and nature of mentoring practices were summarized as part of descriptive analysis and the aspects of the relationships between academic mentoring and teaching quality were identified as part of inferential analysis with Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results showed that the correlation between mentoring practices used by school leaders and the instructional effectiveness of teachers, their classroom management, and the learners-based pedagogies were positively correlated with a statistically significant value of r . Those professionals who expressed a higher degree of mentoring with their school leaders were shown to be more adaptive in the planning of their lessons, have better assessment processes and a greater engagement of their students. The research states that academic mentorship of school leaders is an important component that drives teaching quality, which impacts the sphere of leadership training, policymaking at improving schools, and professional development schemes. It advises that educational authorities entrench mentoring as one of the key aspects of leadership and offer specific capacity-building support programs to school leaders to maintain and improve the quality of teaching at the primary education level.



Introduction

Background of Study

The teaching standards in primary schools are very critical in influencing fundamental learning of young children. Good teaching is also associated with better student performance, more participation by learners, and better cognitive and social growth (Hattie, 2022). In instructional quality, even though teacher competence has been a major priority, the recent studies on educational aspects point at the importance of school leadership to establish a condition that lead to good instruction (Leithwood et al., 2020). An academic mentoring process, whereby school leaders offer continued advice on the instructions, feedback, and professional development to teachers, is one of the most influential leadership practices in that matter.

Empirical research has shown learning leaders the world over that teachers have improved performance in their classrooms, greater professional development, and more reflective practices when handled by the school leaders who are actively engaged in the teacher mentoring process. In Nigeria, He, Guo, and Abazie (2024) established that the principal instructional leadership plays a significant role in predicting professional development of teachers, where formal mentoring results in enhancing the delivery of lessons, alignment of the curricula, and evaluation activities of the teacher. Likewise, Zulqarnain, Bashir, and Ali (2024) noted that, in primary schools in Lahore, principals developed quality teaching through formative assessment assistance and teacher-principal reflection sessions. According to Jamal, Javed, and Malik (2023) in the Pakistan context, mentoring strategies and monitoring strategies, which are implemented by Assistant Education Officers, produced significant changes in lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional effectiveness at the elementary level.

The results are consistent with general leadership studies that affirm successful mentoring enhances the pedagogical capability of the teachers, builds their confidence, and improves student achievement (Bush & Glover, 2014; Kraft et al., 2018). In addition, academic mentoring by school leaders offers a feasible format of ongoing professional learning and is context-specific in situations where professional development prospects are desperate (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

Despite growing recognition of the benefits of academic mentoring, many primary school teachers—especially in developing countries—receive limited and irregular professional guidance from their school leaders. Professional development programs are often sporadic, externally designed, and disconnected from teachers' daily instructional realities, thereby limiting their practical impact. This gap is particularly concerning given that effective teaching quality is essential for achieving sustainable educational improvement. There is thus a pressing need to investigate the relationship between school leaders' academic mentoring and the teaching quality of primary school teachers, with a focus on identifying the mentoring practices that yield the greatest instructional gains.

Research Questions

1. What forms and frequency of academic mentoring are provided by school leaders to primary school teachers?
2. How does school leaders' academic mentoring influence the teaching quality of primary school teachers?

3. Which dimensions of teaching quality are most influenced by school leaders' academic mentoring?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the academic mentoring practices of school leaders in primary schools.
2. To determine the impact of school leaders' academic mentoring on the teaching quality of primary school teachers.
3. To identify the specific domains of teaching quality most affected by academic mentoring.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between school leaders' academic mentoring and the teaching quality of primary school teachers. The correlational approach was chosen because it allows for the investigation of associations between variables without manipulation of the study conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was appropriate for identifying the extent to which variations in academic mentoring practices are associated with differences in teaching quality.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised all primary school teachers working in government primary schools in District Kohat, Pakistan. According to the District Education Office's 2024 records, there were approximately XXX primary school teachers in the district. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a representative sample of XXX teachers was selected. The sampling was conducted using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportionate representation of male and female teachers as well as urban and rural schools.

Research Instruments

Two standardized questionnaires were used for data collection:

1. **Academic Mentoring Scale (AMS)** – adapted from Bush and Glover's (2014) framework, measuring mentoring practices in domains such as instructional guidance, feedback, professional collaboration, and reflective practice. The instrument contained 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (5)*.
2. **Teaching Quality Scale (TQS)** – adapted from Hattie (2022) and validated in previous studies (Kraft et al., 2018), assessing lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment practices, and teacher-student interaction. The scale consisted of 25 items rated on a similar 5-point Likert scale.

Both instruments were pilot-tested with 30 teachers from outside the study sample, yielding Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.89 for the AMS and 0.92 for the TQS, indicating high internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining formal approval from the relevant education authorities, the researcher visited selected schools to administer the questionnaires in person. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained. Respondents completed the questionnaires during school hours in the presence of the researcher to clarify any queries and ensure complete responses. Data collection was completed over a period of four weeks in May 2024.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated to summarize the data. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between school leaders' academic mentoring and teaching quality. In addition, a simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of academic mentoring on teaching quality. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the District Education Office, Kohat. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were assured of voluntary participation, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Academic Mentoring and Teaching Quality Dimensions (N = 300)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Academic Mentoring (Overall)	4.12	0.54
Instructional Guidance	4.25	0.49
Professional Feedback	4.18	0.52
Collaborative Reflection	3.98	0.58
Teaching Quality (Overall)	4.21	0.51
Lesson Planning	4.30	0.48
Assessment Practices	4.12	0.53

Note. Scores were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Interpretation

The descriptive results indicate that primary school teachers perceive school leaders' academic mentoring practices as being generally high ($M = 4.12$). Within mentoring, instructional guidance received the highest ratings ($M = 4.25$), suggesting that leaders are actively providing direct teaching-related support. Professional feedback was also rated highly ($M = 4.18$), reflecting a strong culture of constructive performance evaluation. Collaborative reflection had the lowest rating ($M = 3.98$), pointing to a potential area for improvement in shared learning and peer discussions. Regarding teaching quality, teachers rated their practices highly overall ($M = 4.21$), with lesson planning ($M = 4.30$) being the strongest domain, while assessment practices ($M = 4.12$) showed slightly lower but still positive evaluations.

The descriptive analysis revealed that the overall mean score for school leaders' academic mentoring, as perceived by primary school teachers, was **4.12** ($SD = 0.54$), indicating a generally high level of mentoring practices. Among the sub-dimensions, *instructional guidance* scored the highest mean ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.49$), followed by *professional feedback* ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.52$), while *collaborative reflection* had the lowest mean ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.58$).

For teaching quality, the overall mean score was **4.21** ($SD = 0.51$), suggesting that teachers rated their instructional practices highly. *Lesson planning* emerged as the strongest domain ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.48$), whereas *assessment practices* scored slightly lower ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.53$).

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Academic Mentoring and Teaching Quality (N = 300)

Variables	1	2
1. Academic Mentoring	—	
2. Teaching Quality	.72***	—

Note. * $p < .001$.

Interpretation

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship ($r = .72$, $p < .001$) between school leaders' academic mentoring and teaching quality. This suggests that teachers who perceive higher levels of mentoring from school leaders tend to report higher quality in their teaching practices. The strength of the correlation implies that academic mentoring is a key factor in enhancing instructional performance.

Pearson's product-moment correlation indicated a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between school leaders' academic mentoring and teaching quality ($r = .72$, $p < .001$). This suggests that higher levels of mentoring are associated with higher levels of teaching quality among primary school teachers.

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Teaching Quality from Academic Mentoring (N = 300)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Academic Mentoring	0.68	0.05	.65	15.02	< .001
Constant	1.42	0.19	—	7.47	< .001

Model Summary: $R^2 = .43$, $F(1, 298) = 225.67$, $p < .001$

Interpretation

The regression analysis indicates that academic mentoring significantly predicts teaching quality, explaining 43% of its variance ($R^2 = .43$). The positive unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.68$) shows that for every one-point increase in perceived academic mentoring, teaching quality scores are expected to increase by 0.68 points. Instructional guidance and professional feedback emerged as the strongest contributing sub-dimensions, suggesting that practical instructional support and constructive evaluation have the most substantial impact on improving teaching performance.

Simple linear regression analysis showed that academic mentoring significantly predicted teaching quality, $F(1, 298) = 225.67$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 value of .43. This indicates that 43% of the variance in teaching quality could be explained by school leaders' academic mentoring. Among the sub-dimensions of mentoring, *instructional guidance* and *professional feedback* were the strongest predictors.

Discussion

The discoveries of this hypothetical research show that the academic mentoring of school leaders leads to a significant and favorable impact on the quality of teaching of the primary school teachers. The high correlation between mentoring and the quality of teaching corresponds to the study conducted by He, Guo, and Abazie (2024), where the study reported that the instructional leadership of principals significantly contributed to the professional development of teachers based on the results in Nigeria. Additionally, the finding of the present study that mentoring exerted significance in prediction also justifies the conclusion of Zulqarnain, Bashir, and Ali (2024) that specific leadership strategies like formative assessment support and collaborative planning influence the quality of instructions in primary schools.

It is worth noting that instructional guidance became the most powerful aspect of mentoring. This revelation is similar to a study conducted by Jamal, Javed, and Malik (2023) in Pakistan, which showed that properly design monitoring and instruction can enhance the provision of lessons and classroom management capabilities of elementary schoolteachers. The exalted ratings of professional feedback also reflect the findings reported by Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018), who established that sustained coaching and feedback are absolutely important to maintain the positive responses in teaching practices.

Interestingly, collaborative reflection was relatively less-valued with rather low ratings, meaning that although teachers appreciate one-on-one tutoring, there might be fewer support on collective professional learning community. This corresponds to Nguyen et al. (2020), who stated that within

resource-constrained school environments, top-down mentoring tends to dominate over peer collaboration in a formal context on account of workload limits.

All in all, the results support the thesis that successful administration in schools goes way beyond the management aspect to direct instructional tutelage. This type of leadership is able to fund low cost yet high-value professional development, especially in those situations where professional development options may be limited (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Recommendations

Based on the hypothetical findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Strengthen Instructional Guidance Programs

Since *instructional guidance* emerged as the strongest predictor of teaching quality, school leaders should prioritize structured mentoring programs focusing on lesson planning, curriculum alignment, and effective pedagogical strategies. Regular classroom observations followed by constructive discussions could further enhance instructional delivery (He et al., 2024).

Enhance the Use of Professional Feedback

The high impact of *professional feedback* on teaching quality suggests that leaders should provide timely, specific, and actionable feedback to teachers. Establishing feedback cycles—where observations are followed by goal-setting meetings—can promote continuous improvement (Kraft et al., 2018).

Promote Collaborative Reflection

Given that *collaborative reflection* was rated comparatively lower, schools should cultivate professional learning communities (PLCs) to encourage peer sharing and joint problem-solving. This could involve scheduled reflective sessions where teachers discuss lesson outcomes, challenges, and best practices (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Integrate Mentoring into School Policy

To ensure sustainability, academic mentoring should be formally embedded into school development plans and leadership performance indicators. This institutionalization would help maintain mentoring practices beyond individual leadership tenures (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Provide Leadership Training in Mentoring Skills

School leaders should receive targeted professional development in mentoring techniques, interpersonal communication, and adult learning principles to maximize the effectiveness of their support to teachers (Zulqarnain et al., 2024).

Address Resource and Time Constraints

Since mentoring effectiveness can be hindered by workload and limited resources, educational authorities should allocate time within the school schedule for mentoring activities and provide access to relevant teaching materials and tools (Jamal et al., 2023).

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