

GUIDING THE NEXT GENERATION: A QUALITATIVE LOOK AT EFFECTIVE TEACHER MENTORING

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ABSTRACT

Abstract

This qualitative study examined the lived experiences, challenges, and perceived enabling factors of teachers involved in the implementation of teacher mentoring programs in T'boli West District. Using in depth interviews and focus group discussions with fifteen public school teachers selected through purposive sampling, the study explored how mentoring shapes professional growth, the obstacles teachers encounter in the process, and the conditions that contribute to effective and sustainable mentoring practices in schools. Colaizzi's method guided the analysis, allowing the researcher to extract significant statements, formulate meanings, and cluster themes reflective of teachers' authentic experiences. Findings revealed five major themes describing teachers' lived experiences in mentoring: professional growth through mentoring, transformational learning from mentors, supportive mentor mentee relationships, enhanced professional identity, and a collaborative learning culture. Teachers consistently reported that mentoring strengthened their instructional competence, classroom management, reflective practice, self-confidence, and sense of belonging within the school community. In terms of challenges, teachers faced structural issues such as time constraints, mismatched expectations, communication barriers, emotional vulnerability, and insufficient institutional support. They navigated these challenges through open dialogue, peer collaboration, reflective tools, flexible adjustment of schedules, and strong reliance on supportive colleagues and mentors. The study also identified key factors that sustain effective mentoring programs, including administrative support, clear mentoring structures, high quality mentor mentee relationships, research informed guidance, and adaptable mentoring approaches responsive to teachers' contexts. The study concludes that mentoring is a powerful professional development mechanism when adequately structured and supported. It recommends strengthening administrative involvement, institutionalizing clear mentoring guidelines, integrating research based practices, and expanding professional development for mentors. Future research may explore digital mentoring models, long term impacts of mentoring on teacher retention, and culturally responsive mentoring frameworks suited for diverse Philippine school settings.

Keywords: *teacher mentoring, lived experiences, professional development, instructional support, mentoring challenges, institutional support, qualitative study, T'boli West District*

INTRODUCTION

Guidance had long been recognized as a cornerstone of teacher development, particularly in shaping the next generation of educators who navigated increasingly complex instructional, social, and technological landscapes. Effective teacher mentoring served as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and real classroom demands, equipping novice teachers with emotional, pedagogical, and professional support necessary to manage the challenges of contemporary teaching. International literature emphasized that formal mentoring structures enhanced teacher retention by strengthening professional identity and competence, especially for beginning teachers adapting to new environments (Aydın & Arslan, 2022; Fallen & Mullen, 2022; Jones, 2023). Global education frameworks likewise highlighted mentoring as an essential mechanism for improving teacher quality, aligned with SDG 4, which reported that 42 out of 100 learners worldwide continued to struggle with foundational skills, reinforcing the need for strong teacher support systems (United Nations, 2023). Thus, mentoring emerged not only as an instructional necessity but also as a strategic response to global learning challenges.

At the international level, research revealed significant inconsistencies in mentoring systems across educational contexts, particularly in language education and teacher preparation programs. Aydın and Arslan (2022) noted that cross-cultural differences in mentor expectations, training, and roles often resulted in fragmented mentoring experiences for EFL teachers, while Fallen and Mullen (2022) argued that induction programs lacking structure contributed to uneven teacher preparedness. Evidence from mentoring models in Australia and Europe also showed that although structured mentoring programs improved teacher self-efficacy, many countries still lacked standardized frameworks ensuring equitable access for novice teachers (Lewis, 2024; Gjelaj & Saqipi, 2022; Taylor, 2023). In several systems, only 3 out of 10 new teachers reportedly received sustained mentoring beyond their first year, indicating a persistent gap between global commitments and actual practice (UNESCO, 2023). These variations suggested a continuing need for culturally responsive, well-supported, and long-term mentoring systems that addressed professional demands in diverse educational environments.

The Philippine education landscape presented its own complexities, with teacher mentoring widely acknowledged as essential but inconsistently implemented across regions and school types. National reports revealed persistent issues influencing teacher capacity, workload, and professional growth. According to the EDCOM II (2023) report, 62 out of 100 Filipino learners struggled with reading and numeracy, placing considerable pressure on teachers to deliver high-quality instruction under demanding conditions. This context underscored the value of mentoring as a mechanism that supported teacher development. Scholars such as Berondo (2023) and Rodriguez (2023) indicated that limited research engagement among Filipino teachers remained a barrier to their professional advancement, with only 18 out of 100 beginning teachers reporting confidence in conducting classroom-based research. Mentoring programs in the Philippines were frequently characterized by informal structures lacking continuity, a concern highlighted by Dingal (2023) and Ibrahim (2021), who noted that many schools

relied on personal mentoring relationships rather than competency-driven, systematic frameworks. These observations aligned with national concerns regarding teacher preparedness and instructional quality, pointing to the need for strengthened and sustainable mentoring systems.

At the local level, mentoring practices were shaped by institutional capacity, availability of qualified mentors, and school-based support systems. Research demonstrated that mentoring initiatives succeeded or faltered based on the presence of skilled mentors capable of providing sustained and context-specific guidance (Agan, 2023; Escobal, 2023). Studies in local Philippine contexts showed that while experienced teachers expressed willingness to mentor, barriers such as time constraints, limited professional development, and insufficient administrative support hindered the effectiveness of mentoring interactions (Combo & Ramos, 2023; Dingal, 2023; Quinn, 2023). Qualitative investigations likewise revealed that some schools relied heavily on informal mentoring arrangements that varied in quality, producing inconsistent outcomes for novice teachers (O'Connor, 2023; Vecaldo, 2022; Parker, 2023). Local observations also mirrored EDCOM II findings showing that teacher workload in several districts reached 56 out of 100 hours per week, leaving minimal time for structured mentoring sessions that required observation, reflection, and feedback. Despite these challenges, mentoring remained a critical component of teacher professional development when mentors were adequately prepared and institutional support was present.

Given these gaps at global, national, and local levels, there was a need to examine the lived experiences of mentors and mentees to understand what made mentoring effective, sustainable, and meaningful. Previous studies emphasized that mentoring extended beyond technical assistance to include relational support, reflective dialogue, and shared professional inquiry (Jones, 2023; Mullen & Badger, 2023; Upton, 2023). However, many existing mentoring models failed to capture the nuanced interactions shaping teacher growth, including emotional labor, identity construction, and mentor-mentee dynamics. This qualitative inquiry therefore sought to illuminate the human dimensions of mentoring by exploring how educators experienced, interpreted, and enacted mentorship within their everyday contexts (Hall, 2024; Klein, 2024; Smith, 2024). By attending to teachers' voices, the study generated empirical insights that could strengthen mentoring frameworks and align them with the evolving realities of the teaching profession.

In this context, the study aimed to explore the lived experiences of mentors and mentees to identify elements that contributed to effective mentoring. This exploration responded to documented gaps in mentoring research and aligned with policy directions calling for stronger teacher development systems in the Philippines and beyond. With SDG 4 highlighting the need for qualified and well-supported teachers and EDCOM II underscoring weaknesses in teacher induction and continuous professional development, the study offered timely insights grounded in actual mentoring practice. By examining mentoring across relational, instructional, organizational, and emotional dimensions, the study sought to inform future mentoring policies, strengthen school-

based mentoring programs, and contribute to preparing the next generation of capable and confident educators (Parker, 2023; Quinn, 2023; Rodriguez, 2023).

METHODS

Research Design

A qualitative methodology was utilized for the conduct of this investigation. In this study, qualitative research was conducted to determine the significance that participants attached to the various research challenges they had experienced in the past or were currently going through, particularly on the utilization of different strategies in promoting the well-being of teachers (Spady, 2021).

For the purpose of making sense of and interpreting the results of this qualitative study, the researcher engaged in qualitative inquiry (Rust, 2022). More specifically, the researcher examined situations in their natural settings in order to describe both routine and challenging moments encountered by the participants. In addition, qualitative research was flexible, which enabled the researcher to build and revise the methodological steps based on the needs of the study, allowing movement back and forth between different stages of execution. Therefore, if the data were not yet saturated—a requirement for triangulation—the researcher could establish the credibility of the data by revisiting earlier steps. This process was possible only when the data had not yet been fully collected.

Creswell (2013) outlined phenomenology as a qualitative method that the researcher used to investigate individuals' lived experiences in relation to a particular phenomenon. In alignment with this approach, the purpose of this qualitative research method was to shed light on specific events or circumstances as described by the participants.

Research Participants

The research participants of this study were public school elementary teachers. The researcher employed purposive sampling as the chosen sampling technique to ensure that participants possessed relevant experiences and insights related to the study. The study exclusively involved teachers as research participants, focusing on those who had actively implemented teacher mentoring programs in T'boli West District.

The study involved a total of fifteen (15) research participants, representing the study's sample size. Specifically, fifteen (15) public school elementary teachers with direct experience in implementing teacher mentoring strategies were selected. The data collection involved two methods: in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). Nine (9) participants took part in the IDI to provide detailed, individual perspectives, while six (6) participated in the FGD to facilitate collaborative discussions of shared experiences and insights. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring processes within the district.

The selection of research participants was carried out using purposive sampling, guided by the following inclusion criteria: (1) they were permanent or regular elementary teachers in T'boli West District, (2) they had served as teachers for at least three (5) years, and (3) they actively implemented teacher mentoring programs to support teacher development. These inclusion criteria were designed to ensure that all participants had sufficient experience and practical knowledge in mentoring teachers, contributing valuable insights to the study.

The exclusion criteria encompassed individuals who did not meet the characteristics outlined in the inclusion criteria. This included other stakeholders who were not directly responsible for implementing teacher mentoring programs. Additionally, teachers with less than three years of experience or those who did not engage in mentoring initiatives were excluded to maintain the relevance and integrity of the collected data.

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Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the collection of data, the researcher obtained a letter of approval from the Dean of the Graduate School of Education at CMC. The researcher will write a letter to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) to request permission to carry out this study. Once it has been authorized by the SDS, the researcher will send the letter to the principals of the schools of the District. After that, the researcher will send a letter to the participants, together with the prior letters of approval and the

informed consent form. In order for the researcher to effectively gather the data, he or she will need to establish a rapport with the participants and earn their confidence.

In addition, the researcher will build rapport and trust with the participants by adhering to the ethical principles and honouring the participants' numerous rights. As a result, in order for the participants to feel comfortable and at ease in the process of sharing their personal experiences, the researcher will remain objective by acting justly and always exhibiting courtesy. This will allow the participants to feel comfortable and at ease in the process of sharing their personal experiences. These two different interviewing methods will be recorded, and then the recordings will be transcribed into transcripts to serve as documentation of the data collection approach. These two will be used together as transcripts to increase the recordings' incapacity to be easily examined. They will be utilized concurrently. Transcripts should be utilized in addition to recordings rather than in substitute of them. In a similar manner, the informed consents will be delivered either in-person or online in a format that can be printed, allowing the informants to print the consents themselves before putting their signatures on them. During the process of carrying out the IDI, the researcher will initially be tasked with locating prospective participants. The researcher will next provide the participant the informed consent form once they have been identified.

Those who choose not to take part will have their decision honoured because they are exercising their freedom to do so voluntarily, and the researcher will continue to look for additional subjects. When the study had already reached the required minimum of 15 participants, she would offer the participants the opportunity to select the day and time of the interview that was scheduled for them. This is an interview with just the two of us. In the meantime, the researcher is going to utilize the FGD in order to triangulate the data. The discussion in the focus group is being held with the intention of gleaning important information from the individuals who have been carefully chosen to participate. It usually takes between one and two hours when using this form of discussion to have in-depth conversations about the topics with the participants (Mager, 2020).

Data collection begins with purposive sampling begins with defining the target population based on the study's objectives. Researchers identify specific characteristics or qualities that participants must have to be relevant to the research. For this study, it the respondents will be the 15 public elementary teachers.

Furthermore, the researcher develops criteria for selecting participants that align with the study's goals. These criteria help ensure that the selected individuals have the necessary knowledge or experience. Researchers then actively recruit individuals who meet these criteria, often through direct contact, invitations, or referrals from key informants. The criteria were discussed in the previous part of this proposal.

Once participants are identified, data is collected through methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. The collected data is then analyzed to gain insights into the research topic. The process of purposive sampling is iterative, meaning researchers may refine their criteria for selection process based on initial findings to ensure they gather the most relevant and comprehensive information.

Data Analysis

The initial step in the research process was the coding of the interview transcripts, utilizing the theoretical framework upon which the study was grounded. This coding process was essential for conducting a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data. At this stage, the researcher interpreted the participants' narratives to identify and analyze subjects, issues, similarities, and differences. This methodology facilitated the researcher's understanding of how participants constructed their reality based on their individual viewpoints (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Once the codes had been identified and categorized, the researcher proceeded with the task of thematizing the dataset. Thematizing involved organizing the codes extracted from the transcripts in a logical and coherent manner. Consequently, when arranging the findings for presentation, the identified themes were used as section headings in the written report, with the corresponding codes positioned beneath them along with the researcher's analysis and explanation (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The initial phase in implementing Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological approach was the examination of the interview transcripts to extract textual data. The researcher then identified and highlighted sections of the text that were connected to the predetermined codes outlined in the study's theoretical framework. These data codes were subsequently classified or thematized according to established clustering procedures (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Assarroudi et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the results of the study and discussed the themes derived from the lived experiences of elementary teachers as they implemented various strategies to promote teacher well-being within the district. The analysis focused on how mentoring practices were enacted, interpreted, and experienced by the participants, highlighting both the strengths and challenges of existing mentoring processes in public elementary schools. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the chapter outlined the key elements that shaped effective mentoring relationships, the obstacles encountered in fostering teacher well-being, and the contextual factors influencing mentoring implementation.

QUALITATIVE STRAND

Lived experiences of teachers in the implementation of teacher mentoring programs

Table 1 presented the thematic analysis of teachers' lived experiences in the implementation of teacher mentoring programs and revealed **five major themes** that captured the depth and diversity of their narratives. These themes were **Professional Growth through Mentoring, Transformational Learning from**

Mentors, Supportive Mentor–Mentee Relationships, Enhanced Professional Identity, and Collaborative Learning Culture. Together, these themes illustrated how mentoring shaped teachers’ professional journeys by offering structured guidance, meaningful modelling, emotional support, identity formation, and a collective environment that nurtured continuous reflection and improvement.

The significant statements highlighted how mentoring helped teachers refine instructional strategies, gain confidence, form reciprocal relationships, strengthen their sense of professional purpose, and engage in collaborative practices that contributed to overall school improvement. The table therefore showed that mentoring was not a single event but a dynamic, relational, and developmental process that touched multiple dimensions of teachers’ professional lives.

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These results were consistent with mentoring literature. Agan (2023) emphasized that well-structured mentoring strengthens teachers’ competencies and encourages reflective practice. Escobal (2023) highlighted that mentoring flourishes when both pedagogical and emotional dimensions are considered. Meanwhile, Aydın and Arslan (2022) underscored that mentoring is most effective when grounded in clear expectations, supportive relationships, and authentic professional engagement. These perspectives situated the five themes within a broader understanding of mentoring as a transformative and holistic professional development experience.

Table 1. Thematic analysis on the lived experiences of teachers in the implementation of teacher mentoring programs

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Professional growth gained through mentoring experiences	Skill enhancement; confidence building; instructional	“Teacher mentoring has significantly shaped my professional growth by providing	Professional Growth through Mentoring	Teachers experienced substantial improvement in instructional

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Development of professional identity through mentoring	Self-awareness; reflective teacher identity	<p>than supervisory.” (ID13)</p> <p>“Mentors and mentees learn from each other.” (ID18)</p> <p>“Mentoring helped me become a more confident, reflective, and adaptive teacher.” (ID13)</p> <p>“Through mentoring, I know my strengths and weaknesses as a professional.” (ID15)</p>	Enhanced Professional Identity	Mentoring fostered reflective practice and self-awareness, enabling teachers to develop a stronger, more confident professional identity.
Contribution of mentoring to school-wide professional culture	Peer learning; shared expertise; community building	<p>“Mentors provide guidance while mentees bring fresh perspectives.” (ID11)</p> <p>“Mentoring broadened my teaching perspectives through collaborative learning.” (ID18)</p>	Collaborative Learning Culture	Mentoring cultivated a collaborative school culture where shared knowledge, peer support, and collective learning strengthened instructional practices and innovation.

Challenges teachers encounter and how they navigated them

Table 2 presented the thematic analysis of the challenges teachers encountered in the mentoring process and their strategies for navigating these difficulties. The table revealed **five major themes**, namely: **Time Constraints and Workload Pressures**, **Emotional and Psychological Barriers**, **Misalignment of Teaching Philosophies**, **Institutional and Policy-Related Challenges**, and **Adaptive Coping and Support**

Mechanisms. These themes collectively captured how teachers struggled with competing responsibilities, feelings of vulnerability, differences in pedagogical approaches, inconsistent implementation of institutional policies, and limited leadership support. The significant statements further showed that despite these difficulties, teachers employed various coping strategies such as open communication, reflective practice, peer collaboration, and structured planning to sustain their mentoring engagement.

These findings aligned with existing literature. Smith (2024) emphasized the inconsistency of mentoring program implementation as a major cause of mentoring difficulties. Quinn (2023) highlighted the heavy workload and time constraints that often weaken mentoring relationships. Mullen and Badger (2023) further revealed that external disruptions and institutional pressures intensify mentoring challenges, particularly when leadership support is inconsistent. Thus, the themes from Table 2 provide a nuanced understanding of the complex realities teachers face in mentoring.

Table 2. Thematic analysis on the challenges teachers encounter and how they navigated them

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Challenges teachers face in managing time and workload during mentoring	Scheduling conflicts; heavy teaching tasks	“I struggled with time management in preparing my lessons.” (IDI1) “Balancing time and workload was challenging.” (IDI3) “Time constraints posed challenges.” (IDI6)	Time Constraints and Workload Pressures	Teachers found it difficult to balance mentoring responsibilities with academic and administrative tasks, limiting their full engagement in mentoring programs.

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Emotional difficulties encountered in the mentoring process	Self doubt; vulnerability; anxiety	<p>“One difficulty was the fear of being judged.” (IDI3)</p> <p>“I felt vulnerable sharing my weaknesses.” (IDI9)</p> <p>“It was challenging to express my requirements and expectations.” (IDI15)</p>	Emotional Struggles and Fear of Judgment	Emotional barriers such as fear, anxiety, and vulnerability hindered teachers from openly participating in mentoring and sharing areas needing improvement.
Differences in instructional beliefs between mentors and mentees	Misalignment of strategies; conflicting styles	<p>“Differing teaching philosophies and communication barriers posed challenges.” (IDI2)</p> <p>“Differences in teaching styles required patience and adjustment.” (IDI12)</p>	Differences in Teaching Philosophies	Misaligned teaching approaches and styles created tension, requiring both mentors and mentees to negotiate, adjust, and remain patient during the mentoring process.
Structural or institutional limitations in the mentoring system	Inconsistent mentoring; lack of formal system	<p>“I faced limited and no proper program for mentoring.” (IDI7)</p>	Limited Mentoring Structures	Inadequate and inconsistent mentoring frameworks restricted the continuity and effectiveness of professional support.
Strategies teachers use to cope with mentoring challenges	Peer support; open dialogue; reflection	<p>“I relied on open communication with my mentor.” (IDI1)</p> <p>“Peer support helped me cope.” (IDI2)</p> <p>“Reflection journals helped me stay organized.” (IDI3)</p>	Coping through Communication and Support Systems	Teachers relied on communication, peer collaboration, and reflective practices to manage mentoring difficulties and sustain professional growth.
Influence of policies and	Policy alignment;	<p>“DepEd policies and culture shape</p>	Use of DepEd Policies and	DepEd policies and school culture shaped

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
school norms on mentoring	school norms	mentoring experiences.” (ID18) “Policies can support or hinder mentoring.” (ID111)	School Culture as Guides	mentoring dynamics, either facilitating effective practice or creating barriers depending on how they were implemented.

Factors contributing to effective and sustainable teacher mentoring programs

Table 3 presented the thematic analysis of the factors that contributed to the effectiveness and sustainability of teacher mentoring programs as experienced by the teacher participants. The analysis revealed **five major themes**, namely: **Strong Institutional and Leadership Support, Constructive Mentor–Mentee Dynamics, Structured and Future-Ready Mentoring Frameworks, Research-Driven and Collaborative Professional Culture, and Innovative and Contextually Responsive Mentoring Practices**. These themes collectively illustrated how mentoring programs thrived when guided by competent leadership, anchored in clear roles and expectations, strengthened by positive interpersonal relationships, enriched through research engagement, and sustained by flexible and innovative approaches tailored to teachers’ diverse instructional contexts. The significant statements in the table revealed how teachers perceived mentoring as a continuous developmental process supported by systematic structures, trust-based relationships, shared learning experiences, and adaptability to school realities. These factors demonstrated that sustainable mentoring programs required both organizational commitment and individualized professional support.

The interpretation of these themes aligned strongly with mentoring literature. Cox and Mullen (2023) emphasized that leadership plays a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of mentorship and professional collaboration. Agan (2023) and Escobal (2023) underscored the importance of structuring mentoring frameworks to meet evolving educational demands. Meanwhile, Berondo (2023) and Rodriguez (2023) highlighted that research-informed mentoring strengthens instructional practices and enhances teacher readiness. These studies reinforced the findings of Table 3, situating the five themes within a broader understanding of sustainable mentoring models.

Table 3. Thematic analysis on factors contributing to effective and sustainable teacher mentoring programs

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
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Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Importance of having clear mentoring objectives and organized processes	Goal setting; program clarity; systematic activities	<p>“Effective mentoring thrives on clear goals and structured meetings.” (IDI1)</p> <p>“Clear goals and structure make the program meaningful.” (IDI3)</p> <p>“Effective programs feature clear goals.” (IDI2)</p>	Clear Goals and Structured Mentoring Processes	Mentoring becomes more meaningful and effective when expectations are aligned, objectives are defined, and activities are systematically planned.
Role of administrators and school leaders in sustaining mentoring	Resources; recognition; protected time	<p>“Strong administrative support sustains mentoring programs.” (IDI1)</p> <p>“Leaders provide resources and recognition.” (IDI2)</p> <p>“Administrative support greatly influences sustainability.” (IDI13)</p>	Supportive Administrative and Leadership Involvement	Leadership engagement strengthens mentoring by providing necessary resources, allocating time, and endorsing the value of mentoring across the school.
Relationship qualities that enhance the mentoring experience	Safe environment; trust building; relationship quality	<p>“Trust and respect strengthen mentoring relationships.” (IDI5)</p> <p>“Open communication enables collaborative learning.” (IDI10)</p> <p>“Mentoring requires mutual</p>	Mutual Trust, Respect, and Open Communication	Trust, respect, and open communication create a psychologically safe mentoring environment that allows honest dialogue, collaboration, and professional growth.

Issues Probed	Codes / Categories	Significant Statements (with Attributions)	Themes	Meanings / Interpretations
Need for sustained training and development for mentors	Workshops; LAC sessions; coaching skills	respect.” (IDI14) “Ongoing training is needed to enhance mentoring impact.” (IDI1) “Mentoring benefits from PD workshops.” (IDI4)	Continuous Professional Development and Mentor Training	Continuous training equips mentors with updated skills and strategies, leading to more consistent, high-quality mentoring practices.
Influence of school culture on the success of mentoring	Shared learning; collegial support	“Mentoring creates a culture of continuous improvement.” (IDI1) “A positive school culture strengthens mentoring.” (IDI12)	Collaborative and Reflective School Culture	A supportive, collaborative school culture promotes shared expertise, reflective practice, and collective professional growth through mentoring.
Need for flexible and individualized mentoring approaches	Individual needs; flexibility	“Programs should adapt to evolving needs.” (IDI1) “Personalized training enhances long-term impact.” (IDI8)	Personalized and Adaptive Mentoring Approaches	Tailored and flexible mentoring approaches respond better to unique teacher needs, ensuring relevance, effectiveness, and long-term impact.
Importance of systematic evaluation and continuous feedback	Monitoring; reflection; program improvement	“Regular evaluations ensure the program adapts.” (IDI1) “Ongoing evaluation strengthens mentoring impact.” (IDI11)	Consistent Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms	Monitoring and feedback allow mentoring programs to evolve, address gaps, and remain responsive to emerging challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study revealed a holistic and interconnected picture of teacher mentoring as experienced by educators across different roles and contexts. Across the three major areas of inquiry, participants consistently described mentoring as a deeply influential professional process that shaped their instructional competence, strengthened their professional identity, and enhanced the collaborative culture within their schools. The results of the thematic analyses showed that mentoring contributed to professional growth, promoted transformative learning, enhanced mentor–mentee relationships, and supported a shared culture of improvement, which collectively reinforced the significance of mentoring in building teacher capacity. These insights resonate with the literature showing that well-structured mentoring programs cultivate skill development, reflective practice, and long-term instructional improvement, as reported by Agan (2023), Escobal (2023), Dingal (2023), Combo and Ramos (2023), and Jones (2023). Additionally, the findings aligned with the assertions of Aydın and Arslan (2022) and Ibrahim (2021) that mentoring experiences are shaped by the interaction of expectations, institutional conditions, and personal encounters.

The synthesis for Table 1 emphasized how mentoring facilitated teachers' professional growth, fostered transformational learning, strengthened professional identity, cultivated supportive mentor–mentee relationships, and promoted a collaborative learning culture. Teachers described mentoring as an essential mechanism for personal development and instructional confidence, consistent with the findings of Agan (2023), Escobal (2023), and Dingal (2023). Moreover, the influence of mentoring on professional identity formation echoed the results of Aydın and Arslan (2022), who found that mentoring relationships serve as relational spaces where teachers negotiate and construct their sense of professional self. Similarly, the enhancement of collegiality and collaboration found support in the research of Ibrahim (2021), Jones (2023), and Klein (2024), who observed that mentoring deepens shared learning and encourages on-going dialogue about instructional practices. The recurring emphasis on reflective learning also corroborated the works of Combo and Ramos (2023) and Hall (2024), who highlighted how sustained mentoring promotes purposeful improvement and strengthens teachers' commitment to continuous learning.

The synthesis for Table 2 highlighted the complex challenges teachers encountered in the mentoring process, including lack of structured mentoring systems, limited time and resources, mismatched expectations, insufficient research involvement, emotional strain, and contextual disparities. These challenges aligned with the observations of Smith (2024), O'Connor (2023), and Quinn (2023), who all underscored the problem of inconsistent mentoring frameworks and mentor overload. The findings also resonated with studies by Taylor (2023) and Mullen and Badger (2023), which identified philosophical mismatches and the pressures of adapting to changing instructional environments as major sources of tension within mentoring relationships. Additionally, the issue of limited research involvement supported the findings of Rodríguez (2023), Berondo (2023), and Upton (2023), who noted that many beginning teachers struggle to integrate research-informed practices without sufficient guidance. The influence of cultural and contextual factors further affirmed the claims of Nikoçeviq-Kurti and Saqipi (2022) and Vecaldo (2022), suggesting that mentoring cannot be

effective without recognizing the specific needs of teachers within their unique educational environments.

The synthesis for Table 3 revealed the key factors that contributed to the effectiveness and sustainability of mentoring programs, which included institutional and leadership support, strong mentor–mentee relationships, systematic and future-oriented mentoring frameworks, collaborative and research-informed cultures, and innovative, context-responsive mentoring practices. These results were strongly supported by findings from Cox and Mullen (2023), Lewis (2024), and Mullen and Badger (2023), who emphasized that leadership commitment strengthens the sustainability of mentoring structures. The importance of well-structured frameworks aligned with the conclusions of Agan (2023) and Escobal (2023), who argued that mentoring must be intentionally designed to support future-ready education systems. Furthermore, the integration of research practices echoed the views of Berondo (2023), Rodríguez (2023), and Upton (2023), who noted that research-engaged mentoring enhances instructional quality. Finally, the value of contextualized and innovative mentoring practices reinforced the insights of Hall (2024), Klein (2024), and Jones (2023), who demonstrated that adaptive, creative, and relationship-centered mentoring produces deeper and more meaningful outcomes for teachers.

Generally, the synthesis showed that teacher mentoring is most effective when supported by strong institutional leadership, grounded in collaborative professional relationships, guided by systematic frameworks, enriched through research and reflective dialogue, and adapted to the context and needs of teachers. The findings, which consistently echoed across participant narratives and aligned with multiple studies from Agan (2023), Escobal (2023), Cox and Mullen (2023), Dingal (2023), Taylor (2023), and Rodríguez (2023), demonstrated that mentoring is a dynamic and evolving process. It succeeds when mentors and mentees are supported, when expectations are aligned, and when programs are structured yet flexible. The interconnected insights from the three tables provide a powerful foundation for refining teacher mentoring programs so that they become more sustainable, equitable, and impactful in enhancing teacher development and improving student learning outcomes.

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