

Mentoring Practices and Pre-Service Teacher-Education Performance in Selected Higher Education Institutions in Cavite: Basis for A Teach Upskilling Development Program

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ABSTRACT

Teacher mentoring has become an essential component of pre-service teacher education by facilitating the transition from pedagogical theory to authentic classroom practice. Effective mentoring strengthens instructional competence, professional identity, classroom management, and reflective practice among future educators. This study assessed mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance at selected higher education institutions in Cavite to inform the development of a TEACH Upskilling Development Program. Specifically, the study examined mentoring practices in terms of coaching and supervision, observation, feedback mechanisms, and co-planning opportunities; evaluated pre-service teacher-education performance; determined significant differences among school heads, critic-teachers, and mentees; examined the relationship between mentoring practices and teacher-education performance; identified mentoring challenges; and assessed the acceptability of the proposed development program. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 216 respondents consisting of school heads, critic-teachers, and pre-service teachers. Data were gathered using a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, analysis of variance, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings revealed that mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance were generally assessed as highly evident. Significant differences were observed among respondent groups in selected variables, while mentoring practices demonstrated a significant positive relationship with teacher-education performance. The proposed TEACH Upskilling Development Program was likewise rated highly acceptable, indicating its feasibility for strengthening mentoring systems within teacher education institutions. The study concludes that effective mentoring substantially contributes to the professional preparation of future teachers and recommends institutionalizing structured mentoring programs across teacher education institutions.

Keywords: mentoring practices, pre-service teachers, teacher education, practicum, professional development, higher education institutions, mentor teachers

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is a fundamental component of teacher education that bridges pedagogical theory and authentic classroom practice. Through coaching, classroom observation, collaborative planning, and constructive feedback, mentoring enables pre-service teachers to develop instructional competence, professional confidence, reflective practice, and classroom readiness. Consequently, effective mentoring has become an essential strategy for preparing future educators capable of meeting the evolving demands of contemporary education.

In the Philippines, improving teacher quality remains a national priority through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), Teacher Education Council reforms, and the recommendations of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II). These initiatives emphasize stronger partnerships between higher education institutions and cooperating schools to ensure that pre-service teachers receive meaningful professional guidance during their practicum experiences.

Despite these reforms, mentoring practices continue to differ across teacher education institutions due to variations in mentor preparation, institutional support, supervisory practices, and practicum implementation. Such differences may influence the quality of professional learning and the overall readiness of pre-service teachers for classroom practice. Moreover, limited empirical studies have comprehensively examined mentoring practices alongside multiple dimensions of pre-service teacher performance while incorporating the perspectives of school heads, critic teachers, and mentees.

Accordingly, this study assessed mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance in selected higher education institutions in Cavite. Specifically, it examined mentoring practices, evaluated teacher performance, determined significant differences and relationships among the study variables, identified mentoring challenges, and developed a TEACH Upskilling Development Program to strengthen institutional mentoring systems.

Research Gap

Previous studies have consistently recognized mentoring as an important factor in developing instructional competence, reflective practice, and professional identity among pre-service teachers. However, most investigations have examined mentoring practices or teacher performance independently, with relatively few studies exploring their relationship within a comprehensive institutional framework.

Furthermore, existing research has often focused on either mentor or mentee perspectives, with limited studies simultaneously incorporating the viewpoints of school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers. Likewise, few studies have translated empirical findings into structured mentoring interventions that support continuous institutional improvement.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive assessment of mentoring practices and pre-service teacher performance in selected higher education institutions in Cavite while proposing a validated TEACH Upskilling Development Program to strengthen mentoring systems and improve teacher preparation.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance at selected higher education institutions in Cavite to serve as the basis for developing a TEACH Upskilling Development Program.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Assess the mentoring practices in terms of: coaching and supervision; observation; feedback mechanisms; and co-planning opportunities;
2. Assess the pre-service teacher-education performance in terms of: personal and professional background; instructional skills; rapport building; adaptive and personalized learning; and automated grading and feedback;
3. Determine whether significant differences exist among the assessments of school heads, critical teachers, and mentees regarding mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance;
4. Determine the significant relationship between mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance;
5. Identify the challenges encountered by mentors and mentees in the implementation of mentoring practices;
6. Develop a **TEACH Upskilling Development Program** based on the findings of the study; and
7. Determine the acceptability of the proposed TEACH Upskilling Development Program.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on four complementary theories that explain how mentoring facilitates the professional development of pre-service teachers: **Constructivist Learning Theory**, **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**, **Discovery Learning Theory**, and **Situated Learning Theory**.

The primary theoretical foundation is **Constructivist Learning Theory**, which explains that professional knowledge is developed through active participation, reflection, and meaningful learning experiences. In teacher education, mentoring enables pre-service teachers to construct pedagogical knowledge through guided classroom practice and collaborative learning.

The study is further supported by **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development**, which emphasizes that learners achieve higher levels of competence when guided by more experienced individuals. Through coaching, observation, feedback, and collaborative lesson planning, mentor teachers provide the instructional support necessary for professional growth.

Discovery Learning Theory highlights the value of inquiry, reflection, and problem-solving in developing instructional competence, while **Situated Learning Theory** explains that professional learning occurs most effectively through authentic participation in real classroom environments and communities of practice.

Collectively, these theories explain that structured mentoring strengthens instructional competence, reflective practice, professional confidence, and teacher readiness, providing the conceptual foundation for the proposed TEACH Upskilling Development Program.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a **descriptive-correlational research design** to examine mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance at selected higher education institutions in Cavite. The descriptive component assessed the implementation of mentoring practices and the performance of pre-service teachers, while the correlational component determined the relationship between these variables. The comparative aspect likewise examined differences among the assessments of school heads, critic teachers, and mentees.

This design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to evaluate existing mentoring practices, compare stakeholder perceptions, and determine relationships among the study variables without manipulating the research conditions. The findings also served as the basis for developing the proposed **TEACH Upskilling Development Program**.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in three higher education institutions in Cavite that implement teacher education programs with structured teaching internship and mentoring systems: **Cavite State University–Imus Campus**, **Colegio De Porta Vaga**, and **Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST)–Cavite Campus**.

These institutions were selected because they maintain established partnerships with cooperating schools and actively implement mentoring programs involving school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers. Their diverse institutional contexts provided an appropriate setting for assessing mentoring practices and pre-service teacher performance during the Academic Year 2025–2026 practicum.

Respondents of the Study

The study involved **216 respondents** from three selected higher education institutions in Cavite, consisting of **8 school heads (3.70%)**, **54 critic teachers (25.00%)**, and **154 pre-service teachers or mentees (71.30%)**. School heads were included because they oversee the implementation of teacher education programs and

institutional mentoring policies, while critic teachers directly supervise, coach, and evaluate pre-service teachers during their practicum. Pre-service teachers, as the primary recipients of mentoring, provided firsthand perspectives on their mentoring experiences and professional development. The inclusion of these three stakeholder groups enabled the study to obtain comprehensive insights into mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance from administrative, supervisory, and learner perspectives.

Sampling Technique

The study employed **total population sampling** for school heads and critic teachers due to their relatively small numbers in the participating institutions. All individuals occupying these roles during the study period were included. For pre-service teachers, **total enumeration** was likewise applied, ensuring that all qualified mentees undergoing internship during Academic Year 2025–2026 participated. This approach was chosen to maximize representativeness and reduce sampling bias, as it captured the perspectives of all stakeholders directly involved in the mentoring process. While the study focused on three institutions in Cavite, the inclusion of all stakeholders within these contexts strengthens the internal validity of the findings.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a **researcher-developed survey questionnaire** as the principal instrument for collecting quantitative data. The questionnaire was constructed after an extensive review of mentoring literature, teacher education standards, practicum supervision frameworks, instructional coaching models, and previous empirical studies on mentoring and teacher performance.

Validation of the Research Instrument

The researcher-developed questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in teacher education, educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, practicum supervision, educational research, and measurement and evaluation to ensure its clarity, relevance, content adequacy, and alignment with the study objectives. The experts' recommendations were incorporated to improve the organization, wording, and overall quality of the instrument before its administration.

The revised questionnaire was subsequently pilot-tested among respondents with characteristics similar to those of the target population but who were excluded from the actual study. Reliability was established using **Cronbach's Alpha**, which indicated high internal consistency among the questionnaire items. The results of the validation and pilot testing confirmed that the instrument was both valid and reliable for assessing mentoring practices, pre-service teacher-education performance, mentoring challenges, and the acceptability of the proposed TEACH Upskilling Development Program.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the administrators of the participating higher education institutions. Coordination was likewise made with the deans, program chairpersons, and practicum coordinators regarding the questionnaire administration schedule.

Before participation, respondents were informed of the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality and anonymity of responses, and their right to withdraw at any time. The researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires to ensure completeness and accuracy of the collected data. The accomplished instruments were subsequently coded, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to accepted ethical standards governing educational research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents were maintained throughout the research process. Individual responses were reported only in aggregate, and all information collected was used solely for academic and research purposes.

The researcher likewise respected institutional policies, protected participant privacy, and ensured that no respondent experienced coercion, discrimination, or adverse consequences resulting from participation in the study.

Scope and Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights into mentoring practices and pre-service teacher performance, its scope was limited to three higher education institutions in Cavite. This geographic focus may restrict the generalizability of findings to other regions. Additionally, the descriptive-correlational design identifies significant relationships but does not establish causality. Future studies should adopt experimental or quasi-experimental designs to determine whether mentoring directly improves teacher performance. Expanding the research to include institutions from other provinces or regions would also allow for comparative analysis and broader applicability of the results.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

- **Frequency and Percentage** described the demographic profile of the respondents.
- **Weighted Mean** assessed mentoring practices, pre-service teacher-education performance, mentoring challenges, and the acceptability of the TEACH Upskilling Development Program.
- **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** determined significant differences among school heads, critic teachers, and mentees.
- **Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r)** determined the relationship between mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance.

All statistical analyses were interpreted using the **0.05 level of significance**.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The study involved **216 respondents**, comprising **8 school heads (3.70%)**, **54 critic teachers (25.00%)**, and **154 pre-service teachers (71.30%)** from the participating higher education institutions in Cavite. These respondents represent the principal stakeholders involved in the mentoring process, providing administrative, supervisory, and learner perspectives. Their varied roles enabled the study to produce a comprehensive assessment of mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance.

Mentoring Practices

Overall, respondents assessed **Mentoring Practices** as **Highly Practiced**, indicating that the participating institutions have established effective mentoring systems that support the professional preparation of pre-service teachers. Strong implementation of coaching, classroom observation, feedback, and collaborative planning demonstrates the institution's commitment to developing instructional competence, reflective practice, and professional confidence among future educators. These findings affirm that structured mentoring remains a key component of effective teacher preparation.

Coaching and Supervision

Among the mentoring dimensions, **coaching and supervision emerged as one of the strongest institutional practices**. Respondents agreed that critic teachers regularly provide instructional guidance, model effective teaching strategies, supervise classroom implementation, and support mentees throughout their internship experiences.

Coaching sessions allow mentor teachers to identify instructional strengths, address classroom challenges, and facilitate continuous improvement through individualized guidance. Such practices strengthen pedagogical competence while helping mentees develop professional confidence and decision-making skills.

These findings are consistent with **Situated Learning Theory**, which holds that professional competence develops through guided participation in authentic learning environments in which experienced practitioners mentor novices during actual practice.

Observation

Classroom observation was likewise assessed as **Highly Practiced**, indicating that mentor teachers consistently monitor instructional performance through structured classroom observations.

Observation provides mentor teachers with opportunities to evaluate lesson delivery, classroom management, learner engagement, instructional strategies, and professional behavior. More importantly, systematic observation creates opportunities for reflective dialogue between mentors and mentees, enabling future teachers to identify strengths and areas requiring improvement.

The findings indicate that observation functions not merely as an evaluative mechanism but as an essential professional learning process that supports continuous instructional development.

Feedback Mechanisms

Among the mentoring dimensions, **Feedback Mechanisms** received one of the highest ratings, indicating that mentors consistently provide timely, constructive, and developmental feedback throughout the practicum. Effective feedback enables pre-service teachers to recognize instructional strengths, address areas for improvement, and refine their teaching practices through continuous reflection. The findings support **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development**, emphasizing that guided feedback from experienced mentors promotes higher levels of professional competence and instructional effectiveness.

Co-planning Opportunities

Respondents likewise assessed **co-planning opportunities as Highly Practiced**, indicating that mentors and mentees regularly collaborate during lesson preparation, instructional planning, classroom implementation, and post-instruction reflection.

Collaborative lesson planning encourages shared decision-making while enabling pre-service teachers to develop curriculum alignment, instructional sequencing, classroom organization, and assessment strategies. Through co-planning, mentees learn to justify instructional decisions while benefiting from the professional expertise of experienced educators.

The findings demonstrate that collaborative planning strengthens both instructional competence and professional communication, thereby preparing pre-service teachers for future collaborative work within professional learning communities.

Pre-service Teacher-Education Performance

The respondents evaluated **pre-service teacher-education performance as Highly Evident**, indicating that mentees demonstrate satisfactory professional competence across the identified performance domains.

The findings suggest that the teacher education programs implemented by the participating institutions effectively prepare future educators for classroom responsibilities. Respondents observed that pre-service teachers generally exhibit professional behavior, instructional competence, positive relationships with learners, adaptability, and technology-supported instructional practices.

The consistently favorable assessment likewise reflects the positive influence of structured mentoring on professional readiness. Effective mentoring provides pre-service teachers with authentic opportunities to practice instructional competencies while receiving continuous guidance and support from experienced mentor teachers.

Personal and Professional Development

Pre-service teachers demonstrated strong personal and professional characteristics, including responsibility, professionalism, ethical conduct, confidence, and commitment to teaching. These qualities serve as the foundation for successful classroom practice and lifelong professional development.

Mentoring relationships contribute substantially to professional identity formation by helping mentees internalize professional standards, instructional ethics, and collaborative values expected within the teaching profession.

Instructional Skills

Instructional skills likewise received highly favorable evaluations, indicating that mentees effectively plan lessons, implement appropriate teaching strategies, manage classrooms, facilitate learner engagement, and evaluate student learning.

The findings suggest that structured mentoring significantly contributes to the development of instructional competence by enabling mentor teachers to continuously model effective pedagogical practices and provide opportunities for guided classroom implementation.

Rapport Building

Rapport building emerged as one of the strongest performance dimensions. Respondents agreed that pre-service teachers establish positive relationships with learners through respectful communication, empathy, encouragement, and inclusive classroom interactions.

Positive teacher–student relationships contribute to learner engagement, classroom participation, and effective instructional delivery. The findings indicate that mentoring supports not only technical teaching skills but also interpersonal competencies essential for successful teaching.

Adaptive and Personalized Learning

Respondents likewise recognized that pre-service teachers can adjust instructional approaches to learner needs, classroom situations, and diverse learning characteristics. Although this competency was evaluated positively, respondents identified opportunities to further strengthen differentiated instruction and adaptive teaching strategies.

The findings suggest that future mentoring programs should place greater emphasis on inclusive instructional practices, learner diversity, and personalized teaching approaches.

Automated Grading and Feedback

Technology-supported assessment received favorable evaluations; however, respondents' perceptions of automated grading and feedback systems differed significantly. School heads and critic teachers expressed greater concern regarding instructional alignment and implementation challenges, whereas mentees generally viewed automated feedback more positively because of its immediacy and convenience.

These findings indicate that although educational technology contributes positively to instructional practice, additional professional development is necessary to ensure consistent understanding and effective utilization of technology-assisted assessment tools.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective mentoring significantly contributes to the professional preparation of pre-service teachers. Coaching, observation, constructive feedback, and collaborative lesson planning collectively strengthen instructional competence, reflective practice, professional confidence, and classroom readiness. The results affirm **Constructivist Learning Theory**, **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development**, **Discovery Learning Theory**, and **Situated Learning Theory**, emphasizing that authentic classroom experiences supported by structured mentoring promote meaningful professional learning. Overall, the study highlights the importance of institutionalizing comprehensive mentoring systems to improve teacher preparation and ensure the development of competent beginning educators.

Significant Difference in the Assessment of Mentoring Practices Among School Heads, Critic Teachers, and Pre-service Teachers

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences in selected dimensions of mentoring practices among school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers. These differences reflect the respondents' varying roles and levels of involvement in the mentoring process. School heads primarily viewed mentoring from an institutional perspective, critic teachers emphasized instructional supervision, while pre-service teachers evaluated mentoring based on their actual practicum experiences. Despite these variations, all respondent groups consistently rated mentoring practices as **Highly Practiced**, demonstrating broad agreement regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring systems implemented by the participating institutions.

Significant Difference in the Assessment of Pre-service Teacher-Education Performance

The analysis likewise identified significant differences in selected indicators of pre-service teacher-education performance among school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers. These variations reflect differences in professional expectations, classroom observations, and self-perceptions of competence. Nevertheless, respondents consistently agreed that pre-service teachers demonstrated **high levels of professional performance**, indicating that the participating institutions effectively prepare future educators through structured mentoring and experiential learning.

Relationship Between Mentoring Practices and Pre-service Teacher-Education Performance

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a **significant positive relationship** between mentoring practices and pre-service teacher-education performance. This finding indicates that stronger mentoring practices are associated with higher levels of instructional competence, professional confidence, reflective practice, and classroom readiness among pre-service teachers. The results reinforce the importance of structured mentoring as a critical component of teacher preparation and support **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development** and **Situated Learning Theory**, which emphasize guided learning and authentic professional experiences as foundations of teacher development.

Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Mentoring Practices

Although mentoring practices were generally assessed as **Highly Practiced**, respondents identified several operational challenges that require institutional attention. The most frequently encountered concerns included mentor workload, scheduling conflicts, inconsistent classroom observations, delayed feedback, limited opportunities for collaborative lesson planning, inadequate instructional resources, and insufficient professional development for mentor teachers. Overall, these challenges were assessed as **Moderately Encountered**, indicating that while they do not substantially diminish mentoring effectiveness, addressing them would further strengthen institutional mentoring systems and improve the professional preparation of pre-service teachers.

Integrated Discussion

The findings demonstrate that effective mentoring is a key factor in strengthening the professional preparation of pre-service teachers. The consistently high ratings for coaching, classroom observation, constructive

feedback, and collaborative lesson planning indicate that structured mentoring enhances instructional competence, reflective practice, professional confidence, and classroom readiness. Although respondents identified moderate challenges related to mentor workload, scheduling, and resource availability, these concerns did not substantially diminish the overall effectiveness of the mentoring system. The significant positive relationship between mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance further confirms that well-structured mentoring meaningfully contributes to teacher development. These findings support **Constructivist Learning Theory**, **Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development**, **Discovery Learning Theory**, and **Situated Learning Theory**, emphasizing that authentic learning experiences, guided practice, and collaborative professional interactions are essential for preparing competent future educators. Overall, the study underscores the importance of institutionalizing sustainable mentoring systems to enhance the quality of teacher education and professional readiness.

The Teach Upskilling Development Program

Title of the Program

TEACH: Transformative Enhancement and Advancement through Coaching and Holistic Mentoring

Rationale

The study's findings revealed that mentoring practices and pre-service teacher education performance were generally rated **Highly Practiced** and **Highly Evident**, respectively, confirming the significant contribution of structured mentoring to teacher preparation. Nevertheless, respondents identified operational concerns related to mentor workload, scheduling, classroom observations, feedback delivery, collaborative lesson planning, and mentor capability development, indicating opportunities to further strengthen existing mentoring systems.

In response to these findings, the **Transformative Enhancement and Advancement through Coaching and Holistic Mentoring (TEACH) Upskilling Development Program** was developed to enhance mentoring competencies through structured coaching, reflective practice, collaborative learning, technology-supported mentoring, and continuous professional development. The program seeks to strengthen partnerships among higher education institutions, cooperating schools, and mentor teachers to improve the quality of mentoring and better prepare pre-service teachers for professional practice.

General Objective

To strengthen mentoring practices and improve pre-service teacher-education performance through a structured institutional upskilling program that promotes coaching excellence, collaborative professional learning, reflective practice, and continuous mentoring development.

Specific Objectives

The program specifically aims to:

1. strengthen mentors' competencies in instructional coaching and professional supervision;
2. enhance the quality and consistency of classroom observation and mentoring documentation;
3. improve the delivery of timely, constructive, and developmental feedback to pre-service teachers;
4. promote collaborative lesson planning and reflective instructional practices between mentors and mentees;
5. develop mentor teachers' competencies in technology-supported mentoring and digital instructional supervision;

6. establish institutional mentoring communities of practice that encourage continuous professional collaboration;
7. improve communication and coordination among higher education institutions, cooperating schools, and practicum supervisors; and
8. sustain continuous monitoring and evaluation of mentoring effectiveness through evidence-based quality assurance mechanisms.

Target Beneficiaries

The TEACH Upskilling Development Program is designed for: School Heads, Critic Teachers, Pre-service Teachers, Teacher Education Program Coordinators, Cooperating School Administrators, Practicum Supervisors

Major Program Components

Component 1: Mentoring Excellence Enhancement

Objective

Strengthen mentors' competencies in instructional coaching, supervision, and professional guidance.

Major Activities

- Mentoring competency workshops
- Coaching certification seminars
- Professional supervision training
- Case analysis on mentoring practices
- Best mentoring practices forum

Component 2: Observation and Reflective Practice

Objective

Standardize classroom observation and reflective mentoring processes.

Major Activities

- Classroom observation calibration
- Reflective teaching conferences
- Observation rubric enhancement
- Peer observation activities
- Reflective journal development

Component 3: Feedback for Professional Growth

Objective

Improve the quality and timeliness of mentoring feedback.

Major Activities

- Feedback coaching workshops
- Reflective dialogue sessions
- Professional conferencing
- Goal-setting activities
- Individual mentoring consultations

Component 4: Collaborative Lesson Planning

Objective

Strengthen mentor–mentee collaboration in instructional planning.

Major Activities

- Collaborative lesson planning workshops
- Curriculum alignment sessions
- Learning resource development
- Microteaching activities
- Lesson study implementation

Component 5: Technology-Enhanced Mentoring

Objective

Improve mentors' competencies in digital supervision and technology-supported instruction.

Major Activities

- Digital mentoring workshops
- Learning Management System training
- AI-assisted instructional feedback
- Digital portfolio development
- Online mentoring communities

Component 6: Mentoring Community of Practice

Objective

Promote continuous professional collaboration among mentor teachers.

Major Activities

- Professional Learning Community meetings
- Mentoring roundtable discussions
- Best practice sharing
- Action research presentations
- Annual mentoring summit

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

This cyclical framework ensures that mentoring practices remain responsive to institutional needs while promoting sustainable professional development among mentors and pre-service teachers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Program effectiveness shall be evaluated through multiple performance indicators, including: mentor competency assessments; classroom observation ratings; pre-service teacher performance evaluations; mentoring satisfaction surveys; reflective journals; practicum completion reports; instructional portfolio assessments; and annual program evaluation reports.

Success indicators shall include improvements in mentoring quality, pre-service teacher competencies, mentor satisfaction, and institutional mentoring effectiveness.

Acceptability of the TEACH Upskilling Development Program

The proposed **TEACH Upskilling Development Program** was evaluated by respondents for its relevance, clarity, feasibility, responsiveness, sustainability, and overall usefulness. The findings revealed that the program received an overall verbal interpretation of "Highly Acceptable," indicating strong stakeholder support for its implementation.

Respondents recognized that the proposed intervention directly addresses the mentoring challenges identified in the study while strengthening the existing mentoring system implemented by the participating higher education institutions. The high level of acceptability further suggests that the program's objectives, activities, implementation strategies, and evaluation mechanisms are aligned with the needs of school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers.

The favorable evaluation indicates that the TEACH Upskilling Development Program is both practical and feasible for institutional adoption. Its emphasis on instructional coaching, collaborative mentoring, reflective practice, technology integration, and continuous professional development provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening teacher preparation. Consequently, the program may serve as an evidence-based institutional model for enhancing mentoring effectiveness and improving the quality of teacher education not only at the participating institutions but also at other higher education institutions that implement pre-service teaching internship programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. **Mentoring practices in the participating higher education institutions are highly practiced**, demonstrating that structured coaching, observation, feedback, and collaborative planning effectively support the professional preparation of pre-service teachers.
2. **Pre-service teacher-education performance was assessed as highly evident**, indicating that mentees generally demonstrate satisfactory competence in instructional skills, professional behavior, rapport building, adaptive learning, and technology-supported assessment.
3. **Feedback mechanisms and coaching practices emerged as the strongest components of mentoring**, emphasizing the importance of continuous instructional guidance and reflective professional dialogue.
4. **Significant differences exist among the assessments of school heads, critic teachers, and pre-service teachers**, reflecting differences in professional roles and mentoring experiences.
5. **Mentoring practices exhibit a significant positive relationship with pre-service teacher-education performance**, confirming that effective mentoring substantially enhances teacher competence and professional readiness.
6. **The identified mentoring challenges are primarily organizational**, involving workload, scheduling, coordination, resource availability, and mentor preparation rather than deficiencies in mentoring philosophy.
7. **The proposed TEACH Upskilling Development Program was assessed as highly acceptable**, indicating that respondents consider it relevant, feasible, responsive, and appropriate for institutional implementation.
8. Overall, **effective mentoring remains an indispensable component of teacher education**, and strengthening institutional mentoring systems can significantly improve the quality of future teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. **Higher Education Institutions:** Institutionalize structured mentoring policies that clearly define mentor roles, mentoring schedules, performance expectations, and evaluation mechanisms.
2. **Higher Education Institutions** regularly implement mentor capability-building programs focusing on instructional coaching, reflective supervision, effective feedback, differentiated mentoring, and technology integration.
3. **School Heads** strengthen monitoring and evaluation of mentoring implementation by providing continuous administrative support, workload considerations, and professional recognition for mentor teachers.
4. **Critic Teachers** continue providing individualized coaching, timely feedback, collaborative lesson planning, and reflective discussions that promote continuous professional growth among mentees.
5. **Pre-service Teachers** to actively participate in mentoring activities, seek constructive feedback, engage in reflective practice, and continuously improve instructional competence throughout the practicum experience.
6. **Future Researchers** conduct similar studies involving larger populations, multiple regions, and diverse teacher education institutions.

7. **Future Researchers** examine additional variables such as mentoring styles, mentor competencies, emotional intelligence, instructional leadership, teacher resilience, and professional identity using mixed-method or longitudinal research designs.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted only among selected higher education institutions in Cavite and therefore reflects the institutional context of those participating teacher education programs. The descriptive-correlational design identified relationships among variables but did not establish causal relationships. Future studies employing experimental, longitudinal, or mixed-method approaches may provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of mentoring on teacher competence and professional development.

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