Professional Guidance by Mentors for Teacher Trainee Students: An Attribute or Capacitation

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ABSTRACT

For an effective and viable teaching and learning environment, as well as quality academic attainment among learners, teacher education programs must be implemented to shape the entire curriculum and the future of the education system. Encompassed in these programs, one of the pivotal components is the consideration of mentorship. Therefore, this study aims to provide insights into the implications of mentorship in teacher education. This paper examines the notion of mentors' professional guidance, whether regarded as an attribute or a form of capacitation for teacher-trainee students. This study investigates mentorship dynamics by examining teacher trainee efficacy in relation to professional development. A comprehensive analysis of the qualitative approach entrenched in Participatory Action Research (PAR) was administered. Semi-structured interviews served as a data-gathering tool, where five mentor teachers were purposely selected to share their life experiences. This group of university teachers was allocated to mentor teacher trainees in diverse schools during their Work Integrated Learning (WIL) sessions. The interview process took longer than anticipated, taking on new dimensions that did not primarily capture the interviewers' thoughts. This led to posing follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the investigated problem. Ethical considerations were primarily addressed, which enabled positive collaborations between interviewers and interviewees. This empirical paper uncovered two primary findings: (i) advancement of practical skills significantly increased through mentorship capacitation, and (ii) cultivation of professional identity among teacher-trainee students. With the revealed implications of the study findings, the study concludes and recommends that there is a dire need to optimize mentorship programs as a means of enhancing teacher education outcomes, thus reshaping the future of education.

Keywords: Capacitation, Mentorship, Professional guidance, Teacher retention, Teacher trainee students

1. Introduction

As a point of departure, this paper highlights the critical variables encompasses within the study title. In the educational sphere, a mentor is defined as an experienced and knowledgeable individual who facilitates the personal, academic, or professional development of a mentee. This activity is carried out in the form of guidance, support, and a positive influence, leading to fostered achievements in the mentee's educational journey (Shanks et al, 2022). To achieve this quality trait, an attribute is at the core of the entire process. During the mentor-mentee process, attributes are considered as those qualities or characteristics possessed by both the mentors and mentees. Such qualities tend to have a significant influence on how effective and successful relationships become. Motivational dimensions are therefore facilitated by these qualities, which are intended to foster productive interactions that allow for mutual growth (Goodwin, 2022). Additionally, at the core of the mentorship programme is capacitation, which refers to the process of enhancing an individual's or a group's skills, knowledge, and competencies, thereby empowering them to perform tasks effectively and meaningfully within their respective contexts. This fosters both personal and professional growth (Cree-Green, 2020).

Hence, a worldwide perspective suggests that programs for teacher education development have given significant consideration to the vital role of mentorship in supporting student teachers. Studies have identified several mentorship practices that have been proven effective, as denoted by Albakri et al (2021). In these studies, it is highlighted that there is a need to investigate the underlying perspectives and practices that encompass teacher-trainee students and their respective mentors (Brown et al., 2020). Among these viewpoints, other factors for consideration could be mentorship practices that are effective in facilitating and advancing practical skills for capacity-building purposes (Geesa et al., 2022). Upon considering the beneficial mentorship approaches in depth, an informed design implementation can lead to a positive outcome, enhancing practical skills.

2. Literature Review

Attribute and Capacitation as Critical Aspects of the Mentoring Ecosystem

In the realm of professional guidance for teacher trainees, it is imperative to understand the critical interplay between mentor attributes and skill development, particularly within the mentoring practices applied in teacher education programs. The term "attributes" encompasses the inherent qualities and strengths that mentors possess, while "capacitation" refers to the structured training and development processes that empower trainee teachers to acquire the essential competencies for effective teaching (Viera, 2021). It is essential to assert that recognizing the vital link between these two elements is fundamental for preparing teacher trainees for success in their professional journeys.

Mentors bring invaluable attributes such as extensive experience, comprehensive pedagogical knowledge, and strong interpersonal skills that significantly shape the mentoring relationship. Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that experienced mentors do not merely provide instructional support; they also offer crucial emotional encouragement, which is instrumental in enhancing self-efficacy and confidence among their mentees. Therefore, it is clear that the quality of mentorship can be a decisive factor in a trainee's development.

Conversely, capacitation cannot be overlooked. It encompasses the structured processes and strategic initiatives necessary to equip trainee teachers with the skills essential for professional success. Mentoring programs must include targeted training sessions designed to cultivate reflective teaching practices and enhance pedagogical competence (Zhang, Basham & Yang, 2020). For example, studies convincingly indicate that regular coaching sessions aligned with a capacitation framework lead to significant improvements in teaching effectiveness among trainees. These sessions are not only beneficial but also essential for fostering the reflective practices that underpin personal and professional growth, a point strongly supported by extensive research into effective teacher development programs.

Henceforth, the implementation of well-structured mentoring programs serves as a critical mechanism for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. It is not enough for trainee teachers to merely possess theoretical understanding; they must be equipped to translate that knowledge into impactful classroom strategies. In this context, both mentor attributes and capacitation are not merely desirable but are, in fact, indispensable for the effective preparation of the next generation of educators. Thus, we must advocate for a comprehensive approach that fully integrates these components to ensure the success of our teachers and, ultimately, the students they serve.

Teacher trainee developmental trajectories

For this paper to address the research problems centred around the identification of key factors impacting the effectiveness of mentoring relationships between teacher mentors and their trainees, this investigation seeks to examine how the mentor attributes profile the developmental trajectories of teacher trainees, as outlined by Deng et al (2022). Attributes in question are diverse and not limited to professionalism, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, this paper aims to explore the extent to which structured capacitation, in the form of formal training programs, affects the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship and enhances competencies (Astrove & Kraimer, 2022). In accordance, this paper identifies actionable objectives that may include developing a framework to assess the key attributes of mentors that lead to successful mentoring outcomes, as well as evaluating effective capacitation methods for an enhanced professional ethic among teacher trainees.

It is needless to mention, as outlined by Dos Santos (2021), that closely considering mentor training logistics can help to unwind limited mentorship skills. To develop such initiatives, a wide range of competence development is required, which may include teacher training frameworks that encompass deep knowledge of subject content paired with instructional techniques, lesson planning dynamics, and classroom management procedures (Aderibigbe, 2016). For the validation of Teaching Practice approaches to help and support teacher-trainee students, a sense of professional identity could be instilled, as this is the pride and worthiness of the teaching profession (McConnell et al., 2021).

Be that as it may, there remain some concerns about whether to view mentorship as an attribute or capacitation. Embarking on writing this piece is an attempt to address this argument through a scrutiny of the mentor roles in providing the so-called teacher trainees with proficient guidance (Aarts et al., 2020). To shed light on the probable altered teacher education mentorship, the existing literature has been examined, along with the theory underpinning this inquiry, to help address the underlying problem (Beagle, 2020).

Professional distinctiveness

Consequent to the claims above, Han (2023) proposes that to underscore how reflective practice can be implemented to cultivate professional distinctiveness within a group of teacher-trainee students, there is a significant need for motivation strategies to be put in place. One cited example is when this cohort of teacher trainees is inspired to reflect on aspects such as classroom interactions and experiences with teaching pedagogies, and this exercise is a consistent and normal practice (McConnell et al., 2019). These propositions are supported by Ellis et al. (2020), who argue that engaging in programs that facilitate mentorship can help sustain and deepen the understanding of teacher-trainee students' professional roles, ultimately leading to refined teaching practices that align with emerging teacher identities.

Although mentorship is one of the most critical elements of teacher education programs, it is worth noting that a crucial aspect of this exercise is providing professional and holistic growth to beginner or novice teachers through necessary guidance and support (Matsko et al., 2020). Nonetheless, Fuller (2022) asserts that for mentorship programs to be considered viable, it depends entirely on the program's nature and context. As research reveals that some authors (Farhadiba & Wulyani, 2020) assess mentorship with its static attributes in line with teacher experience, other scholars argue that for mentorship to be considered capacious and functional, its support should be conceptualized in a manner centered around intentional development.

Indeed, in any scholarly discourse, whether it involves research, scientific logistics, or educational diversity, it is common for scholars to hold perspectives and opinions that vary from one another (Byars-Winston & Butz, 2021). Regarding some probable counterarguments, the Government of Ghana (2020) claims that mentorship programs are less effective when expected to cultivate the professional identity of teacher-trainee students. Additionally, there is some inconsistency in mentorship relationships, which hinders the advancement of practical skills, influenced by factors such as mentor-mentee compatibility and the availability of relevant mentors (Carmi & Tamir, 2021).

Critiques by some scholars

Subsequently, some scholars seem to critique the efficacy of attracting teacher-trainee students for public outreach programs. Tuma et al. (2021) argue that some initiatives intended for mentorship purposes may, at times, divert attention from the fundamental focus on preparing novice teachers, thereby deprofessionalizing and politicizing the teaching profession. This typically occurs in educational contexts that are inherently controversial. Therefore, this becomes a wake-up call for teacher mentees as they engage in scholarly discourse, prompting them to take close consideration of the diverse, underlying intricacies (Vessey et al., 2021). With, this paper identified a gap. Although some studies have been conducted on mentorship for teacher trainee students, this paper notes that, even with the implementation of teacher education programmes, there is a failure to bridge the gaps between practical application and abstract knowledge. This failure, therefore, results in a disconnection or division when equating theories of learning with real-world teaching experiences (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

For this inquiry, it was deemed necessary to embed a theoretical framework as a means to provide valuable insights when discussing mentorship versus teacher education programs, as these impacts progress the practical skills of teacher-trainees. The Reflective Practice Theory, as outlined by Schön (1991), underpins this investigation, emphasizing the necessity of engaging in actions aimed at improving experiences through professional practice, particularly within the educational sphere, as it is closely intertwined with professional development. The Reflective Practice Theory proposes reflective practice, wherein teacher-trainee students are given opportunities to reflect on their own teaching experiences after engaging in self-introspection. Upon mentor feedback, mentees, in this case, student teachers, are then exposed to redefining teaching approaches that they have been implementing. This exercise, if consistently practiced, helps advance practical skills.

Concurrently, Schön (1991) highlights two varying reflection modes: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. In cases where professionals address existing challenges by applying knowledge from previous experiences, this mode is referred to as reflection-in-action. In parallel, reflection-on-action occurs when there is a critical analysis of existing experiences and their consequences. Therefore, teachers, as professionals, are sometimes confronted with complex circumstances without clear ways of addressing them (Nokkala et al., 2021). Some expertise is therefore required as a prerequisite to address such compound and multifaceted challenges. This is one of the reasons why teachers need to align themselves as lifelong learners, in order to upskill and adapt to recent and emerging changes in the education sector. Furthermore, when practicing the reflection strategy, teacher-trainee students can be empowered to become capable innovators, thereby enhancing their teaching practice.

Figure 1: The Concept of Reflective Practice (Schön, 1991)

Figure 1 above emphasizes that for an improved educational experience, it is critical to learn and work collaboratively with others, as this leads to enhanced professional ethics, which are essential for lifelong scholarly development.

Educational Implications

With its philosophical underpinnings, Reflective Practice Theory (Schön, 1991) has significant educational implications for teacher education, particularly in contrast to professional development. When reflective practice is incorporated into programs for teacher education, the anticipated benefits are that teachers at the pre-service level attain metacognitive competencies, along with advanced critical thinking skills, that can augment the currently applied teaching pedagogies. By incorporating such developmental initiatives, classroom settings are likely to be transformed into research-oriented environments as teachers reflect on their teaching strategies and experiences, thereby redefining their instructional approaches.

In addition, Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) argue that both novice and experienced teachers require exposure to programs offering coaching and mentorship. Sharing teaching experiences between mentors and mentees is a worthwhile juncture, as those less informed have opportunities to learn from previous productive experiences. Actually, the root cause of ratifying such issues is when an individual teacher can be truthful in critically examining their strategies, and then opting for alternatives (Marciano et al, 2019). Furthermore, for mentors to provide structured feedback, guidance, and supervision, those considered novices become enlightened about pedagogy and enhanced classroom effectiveness (Templeton, 2022). As this paper draws on this underpinning framework, the underlying objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of mentorship.

3. Method

The Research Approach

For this inquiry, a qualitative research approach was employed (Creswell, 2013). The research design implemented was Participatory action research (PAR). For the author to have employed this type of qualitative research design, the primary motive was to facilitate collaboration between me, the investigator, and the study participants. This strategy revealed some underlying social implications that are likely to bring about social change embedded within mentorship in teacher education. As this study is participatory in its approach, a democratic endeavour concerning social justice was ensured, as participants' interaction encouraged diverse perspectives to be heard. When the principle of equality is functionally observed, stakeholders involved in research display a keenness to evoke that optimistic social change, as they are the ones at the core of the studied challenge, thereby generating suggestions to address the matter at hand.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the interview protocol for this study, which aimed to explore how the attributes of mentors and the capacitation processes affect relationships between teacher trainees. To maintain research rigour, the questions in the interview schedule were aligned with the research objectives (Gubrium, 2012). This set of questions was structured to construct inquiry-based conversations that proved to inspire extensive responses. Additionally, this paper deemed it necessary to undergo a pilot process for the instrument, which was conducted to assess question clarity and appropriateness.

A Pilot Study

As piloting was conducted, preliminary interviews were administered to a small sample of teacher trainees and mentors (Gubrium, 2012). This strategy proved crucial, as it significantly assisted in refining the questions for the actual investigation. Lastly, as the interview protocol was refined, it was executed during the main data collection to elicit detailed insights regarding the mentor roles, attributes, and capacitation.

All the questions posed aimed to explore mentors' perspectives on the relationship between mentorship and the enhancement of practical teaching skills, as well as professional identity for the teacher trainees. Below is a set of questions that were contained in the interview schedule:

1. What role does reflective practice within the mentorship experience play in shaping the professional identity of teacher trainees?
2. In what ways does the mentorship process facilitate the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills?
3. How do mentor teachers' mentoring styles contribute to the development of practical skills among teacher trainees during their teaching practice?

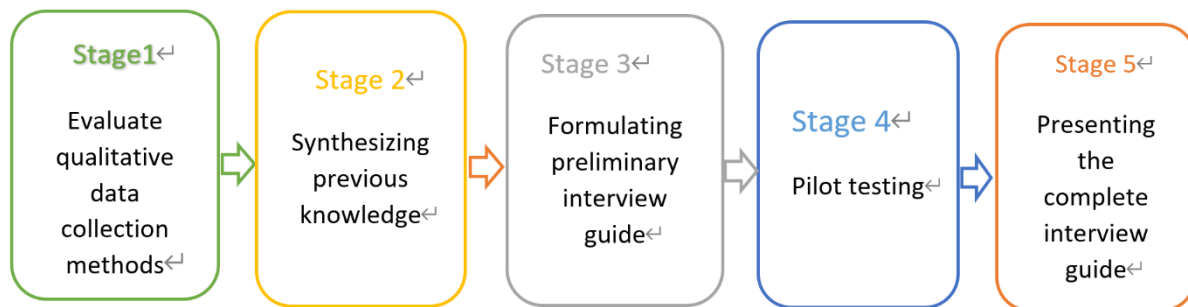*Preparatory Stages for Semi-structured Interviews*

Figure 2: Preparatory Stages for Semi-structured Interviews (George, 2023)

The diagram above summarizes the steps taken prior to administering the actual interview procedures. As semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools, a process was conducted to explore the mentorship roles embedded in teacher education programs. Collaborations between the interviewees and the interviewer were robust to some extent, as they posed follow-up questions not primarily contained in the interview schedule (Adams, 2015). The types of questions posed had an element of open-endedness, thereby leading to open-ended responses from the participants (Patton, 2002). With the non-eruption of new responses, it was evident that a point of saturation had been reached, as no further new patterns, similarities, or dissimilarities were acknowledged.

Participant Selection

As data informants, five mentor teachers were considered as relevant participants for this inquiry. Qualitative investigations, by their nature, prioritize depth over breadth in order to gain a deeper understanding of a circumstance (Kvale & Brinkman, 2008). For this inquiry, the intention to identify 5 mentor teachers was of the same rationale. For this small sample, this study aimed for an in-depth exploration and rich data on the complexities of mentorship relationships, as measured against the professional dynamics encountered by mentors who

professionally guide teacher trainee students. To outline the criteria for participant selection, it is worth mentioning that mentors were preferred based on several factors of significance, including, and not limited to, experience level considering the minimum number of five years of mentoring experience; and diversity of expertise, as the study participants emanated from various teaching disciplines, thus leading to a wide variety of mentorship styles and perspectives. To embark on this selection strategy, the primary objective was to ensure a viable reflection of a comprehensive understanding of the impact of mentorship on teacher trainees' professional development (Bamberg et al., 2021).

These five participants were purposely selected for this sampling strategy, as it ensures that life realities are not skewed, thereby allowing for consideration of diverse perspectives (Patton, 2015). During the interview sessions, this participant cohort was awarded opportunities to unwind their real-life experiences extracted from their involvement in mentoring teacher trainees for the past couple of years when embarking on WIL, commonly termed Teaching Practice, for their specific field of teacher education. This is a consistent process where student teachers visit various schools across varying provinces and diverse home-student backgrounds to exhibit teaching and learning pedagogies.

This study justifies its selection of a small sample size, reflecting the qualitative nature of the research. Unlike quantitative studies, which aim to generalize findings across larger demographics, this investigation delves into the intricate tapestry of individual experiences, motivations, and perceptions of teacher trainees. Research in qualitative methodology suggests that even small samples comprising five or more participants can provide sufficient depth and saturation of data, as evidenced by the recurring key themes that emerged from participant responses.
In this context, the small sample size proved invaluable in facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the rich mentoring experiences and diverse perspectives of the teacher trainees involved. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that mentorship experiences are often profoundly influenced by individual backgrounds and specific contextual factors. Consequently, insights derived from a well-chosen, smaller sample can uncover important nuances that larger-scale studies may miss. Thus, the strategic use of a purposeful sampling method in this research not only enriched the data collected but also provided profound, contextualized insights that are anticipated to make a significant contribution to the field of educational mentoring (Kvale & Brinkman, 2008).

Data analysis

To analyze the data, thematic analysis was employed. This type of analysis is well known for its advantage of underscoring identification, analysis, and translation of patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). This type of analysis was conducted by following the necessary steps.

Firstly, as a foundational step, I embarked on familiarising myself with the contents of the gathered data. As I read and re-read my field notes, I ensured that I highlighted both the key points and interesting segments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Secondly, now that I was familiar with the contents, I began to code the data in a systematic manner. During this process, responses from participants were sorted according to their relations and similarities.

Thereafter, as the 3rd stage, codes were collated into potential themes through the process of grouping together all those codes that seemed to be related to each other (Creswell, 2013).

Patterns caused by related responses then led to the formation of themes about how mentorship experience impacted teacher-trainee development. As the process of data sorting was carried out, with commonalities identified, some notable differences were observed in participant responses. These emergent dimensions helped the researcher explore and discover different perspectives, which are considered in this paper as a tentative investigation for future studies. The last step was to name each identified theme, as conveyed by the essence of the data, thereby considering it as the study's findings.

Throughout the research process, the researcher maintained a reflexivity journal, which was used to record personal reflections on preconceptions and participant responses. This strategy facilitated a continuous examination of how the gathered facts might influence interpretation. Additionally, this helped guard against any possible influence on the research findings, which is considered one of the vital reflective practices in qualitative research (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). Additionally, the study participants were given opportunities to review the findings as outcomes of the interviewer-interviewee interactions. This feedback served as a wake-up call to uncover blind spots and challenge assumptions, ultimately leading to an enhancement of data analysis credibility.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indeed seem to underwrite some insights into mentorship for teacher education. Primarily, the study findings, based on the analyzed data, reveal that mentorship is not just a stand-alone process; instead, it serves as a dynamic contributor or catalyst with vital roles in inspiring professional development and enhancing teacher trainee efficiency. This study juxtaposed two findings: the advancement of practical skills was significantly enhanced through mentorship, as well as the cultivation of a professional identity among teacher-trainee students.

Advancement of Practical Skills Through Mentorship Capacitation

Concerning augmented practical skills, Participant P1 argued:
> Upon understanding that these student teachers come from diverse home backgrounds, this highlights to me that their learning preferences as teacher trainees vary and are parallel. As their mentor, I always strive to address specific areas for skill development. Applying this strategy is solely done to modify my mentorship so that individual needs are catered to.

Accordingly, P2 commented:
> Applying personalized approaches during mentorship sessions has proven to optimize mentorship efficiency and enhance practical skills. With the feedback mechanisms I apply for the teacher-trainee students I mentor, communication between the two parties, mentors and mentees, is conducted in a manner that cultivates effective mentorship dynamics. This practice has proven conducive to upskilling teacher trainees, leading to their holistic development.

With diverse opinions on this finding, P3 disputes:
> Mentorship, when efficiently facilitated, not only facilitates the acquisition of didactic knowledge and skills but also promotes a sense of professional identity, strength, and resilience among the cohort of teacher trainees.

In line with the claims above, P4 alludes:

Retention strategies to support novice teachers who have recently entered the teaching profession are enhanced by increasing mentorship levels. When these novice teachers have acquired the necessary teaching skills, the broader education system ultimately benefits, as such worthwhile skills are imparted to students, not only to enhance their academic performance but also to shape them into valuable and functional human beings.

Concludingly, P5 also proclaimed:

Through mentorship roles implemented for teacher trainee students, their practical skills are seen to be sharpening, and this seems to foster a sense of competence and improved professional traits, as the teaching profession demands. In addition to that, mentorship programs, when implemented efficiently, progress to a strengthened theoretical foundation as theory and practice are integrated to bridge the gap between real-world teaching experiences and academic knowledge.

Cultivation of Professional Identity Among Teacher-Trainee Students

With arguments centred around the cultivation of professional identity, P3 commented:

In my opinion, it has proven to be a vital juncture that provides teacher-trainee students with a platform to introspect and self-reflect on their teaching pedagogies, which helps to augment their professional identities. This is a remedial process that helps unwind hesitations and self-deprecating thoughts that hinder motivation in novices from pursuing their intended careers as lifelong learners.

On the very same accord, P1 signifies:

What I have noticed across all the teacher trainee students I have mentored over the past couple of years is that, as they reflect on their values and beliefs, professional challenges are examined in one way or another. This goes without saying that such reflections are indicators of setbacks encountered. As this hinders educational growth, teacher-trainee students are vulnerable; therefore, perseverance needs to be planted in them to foster resilience, thereby leading to a strengthened recognition of professional distinctiveness.

In line with the latter participants, P4 declares:

I have since observed how teacher-trainee students feel honoured and proud to learn that, as mentors, we consider their existence in the teaching domain. It is therefore important to ensure that these novice teachers get connected to the broader educational community sphere. This is effective when teacher trainees get exposure to collaborative partnerships and professional associations. As they collaborate with seasoned teachers, they get acquainted with a wide range of diverse learning and teaching philosophies. Such an enriched professional identity expands professional networks and fosters self-recognition and intrinsic motivation in emerging teachers.

With the claims that emerged as findings of this investigation, one can deduce that when mentorship programs are prioritized and considered crucial aspects of enhancing professional development, they can lead to teacher education institutions designing programs that are redefined for holistic, functional, and effective throughput achievements (Templeton, 2021). Designing such programs requires policymakers to consider aspects that contribute to the ongoing improvement of teacher trainees' practical skills, as well as the provision of ongoing support coupled with professional development opportunities (Porter & Thompson, 2022).

The empirical evidence that emerged as findings of this inquiry indicates an enhancement of reflective practice between teacher trainees and mentors. As these two incumbents reflect on their own successes, challenges, and experiences, it has been proven that this introspection intensifies the application of theoretical knowledge through the development of practical skills employed in real-world educational contexts (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). Through open

collaborations between mentors and mentees, as noted by Tamir (2020), learning communities are then fostered. For educational institutions to implement programs on mentorship, this involves the exchange of skills and practical knowledge, as well as fostering positive collaborative learning environments.

Additionally, for the findings to delve deeply into the essence of professional development and lifelong learning, teacher-trainee students' professional identity is established and becomes an ongoing and sustainable activity (Amedeker, 2018). When that sense of curiosity and obligation has been instilled within mentor-mentee recipients, all affected parties begin to develop the sagacity of navigating challenges, adaptability, and an intellect that embraces innovation, with the ultimate objective of achieving heightened throughput rates throughout their careers (Hoque et al., 2023). Consequently, for effective and efficient mentorship standards, a cultivated professional identity for teacher trainee students becomes embedded within an all-inclusive imperative for future teachers (Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2021). For teacher trainees to become well-grounded, their professional identities are affirmed, enabling them to become successful, career-oriented professionals.

Attributes can manifest through feedback mechanisms, where mentors offer insights that help trainee teachers refine their instructional strategies, thereby enhancing pedagogical practices. The partnership between mentors and mentees is crucial, as effective mentoring hinges on establishing trust and an open line of communication (Bonner, Wong, Pedwell & Rowland, 2019). Attributes such as empathy, clear communication, and the ability to provide constructive criticism are foundational in fostering a supportive learning environment that enables growth and learning.

Moreover, integrating research rigor into mentorship practices is essential for ensuring that the feedback and strategies being employed are evidence-based and effective. Systematic evaluations and studies on mentoring outcomes can provide insights into which approaches yield the best results for trainee teachers. This can help refine mentoring practices, informing mentors about effective instructional strategies and enabling them to support their mentees more efficiently.

Capacitation involves creating a supportive infrastructure for mentoring relationships, which entails establishing clear guidelines and providing mentors with training and resources to enhance their effectiveness. This is particularly important in contexts where apprentice teachers often feel ill-prepared for the challenges they encounter during their teaching practice. The establishment of competencies based on effective mentorship models can significantly influence the professional growth of the trainee, as research highlights the necessity of guidelines that incorporate best practices in mentorship within teacher education frameworks. Consequently, capacity-building approaches aim to foster an environment where reflective practices are normalized, allowing teacher trainees to critically analyze their experiences and continuously improve their teaching methodologies. Incorporating research rigor strengthens the framework of these practices, ensuring that the methods employed are relevant and impactful. As such, the alignment between attributes and capacitation within teacher mentoring programs, combined with a commitment to research-driven approaches, is considered a holistic strategy to professional development.

These study findings align with the theory that underpins this investigation. The Reflective Practice Theory, as alluded to by Schön (1991), emphasizes the importance of collaboration in philosophical practice and dialogue. This theorist proposes interacting with others within the

same or similar field of work, such as supervisors, mentors, and peers, as measured by unguided individual perceptions. As the affected recipients engage in dialogue, they are exposed to diverse perspectives and challenging assumptions that lead to the construction of new and emergent knowledge within educational communities (Bastian & Marks, 2017). In simple terms, this concept is commonly referred to as information sharing within academia. As such, leaders and managers invest a huge amount of effort in maintaining a fostered reflective practice culture within educational institutions. This can be demonstrated through academic events, such as professional dialogues, and this strategy is well-recognized for its extended collaboration initiatives. When information is shared, it becomes easier for school communities to identify areas for improvement and those that require continued upgrades in standards. Such an institution, having risen to those extreme heights, is tantamount to being recognized as a professionalized and organized learning sphere (Macquarie University, 2022).

5. Conclusion

This paper conducted an in-depth analysis of mentorship for teacher education programmes, identifying some capabilities that are transformative in nature, intended to cultivate professional identity and advanced practical skills in teacher-trainee students. This paper has since brought to the fore how dynamic and attributed the capacitation process is. Another important aspect highlighted by the findings of this paper is the validation of teacher-trainee students as they explore the complexities of the teaching profession. For teacher trainee students to be awarded personalized support that is integrated with theory and practice, such mentorship programs have been proven to advance efficacy, competence, and a sense of professional identity within teacher roles.

Recommendations

Therefore, the findings of this paper serve as a valuable resource for teacher education and policymakers, offering recommendations to enhance mentorship programs that can promote professional growth and expand opportunities for teacher trainees in real-world teaching frameworks. Mentor training programs, therefore, need to prioritize the development of these soft skills, including operative communication skills and emotional intelligence, as these were perceived by mentor teachers as crucial attributes that would foster an effective mentoring relationship. These professional development workshops can be integrated into teacher education curricula. This has an underlying advantage in that such skill enhancement would encourage mentors to support their trainees; additionally, the same skills would help build that sense of confidence, as trainees would feel more valued and understood. Self-confidence is equated with efficacy in teaching.

Furthermore, for holistic and unwavering teacher support development mechanisms, there is a need to diagnose the contextual and cultural factors that impede professional development identity within the sphere of teacher training. Additionally, another critical factor for consideration is the provision of mentorship experiences designed to promote cultural competence, along with awareness of diverse student and community needs.

Future studies

Future studies could investigate addressing the impact of long-term and sustainable mentorship capacitation versus teacher-trainee professional development. Accordingly, another study

could investigate the benefits of mentorship programs for those who have had the opportunity to participate, measure the attributed benefits, and examine the educational implications achieved. Such findings would help sustain and nurture a lifelong learning culture within the education sector. Additionally, future studies could focus on conducting longitudinal research that tracks teacher trainees over several years. This strategy can provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of mentorship on teaching effectiveness, professional identity, and career satisfaction. Henceforth, this paper suggests that such studies could reveal how initial mentorship experiences shape the decision-making processes of augmented teachers' pedagogies.

Limitations

For starters, a substantial limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size of five mentor teachers, which may not allow for the generalization of the study findings. In the context of feasibility and research rigor, the small sample size of five participants may seem limiting in its ability to generalize findings across broader populations. However, it can still yield valuable insights into the specific relationships and dynamics inherent in mentorship for teacher trainees. With this understanding, a small sample size can be sufficient if the selected individuals provide rich and diverse perspectives that contribute meaningfully to the exploration of the research question while maintaining the integrity of the research process. Furthermore, the study's narrow focus, which did not provide sufficient ground to capture diverse perspectives as experienced in the educational landscape, was confined to a specific geographical region. Additionally, assessing long-term impacts and trends associated with mentorship is limited by the study's cross-sectional design.

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