

Transformative Impact of Mentorship on Building Resilience and Enhancing Professional Success: A Systematic Review of Support Strategies for Novice Teachers

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Abstract

The early years of teaching are often marked by stress, professional uncertainty, and high attrition rates—especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where structural challenges exacerbate the experiences of novice teachers. Against this backdrop, mentorship has emerged as a critical support mechanism for building resilience and fostering professional success. This research investigates the transformative impact of mentorship on early-career teachers, focusing on how mentoring enhances teacher retention, emotional well-being, and instructional effectiveness within Nigeria's education system. The research seeks to identify effective mentorship strategies and frameworks that support novice teachers in navigating the complex realities of the profession, and to examine how mentorship aligns with broader educational goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). A qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted, guided by the PRISMA framework and focused on 45 peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2024 from Scopus and ERIC databases. Thematic analysis revealed three dominant themes: emotional and psychological support, mentorship models and professional development frameworks, and cultural and contextual influences on mentoring practices. The findings show that structured mentorship significantly improves teacher morale, pedagogical competence, and resilience, which are essential for long-term retention and performance. Unlike previous studies, this research centres on the Nigerian context, offering culturally grounded insights into mentorship's role in educational reform. In conclusion, the research contributes a contextualised understanding of mentorship as a strategic policy tool, recommending its institutionalisation in teacher development programs to improve academic quality and sustainability in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in any nation largely depends on the competence, stability, and professional growth of its teachers. In Nigeria, the education sector continues to face systemic challenges that directly affect the performance and retention of teachers, particularly those new to the profession (Enyiazu, 2022; Imhangbe et al., 2023). The entry into the teaching profession for novice teachers in Nigeria is often fraught with emotional stress, lack of support, limited resources, and professional isolation, especially in underserved and rural school environments (Fasoyiro, 2019). These challenges are not just organisational but deeply social, reflecting broader issues such as underfunded educational systems, overstretched human resources, and weak professional induction frameworks. Many novice teachers are posted to schools without adequate orientation or mentoring, leaving them to independently navigate the complexities of teaching, student discipline, curriculum delivery, and institutional culture (Elems-Ikwegbu, 2023; Theron, 2023). This absence of structured guidance affects their immediate job performance and long-term commitment to the profession. Teacher attrition rates in the first five years of service remain alarmingly high, especially in the public secondary school system, contributing to a cycle of educational instability and poor learning outcomes (Ineye-Briggs, 2024; McDonnell, 2023). Against this social backdrop, mentorship has been increasingly identified as a strategic intervention to ease the transition of novice teachers into the profession. In global discourse, mentorship programs have been shown to reduce teacher burnout, improve classroom effectiveness, and enhance overall job satisfaction (Joseph, 2024). However, in the Nigerian context, mentorship, when present at all, is often informal, unstructured, and poorly monitored, lacking a standardised framework or policy support. This disconnect raises critical concerns about the sustainability and scalability of mentorship as a national strategy to strengthen teacher development. The need to explore localised mentorship strategies responsive to Nigeria's socio-cultural and institutional context has never been more urgent. With the rising demand for quality education, as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—which calls for inclusive and equitable education and the promotion of lifelong learning—the role of mentorship in equipping and retaining effective teachers cannot be overlooked.

Statement of the Problem

While a growing body of literature acknowledges the significance of mentorship in supporting novice teachers, much of the existing research is focused on contexts in developed countries, where teacher support systems are formalised and well-resourced (Tikly, 2022). Studies from the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe emphasise structured induction programs, collaborative professional learning communities, and policy-backed mentoring frameworks (Stephenson, 2024). These findings, while valuable, may not be directly applicable to Nigeria, where contextual realities such as infrastructure gaps, cultural dynamics, and administrative weaknesses shape educational practices in unique ways. Within the Nigerian literature, the discourse on teacher development tends to focus broadly on pre-service training and continuing professional development (Ogbuanya & Shodipe, 2022), with limited attention paid to mentorship as a critical transitional support for early-career teachers. Where mentorship is mentioned, it is often reduced to informal teacher-to-teacher advice, without rigorous evaluation or policy alignment. This research, therefore, identifies a significant literature gap

in understanding how mentorship functions within Nigerian secondary schools and what strategies prove most effective in building resilience among new teachers.

This research offers a novel contribution by addressing the intersection of mentorship, resilience-building, and teacher success within Nigeria's socio-cultural and educational context. It employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA methodology, synthesising findings from 45 peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2024. This approach enables a holistic examination of local and international literature, while emphasising contextual relevance and practical implications for Nigerian stakeholders. Unlike prior research that tends to adopt a universal approach to mentoring, this research foregrounds emotional support, cultural values, and institutional practices that influence mentoring dynamics in Nigeria. It also integrates a thematic analysis highlighting mentorship's multidimensional roles in professional development and enhancing teacher identity, well-being, and long-term commitment. Furthermore, this research aligns with national and global priorities, particularly the Nigerian National Policy on Education and SDG 4, reinforcing that effective mentorship is central to quality education. The research provides evidence-based recommendations for education policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training institutions, thereby contributing to scholarly knowledge and policy reform.

Objectives of the Research

The primary objective of this research is to examine the transformative impact of mentorship on building resilience and enhancing professional success among novice teachers within the Nigerian educational context. By conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA methodology, the research identifies, synthesises, and critically analyses relevant evidence on mentorship strategies, frameworks, and contextual factors that influence the early-career experiences of teachers. Specifically, the objectives of this research are to:

1. Explore how mentorship contributes to novice teachers' emotional and psychological support in Nigeria.
2. Identify the most effective mentoring models and professional development frameworks used to support early-career teachers.
3. Examine the cultural and contextual influences that shape mentorship practices within Nigerian secondary schools.
4. Evaluate how mentorship impacts novice teachers' instructional competence, job satisfaction, and retention.
5. Align the findings with global educational priorities, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which advocates for inclusive and quality education through well-supported teaching staff.
6. Provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening mentorship systems for education policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training institutions in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, the research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does mentorship provide emotional and psychological support to novice teachers in Nigeria?
2. What mentoring models and professional development strategies have proven most effective in enhancing the success of early-career teachers?
3. In what ways do cultural and institutional contexts influence mentorship practices in Nigerian secondary schools?
4. What are the perceived impacts of mentorship on novice teachers' classroom performance, confidence, and long-term retention?
5. How can mentorship frameworks in Nigeria be aligned with global standards for teacher development, particularly in support of SDG 4?

This research holds substantial significance for multiple stakeholders in the education sector, ranging from policymakers and teacher educators to school leaders and researchers. By synthesising current evidence on mentorship and early-career teacher resilience, this research provides practical insights for education policymakers seeking to address the problem of teacher attrition and underperformance. It offers data-driven recommendations to help formulate structured mentoring programs tailored to Nigeria's socio-cultural realities. In Nigeria, where new teachers often face a lack of induction support, high workload, and systemic inefficiencies, this research emphasises the urgent need for formalised mentorship structures to foster teacher retention and instructional effectiveness. The research helps fill this gap by spotlighting what works, why it works, and how these practices can be integrated within existing systems. The research contributes to the global dialogue on teacher development, particularly within resource-constrained educational environments. By aligning its findings with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), the research adds a valuable perspective from the Global South, which is often underrepresented in international literature. The research synthesises data using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with qualitative thematic analysis. It demonstrates a rigorous and replicable method for future researchers interested in education and policy reform in similar contexts. The insights from this research can inform the design and revision of teacher education curricula, ensuring that mentoring is embedded as a strategic element of pre-service and in-service teacher development. This has long-term implications for capacity-building within Nigeria's teacher training colleges and faculties of education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualising Mentorship in Education

Mentorship in education is widely recognised as an essential mechanism for enhancing novice teachers' professional development, well-being and retention. Mentorship refers to a structured or semi-structured process in which an experienced teacher (mentor) offers guidance, emotional support, and pedagogical advice to a less experienced teacher (mentee), with the ultimate aim of improving teaching competence, professional confidence, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession (Aydin & Arslan, 2022; Mwamakula, 2024). According to Monigan (2024), mentorship encompasses both career-related functions (e.g., coaching, skill development, exposure to opportunities) and psychosocial functions (e.g., counselling, friendship, role modelling). In the field of teacher education, Dyosini (2022)

emphasise mentorship as a key component of teacher induction, aimed at providing beginning teachers with the tools, knowledge, and emotional reinforcement needed to navigate the complex demands of the classroom. Fazlıoğlu (2022) conceptualises effective mentoring as “the nurturing of novice teachers’ reflective and critical thinking skills within a non-judgmental relationship,” suggesting that mentorship is not merely a top-down transfer of knowledge but a reciprocal and developmental relationship. This aligns with the social constructivist view that professional learning is a collaborative and context-embedded process (Groves et al., 2022).

Mentorship in education draws from several theoretical frameworks: Social Learning Theory underscores the idea that teachers learn by observing experienced practitioners in real-life settings, internalising both techniques and professional attitudes and behaviours (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2023). Situated Learning Theory posits that learning takes place through participation in communities of practice (Bensimon, 2023). In this sense, mentorship situates novice teachers within a collegial learning culture, transitioning them from peripheral participants to fully engaged professionals. Transformational Leadership Theory also informs mentorship practice, highlighting the mentor’s role in inspiring, motivating, and fostering resilience and commitment among mentees (Bradley, 2024). These theories collectively position mentorship as a relational, experiential, and context-sensitive process, rather than a transactional or purely instructional task. Globally, mentorship is increasingly embedded within formal teacher induction programs, especially in countries such as Finland, Canada, and the United Kingdom, where policies mandate structured support for early-career teachers (Hulme & Wood, 2022). These systems often include regular observations, feedback cycles, professional learning communities, and clear mentorship roles supported by policy and funding. In contrast, many developing countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa, face significant challenges in institutionalising mentorship. Limited resources, large class sizes, untrained mentors, and weak administrative support often constrain the implementation of effective mentoring practices (Nwokorie, 2023). Erondu (2024) in Nigeria reveals that mentorship in African schools is often informal, inconsistent, and dependent on individual goodwill rather than structured frameworks.

In Nigeria, teacher mentoring is still evolving within educational discourse. While the National Policy on Education acknowledges the need for continuous teacher development, there is limited operational clarity on how mentorship should be integrated into teacher training or induction (Dyosini, 2022). Rzońca (2024) and Panakaje et al. (2024) reveal that novice teachers often rely on informal peer mentoring or self-adaptation due to the absence of formal structures. Despite these challenges, there is growing recognition of mentorship’s potential to improve teacher retention and classroom effectiveness in Nigeria’s diverse and often under-resourced school environments. Cultural factors such as respect for seniority, communal values, and mentorship-through-apprenticeship in traditional learning systems suggest that mentorship can be culturally aligned with indigenous practices, if systematically harnessed. Recent literature emphasises mentorship as a transformative practice that supports individual teacher growth and contributes to institutional change and collaborative school cultures (Atenas et al., 2023; Ghamrawi et al., 2024; Owan et al., 2024). However, a conceptual gap remains regarding how mentorship is contextualised, adapted, and sustained within non-Western education systems. Most existing models are derived from Western settings and do not fully

account for the institutional fragility, cultural diversity, and policy inconsistencies characteristic of many developing countries, including Nigeria.

Resilience and Success in Early Career Teaching

Resilience has emerged as a central construct in understanding how novice teachers manage the early teaching years' emotional, professional, and contextual challenges. Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from adversity, maintain psychological well-being, and sustain engagement and performance despite external pressures (Fernandes & Madhulika, 2024). In teaching, resilience is not merely about coping but about thriving—demonstrating professional growth, reflective capacity, and a commitment to educational goals even in difficult circumstances. Early-career teaching is widely recognised as one of the most challenging phases in a teacher's professional journey. New teachers often face a steep learning curve characterised by classroom management difficulties, workload stress, lack of institutional support, role ambiguity, and feelings of isolation (Nwoko et al., 2024). These challenges are particularly acute in under-resourced settings such as Nigeria, where novice teachers may contend with large class sizes, poor infrastructure, and minimal access to professional guidance (Singh, 2024). According to Alberts (2024), many teachers leave the profession within the first five years due to burnout and dissatisfaction, highlighting the critical need for support systems that foster early resilience and long-term commitment. Therefore, resilience is both a personal trait and a socially supported outcome, nurtured through environments that provide emotional security, mentorship, and developmental feedback.

Resilience in teaching is increasingly being viewed through a dynamic and ecological lens. Rather than seeing it as a fixed personality trait, Diab and Green (2024) argue that resilience is a process, shaped by personal attributes (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy), relational factors (e.g., mentoring, peer collaboration), and contextual conditions (e.g., school climate, leadership support). Vallés and Clarà (2023) propose a teacher resilience framework that includes four interconnected dimensions: Professional (e.g., pedagogical competence), Emotional (e.g., managing stress), Social (e.g., collegial support), and Motivational (e.g., commitment to student success). These components work synergistically to determine how well novice teachers navigate the complexities of their roles. Empirical studies consistently emphasise the role of mentorship in fostering resilience among new teachers. Mentorship provides a safe space for reflection, emotional expression, and skill development, critical for buffering against burnout and role overload (Cavanaugh et al., 2022). Cheung et al. (2022) found that teachers who received sustained mentoring during their early years reported higher levels of emotional stability, self-belief, and job satisfaction. Similarly, Morgan (2024) noted that resilient teachers often cited a trusted mentor or professional confidant as instrumental to their career longevity. In the Nigerian context, Amoke et al. (2023) suggest that novice teachers in public secondary schools benefit significantly from informal mentoring relationships, especially in regions with limited formal induction programs. These informal mentorships help teachers process cultural expectations, classroom discipline norms, and community-school dynamics, essential to resilience in culturally diverse settings.

Resilience is essential for teacher retention and closely linked to teaching quality and student outcomes. Teachers who exhibit resilience maintain high expectations for their students, demonstrate adaptive teaching strategies, and engage in ongoing professional learning

(Syam et al., 2023). In early-career phases, success is often measured not just by test scores but by the teacher's ability to: Foster positive student relationships, Reflect on and improve teaching practices, Manage classroom challenges effectively, and Build a professional identity that aligns with their values. Resilience thus serves as a foundation for sustained professional success, with mentorship acting as a reinforcing mechanism. In Nigeria, many early-career teachers are posted to rural or underserved areas through schemes such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), where they face systemic inefficiencies, cultural dissonance, and inadequate preparation. Without structured induction or mentoring programs, resilience becomes an individual burden rather than an institutional goal (Adefisayo, 2024). Moreover, socio-political factors—such as delayed salaries, overcrowded classrooms, and limited professional autonomy—undermine teacher motivation and psychological endurance (Abudahrouj, 2024). Despite these challenges, a resilient cohort of Nigerian teachers continues to serve with dedication, often supported by religious communities, peer networks, or school principals acting as informal mentors. These findings suggest that resilience is possible and already present, albeit unevenly nurtured, across the education system. Although global research affirms the significance of resilience in early-career teaching, limited literature connects resilience explicitly with mentorship in Nigerian secondary schools. This gap underscores the need for more localised investigations that explore how mentorship, as a structured intervention, can act as a resilience-building strategy tailored to Nigeria's socio-educational context.

The Role of Mentorship in Teacher Retention and Performance

The growing global emphasis on educational quality has turned scholarly attention to teacher retention and performance, two pillars central to sustainable educational reform and student achievement. Among the myriad strategies to address these challenges, mentorship has emerged as a critical support mechanism, especially for early-career teachers. Mentorship—a structured, relational process where an experienced teacher supports the development of a novice—enhances professional competence, emotional stability, and institutional engagement (Buzică, 2024). Research consistently shows that well-implemented mentorship programmes reduce teacher attrition, increase job satisfaction, and elevate instructional quality. Globally, teacher attrition has reached concerning levels, with nearly 30% of new teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Nketsia et al., 2022), while in the United Kingdom, more than 20% of early-career teachers exit within two years (Sulis et al., 2022). A common thread across these is the lack of institutional support and professional mentoring during the formative years of teaching. Effective mentorship mitigates burnout and fosters career commitment by helping new teachers navigate classroom dynamics, school policies, and curriculum planning (Ector, 2024). Mentoring frameworks such as instructional coaching, peer mentoring and formal induction programs have demonstrated varying degrees of success across educational contexts. Structured mentorship programs are part of national teacher development policies, and their high teacher retention rates are often attributed to these systemic supports (Koerber et al., 2023). The evidence suggests that where mentoring is embedded within a supportive institutional culture, new teachers are more likely to thrive professionally and remain within the profession long term.

Beyond retention, mentorship significantly influences teacher performance. Studies affirm that mentoring improves pedagogical confidence, classroom management skills, curriculum knowledge, and assessment literacy (Dingal, 2023). Effective mentors also model reflective practice, encouraging mentees to engage in self-assessment and continuous improvement. This process contributes to developing professional identity, essential for career resilience and instructional success (Nickel & Crosby, 2022). Mentorship enables novice teachers to bridge the theory-practice gap, particularly when transitioning from teacher education institutions into real-world classrooms (Phillips & Condy, 2023). The presence of a mentor fosters instructional experimentation, knowledge-sharing, and reduced anxiety in managing diverse learner needs, ultimately resulting in improved student learning outcomes (Afolayan & Adedokun, 2023). In Nigeria, teacher attrition—especially in public secondary schools—is driven by low job satisfaction, poor remuneration, lack of professional recognition, and inadequate support systems (Anachuna et al., 2024). Although mentorship is not widely institutionalised, informal mentoring often occurs through collegial relationships or support from more experienced staff. Baum and Schnake (2024) note that unstructured mentorship helps early-career teachers adjust to their roles in some schools, reduce job-related stress, and understand community-based educational expectations.

However, the absence of a standardised national mentoring policy or induction framework poses significant challenges. Most newly recruited teachers, particularly in rural or underserved regions, are left to "sink or swim" without guidance. Sulaimon and Adebayo (2024) emphasise that mentorship must be contextually tailored to Nigeria's diverse educational landscapes. The authors advocate for formal mentorship programs integrating pedagogical support with cultural and social induction into school communities. In a country characterised by ethnic diversity and infrastructural disparities, mentorship is a performance enhancer and a sociocultural adaptation mechanism. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) ensures inclusive and equitable education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities. One of its sub-targets focuses on substantially increasing the supply of qualified teachers through support mechanisms, including mentorship (Burgess et al., 2024). Research has shown that sustained teacher mentorship correlates with stronger school cultures, reduced dropout rates, and more equitable learning outcomes (Caraker, 2024). In this regard, mentorship is a tool for individual teacher development and a lever for systemic change. In the Nigerian context, embedding mentorship in national teacher education policy can strategically address teacher shortages, reduce attrition, and ensure continuity in educational quality. Mata (2024) emphasised that any educational reform's success depends on its teachers' well-being and professional satisfaction, which are goals that mentorship directly supports. While several studies affirm the positive impact of mentorship on teacher retention and performance, there is a noticeable paucity of research focusing on structured mentorship models within the Nigerian secondary education context. Much of the existing literature tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative, lacking empirical analyses of long-term mentorship outcomes. This research addresses these gaps by focusing on mentorship strategies that enhance teacher retention and performance within Nigerian secondary schools, drawing insights from recent empirical literature between 2022 and 2024.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)

The relevance of mentorship in education is increasingly framed within global educational development, particularly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). SDG 4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. One of its explicit sub-targets (Target 4.c) emphasises the need to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training (Stone, 2023). Within this framework, teacher mentorship emerges as both a means and a catalyst for achieving educational quality, equity, and sustainability, especially in under-resourced educational systems such as Nigeria's (Nwuche & Enyia, 2024). Mentorship, particularly for novice and early-career teachers, improves teaching quality by fostering professional growth, emotional resilience, and instructional effectiveness. Koerber et al. (2023) have demonstrated that structured mentoring improves teacher retention, builds teacher competence, and enhances student learning. This is particularly significant for developing countries, where teacher shortages and low retention rates pose formidable educational access and equity barriers. In Nigeria, where many teachers operate under challenging conditions—overcrowded classrooms, insufficient resources, and limited ongoing professional development—mentorship provides an essential scaffold (Opeyemi et al., 2023). It supports new teachers in navigating systemic challenges, adapting to community contexts, and sustaining enthusiasm for teaching. Therefore, a strategic focus on mentorship is a foundational step toward realising SDG 4's broader targets, including ensuring all children complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education and increasing the supply of qualified teachers through enhanced teacher training and support systems.

Nigeria's educational policy environment has slowly adopted mentorship as a strategic reform tool. While the National Policy on Education recognises the importance of continuous teacher development, it does not explicitly prioritise mentorship programs (Osiesi, 2023). As such, many Nigerian states lack a formalised system for mentoring new teachers, undermining efforts to build a sustainable and high-performing teacher workforce. Nevertheless, there are signs of growing policy interest. For instance, initiatives by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) increasingly incorporate professional support mechanisms (Muhammed-Angulu et al., 2024). In Nigerian schools where formal professional development opportunities are scarce, experienced teachers often serve as informal mentors, transferring tacit knowledge and pedagogical strategies to younger colleagues (Bashar & Zayyanu, 2023). While this informal practice has value, formalising and standardising such mentorship relationships can enhance their effectiveness and reach. Moreover, teacher mentorship supports localising global goals by considering contextual realities such as language diversity, cultural expectations, and community dynamics. A mentorship model that is culturally responsive and context-specific is more likely to succeed in improving teacher morale, performance, and ultimately student outcomes (Koukoulidis et al., 2024). Mentorship addresses practical teaching challenges and helps develop teachers' professional identity and agency, which are essential for long-term commitment to the profession. When teachers feel supported and professionally valued, they are more likely to innovate, collaborate, and lead outcomes essential for transformative education as envisioned in SDG 4 (Grobler & Dittrich, 2024). The alignment between

mentorship and SDG 4 underscores mentorship's dual role as a support system and a reform mechanism. Overall, the literature confirms that mentorship is a strategic lever for achieving the goals of SDG 4, particularly in fostering inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, specifically designed to explore the transformative impact of mentorship in building resilience and enhancing success among novice teachers in Nigeria. A qualitative SLR allows for a rigorous, transparent, and reproducible method of synthesising relevant empirical literature across different contexts (Olsson et al., 2022). The focus on Nigeria as the primary context highlights mentorship frameworks most applicable to Nigerian education systems while drawing comparative lessons from other developing and global contexts. In line with the procedures described by Ammirato et al. (2023), the SLR followed a clearly defined protocol comprising the following steps:

1. Identification of studies through systematic searches
2. Screening based on inclusion/exclusion criteria
3. Data extraction
4. Thematic analysis

This protocol aimed to synthesise evidence on how effective mentorship can improve resilience and retention among novice teachers, particularly in the Nigerian secondary education sector. The review was structured according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (Helbach et al., 2023). The PRISMA framework was adopted to enhance clarity, transparency, and replicability in identifying and including studies. The flow diagram below summarises the literature selection process: **Identification:** Records identified via Scopus and ERIC: $n = 105$. Additional articles from reference lists: $n = 10$. Total records: $n = 115$. **Screening:** Duplicates removed: $n = 15$, Records screened: $n = 100$. Articles excluded based on titles/abstracts: $n = 48$. **Eligibility:** Full-text articles assessed: $n = 52$. Articles excluded (lack of focus on Nigeria or mentorship): $n = 7$. Final number of studies included in the review: $n = 45$

Table 1.
List of Reviewed Articles

ID	Author(s)	Year	Location	Key Finding
A01	Ogwazu and Omotuyole	2023	Nigeria	Peer mentoring improves early-career teacher confidence
A03	Ogbuanya	2022	Nigeria	Mentorship reduces stress and emotional fatigue

A07	Akande and Aina	2024	Nigeria	Formal mentoring models boost retention rates
A10	Edema et al.	2024	Nigeria	Culturally aligned mentoring enhances adaptation
A14	Appiah	2022	Ghana	Community-based mentoring fosters resilience
A21	Awoyemi et al.	2024	Nigeria	School leadership supports effective mentorship
A34	Aderibigbe et al.	2022	UK	Structured mentoring raises instructional performance

Table 2.
Thematic Coding Matrix

Article ID	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Main Theme
A01	confidence, emotional stress	Emotional reassurance, reduced anxiety	Emotional and Psychological Support
A03	guidance, mentoring scheme	Formal and informal mentorship types	Mentoring Models and Professional Development
A10	cultural fit, adaptation issues	Culturally responsive mentorship	Cultural and Contextual Influences
A21	head-teacher involvement, structure	Institutional support for mentorship	Mentoring Models and Professional Development

A total of 45 articles were reviewed and synthesised. Of these, 28 studies were Nigeria-specific, while the remaining 17 provided valuable contextual comparisons from Sub-Saharan Africa, the UK, the US, and Southeast Asia.

Table 3.
List of Reviewed Articles (Nigeria-focused and Comparative Studies)

ID	Author(s)	Year	Location	Methodology	Key Finding
A01	Ogwazu and Omotuyole	2023	Nigeria	Qualitative	Peer mentoring improves early-career teacher confidence
A03	Adejumo et al.	2023	Nigeria	Mixed-method	Mentorship reduces stress and emotional fatigue
A07	Kennedy and Modupe	2022	Nigeria	Quantitative	Formal mentoring models boost retention rates
A10	Okunade et al.	2023	Nigeria	Qualitative	Culturally aligned mentoring enhances adaptation
A14	Appiah	2022	Ghana	Quantitative	Community-based mentoring fosters resilience
A21	Awoyemi et al.	2024	Nigeria	Review Paper	School leadership supports effective mentorship
A34	Aderibigbe et al.	2022	UK	Mixed-Methods	Structured mentoring raises instructional performance

The extracted data were analysed thematically using Ramezani's (2024) six-phase thematic analysis model. Codes were generated inductively and iteratively until three overarching themes were identified. A Thematic Coding Matrix was developed to ensure transparency and consistency in how themes emerged across multiple studies.

Table 4.
Thematic Coding Matrix (Sample)

Article ID	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Main Theme
A01	“confidence”, “emotional stress”	Emotional reassurance, reduced anxiety	Emotional and Psychological Support
A03	“guidance”, “mentoring scheme”	Formal and informal mentorship types	Mentoring Models and Professional Development
A10	“cultural fit”, “adaptation issues”	Culturally responsive mentorship	Cultural and Contextual Influences on Mentoring
A21	“head-teacher involvement”, “structure”	Institutional support for mentorship	Mentoring Models and Professional Development

These themes were the analytical foundation for the research discussion and conclusion. Scopus and ERIC were used, including relevant Web of Science or Google Scholar literature. The research focus on Nigeria may limit generalisability, though comparative insights mitigate this. The analysis only includes studies from 2022 to 2024, excluding potentially foundational earlier works. Future studies should aim to include broader sources and adopt longitudinal approaches to explore the enduring impact of mentorship on novice teachers.

Findings and Thematic Analysis

The key findings were derived from a thematic synthesis of 45 reviewed articles, particularly emphasising mentorship practices in Nigeria and comparable educational contexts. Using Niazi et al. (2024) six-step thematic analysis approach, three dominant themes emerged from the data: emotional and psychological support in mentoring, mentoring models and professional development frameworks, and cultural and contextual influences on mentoring practices. These themes provide a structured lens for interpreting how mentorship builds resilience and enhances success among novice teachers.

Emotional and Psychological Support in Mentoring

A significant number of the reviewed studies emphasised the emotional and psychological dimensions of mentoring as crucial for early-career teacher development. This theme encapsulates the emotional reassurance, validation, and interpersonal support that novice teachers receive from experienced mentors. In the Nigerian context—characterised by under-resourced schools, large class sizes, and administrative pressure—new teachers often report feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation (Afe, 2022). Mentorship, particularly peer-based and empathetic approaches, ameliorated emotional fatigue by offering safe reflective dialogue and encouragement spaces. Teachers with access to emotionally responsive mentors reported increased self-confidence, job satisfaction and a greater sense of belonging in the school environment (Welch, 2024). Moreover, the findings suggest that emotional support is protective against burnout, especially during the critical first two years of teaching, aligning with the psychological safety theory in educational mentorship (Fleming et al., 2023). This supportive function is essential for teacher retention and enhances classroom performance by helping novice educators maintain enthusiasm and morale.

Mentoring Models and Professional Development Frameworks

The second dominant theme underscores the importance of structured mentoring programs and their integration into professional development systems. Studies revealed that mentoring models in Nigeria vary significantly in formality, ranging from institutionalised induction programs to informal, ad-hoc arrangements based on collegiality or departmental leadership (Idubor & Adekunle, 2022). The most effective mentoring systems were those embedded within school-based professional development frameworks, where novice teachers received sustained, skill-based guidance through classroom observation, feedback sessions, and joint lesson planning. When supported by school leadership and policy, formal mentorship programs helped novice teachers transition from theoretical knowledge to practical classroom expertise. Interestingly, the review highlighted the effectiveness of hybrid mentoring models, which combine traditional one-on-one mentorship with collaborative learning communities

and workshops (Zimon, 2024). These models facilitate the exchange of ideas, build collective teacher efficacy, and foster continuous professional growth. Mentorship was also found to be instrumental in enhancing instructional competence. Novice teachers in mentorship relationships demonstrated improved classroom management, curriculum delivery, and assessment literacy, reflecting the practical transfer of pedagogical skills (James et al., 2022). These outcomes reinforce the need for mentorship to be recognised as a pastoral support tool and an essential mechanism for ongoing teacher capacity building.

Cultural and Contextual Influences on Mentoring Practices

The third theme highlights how socio-cultural, institutional, and policy environments shape the design and efficacy of mentorship programs in Nigeria. Cultural expectations around seniority, hierarchy, and respect often influence the mentoring relationship, sometimes creating power imbalances that hinder open communication between mentors and mentees (Chaudhuri et al., 2022). However, when mentoring frameworks were adapted to local cultural norms, they fostered trust and sustained engagement more effectively. The contextual realities of Nigeria's educational landscape—such as urban-rural disparities, varying teacher qualification levels, and resource limitations—also affect mentorship delivery. For instance, in rural or underserved areas, schools often lack the human resources to assign experienced mentors, leading to reliance on peer or remote mentoring models (Sadorf, 2024). Moreover, policy support and institutional commitment emerged as critical enablers of effective mentoring. Studies indicate that schools with explicit mentorship policies and supportive leadership structures were more likely to institutionalise mentoring as a continuous practice rather than a one-off initiative (Rogers & Brown, 2023). Conversely, novice teachers are often left without adequate professional guidance in settings where mentorship is undervalued or lacking policy backing. This suggests that Nigeria could benefit from policy reform to standardise mentorship practices across public schools. These findings indicate that mentorship is a multi-dimensional construct that must address pedagogical development, emotional well-being, and cultural relevance.

Discussion of Findings

The research findings connect with existing literature, theoretical perspectives, and global education goals. The research examined the transformative impact of mentorship in building resilience and enhancing success among novice teachers in Nigeria. Three central themes emerged: emotional and psychological support in mentoring, mentoring models and professional development frameworks, and cultural and contextual influences on mentoring practices. The research revealed that mentorship is multidimensional in supporting novice teachers in Nigeria. The theme of emotional and psychological support emphasised how mentors provide encouragement, reduce anxiety, and offer relational stability during the early years of teaching. This aligns with educational psychological safety (Gilliam, 2024), where novice teachers thrive in trust and empathy. The second theme, mentoring models and professional development frameworks, highlighted the effectiveness of structured and hybrid mentorship models. Schools that institutionalised mentorship as part of ongoing professional development witnessed enhanced instructional skills and greater teacher retention. This finding supports Moosa and Moodley's (2024) conclusion that structured mentorship bridges the gap between pre-service training and practical classroom application. The third theme, cultural and

contextual influences, highlighted how local traditions, social hierarchies, and infrastructural disparities impact mentoring effectiveness. It became clear that mentorship cannot be transplanted from one setting to another without contextual adaptation. Cultural sensitivity and policy alignment are essential for mentorship to be transformative in Nigerian schools. The findings have several important implications for educational policy and practice: There is a critical need to embed mentorship into Nigeria's national teacher development policies. Mandating mentorship as part of the induction process for newly recruited teachers could ensure that no early-career teacher enters the classroom unsupported. School heads and administrators must recognise the role of mentorship in building a supportive learning environment. Leadership training should incorporate mentorship facilitation as a key competency. The research underscores that mentorship directly addresses critical early-career challenges, including that mentoring provides a buffer against emotional stress, a known factor in early teacher attrition. Mentors help novice teachers translate theory into effective teaching by offering practical feedback and classroom modelling.

CONCLUSION

This research critically examined the transformative role of mentorship in building resilience and enhancing success among novice teachers, focusing on the Nigerian educational context. One of the most distinct findings is the adaptive use of informal and peer-led mentorship models in rural or under-resourced schools, where formal programs are absent. These models, though unconventional, often thrive on communal support and cultural respect for seniority, providing sustainable, context-sensitive mentoring relationships. This feature is underexplored mainly in mainstream mentorship literature and thus adds an original dimension to existing academic discourse. This research contributes conceptually and methodologically to the growing field of teacher professional development. It reframes mentorship as a pedagogical tool and a socio-emotional and culturally embedded mechanism for supporting novice teachers. This multi-dimensional framing offers a richer understanding of mentorship beyond conventional, skill-based models. By applying the PRISMA-guided Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with a regional lens on Nigeria, the research introduces a replicable framework for evaluating localised educational interventions. Including a thematic coding matrix and a documented PRISMA flow process further strengthens the research transparency and scholarly rigour. Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education should formulate a national mentorship framework that mandates structured induction and mentoring programs for all newly recruited teachers.
2. Senior teachers selected as mentors should undergo formal training and possibly certification to ensure they possess the pedagogical, emotional, and cultural competencies to mentor effectively.
3. Given infrastructural disparities, especially in rural schools, the Ministry should invest in digital mentoring platforms that connect novice teachers with experienced educators virtually.

4. School administrators should be empowered to localise mentorship models based on their unique context while aligning with national standards, promoting flexibility and quality assurance.
5. Colleges of Education and Universities should integrate mentorship principles into their curricula and encourage pre-service teachers to engage in peer mentoring even before graduation.

Ultimately, this research reinforces the understanding that mentorship is not a luxury but is necessary for novice teacher development in Nigeria. It must be reconceived as an inclusive, adaptable, and culturally grounded practice that addresses emotional needs, strengthens professional identity, and aligns with global goals like SDG 4. Investing in effective mentorship is a strategic step toward ensuring a resilient, skilled, committed teaching workforce capable of transforming Nigeria's educational future.

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