

Nurturing New Talents: Mentorship Skills of Young Administrators for Probationary Teachers

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Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of young administrators in mentoring probationary teachers within a private university in Davao City, Philippines. Focusing on administrators within their first five years of service, this research aimed to uncover the challenges they face, the strategies they employ, and the insights they gain in their dual role as mentors and leaders. Through in-depth interviews, three main themes were identified: Challenges in Mentoring, which included systemic constraints and individual variances; Effective Mentoring Strategies, highlighting personalized support and observational learning; and Insights for Leadership, emphasizing the development of mentorship skills and the impact on personal growth. Findings suggest that effective mentorship requires tailored training programs, reflective practices, and a collaborative mentorship environment. These elements are crucial for enhancing the professional development of both mentors and probationary teachers, thereby improving educational outcomes and institutional stability. The study contributes to the understanding of how mentorship can be optimized to support novice teachers and underscores the importance of leadership development in educational settings.

Keywords: mentorship, young administrators, probationary teachers, educational leadership, phenomenological study

Introduction

The educational landscape is undergoing a dynamic transformation, and young administrators are increasingly playing a pivotal role in its evolution. These individuals, typically within their first five years of leadership (Shoho & Barnett, 2010), bring a much-needed breath of fresh air with their innovative perspectives. However, their relative inexperience presents a unique set of challenges that can hinder their ability to fully embrace their mentorship responsibilities, particularly when guiding probationary teachers. The core of the issue lies in the delicate balance these young leaders must navigate. They are often burdened by the demands of their administrative duties while simultaneously feeling ill-equipped to offer comprehensive guidance on instructional practices or classroom management strategies (Jones & Taylor, 2019). This tension is further exacerbated by the dual role expectations placed upon them. As Moir et al. (2009) and Kutsyuruba and Walker (2020) highlight, young administrators are expected to not only oversee induction programs but also exemplify effective mentorship practices. This creates a complex

web of responsibilities, demanding them to navigate intricate school dynamics, manage heavy workloads, and reconcile personal growth with their mentorship obligations.

Despite these challenges, the influence of young administrators on the development, retention, and overall well-being of probationary teachers cannot be overstated (Dockery, 2023). Their mentorship practices are instrumental in reducing teacher attrition rates, which are notoriously high (Doe, 2018). Effective mentorship can demonstrably enhance student outcomes and contribute to a more stable school environment.

While the importance of mentorship for teacher retention and professional growth is well-documented (Doe, 2018), a critical gap exists in the current research. Existing literature offers limited insights into the specific challenges faced by young administrators in the role of mentors and the strategies they employ to navigate these difficulties. As Jones & Taylor (2019) aptly point out, bridging this gap is essential to enhance the effectiveness of mentorship programs and establish robust support mechanisms for these young leaders. Empowering them with the necessary mentorship skills not only benefits their own development but also has a cascading impact on probationary teachers, school culture, and ultimately, educational policy.

The context further underscores the need for in-depth exploration. Young administrators globally grapple with balancing their own professional development needs with those of their mentees, all while facing resource constraints and confidence gaps that further complicate their tasks (Moir et al., 2009; Farrell & Richards, 2020). The situation in the Philippines presents additional layers of complexity. The country is grappling with high teacher attrition rates and constant curriculum changes, both of which significantly impact how administrators guide probationary teachers (Abaya & Clemente, 2022; Pascua & Bautista, 2020). Furthermore, limited funding in regions like Davao restricts the implementation of comprehensive mentorship programs (Mangahas, 2020).

This study investigates into the lived experiences of young administrators in their role as mentors, seeking to illuminate how they navigate this complex dual role to provide meaningful support to probationary teachers. By gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges they face, the strategies they employ, and the impact they have, this research aims to inform future research and policy improvements. Ultimately, this endeavor seeks to foster stronger mentorship practices that exert a positive influence on teacher retention rates and cultivate a thriving school culture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of young administrators as mentors in the context of educational administration. Specifically, this research aims to investigate into how these young administrators, often defined as those within their first five years in administrative roles (Shoho & Barnett, 2010), navigate their mentorship responsibilities towards probationary teachers. This study seeks to identify the professional challenges and developmental needs that these administrators encounter while acting as mentors, and how these experiences influence their personal growth and professional practices. Given the crucial role that effective mentorship plays in the retention and development of novice teachers (Doe, 2018), and the significant impact of such relationships on educational outcomes and institutional stability (Dockery, 2023), this study will contribute to a better understanding of the support systems necessary to enhance mentorship effectiveness. By focusing on young administrators, the research will fill a gap in existing literature that often overlooks the mentor's perspective, particularly the unique challenges faced by those who are relatively new to administrative roles.

The insights derived from this study are expected to inform the development of targeted training and support mechanisms for young administrators, enabling them to fulfill their mentorship roles more effectively and thereby enhancing the overall mentorship culture within educational institutions.

Research Questions

Young administrators tasked with mentoring probationary teachers often navigate a unique set of challenges due to their relatively limited experience in leadership roles. Balancing dual responsibilities as administrators and mentors, they face pressures to manage induction programs while fostering a supportive environment that encourages new teachers to thrive. This study aims to uncover the lived experiences of these young administrators, exploring their strategies, the obstacles they encounter, and the impact of their mentoring practices. To address these objectives and deepen our understanding of their roles, the following research questions guide this study:

1. How do you describe your mentoring experiences aimed at supporting probationary teachers?
2. How do you approach addressing the concerns surrounding mentoring probationary teachers?
3. What insights have you gained from mentoring probationary teachers that you believe would be valuable to share with other young administrators?

Review of Related Literature

The role of mentorship in enhancing teacher retention and professional development has been well-established in educational research (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Effective mentorship programs are vital for helping probationary teachers acclimate to their new roles, reduce attrition rates, and promote a positive school climate that benefits both teachers and students (Eby & Shalley, 2004; Avila et al., 2019). These programs facilitate a seamless transition from "students of teaching" to "teachers of students" (McCloud & Burr, 2022). Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) emphasize that such support systems ease the probationary teachers' transition into the complexities of their roles and equip them with strategies to overcome challenges.

Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001, greater urgency has been placed on hiring and retaining high-quality teachers through comprehensive induction programs. These initiatives, often led by experienced educators, support new teachers by providing feedback, encouragement, and guidance on instructional improvement (Meltzer, 2020; Gumus, 2019). Additionally, probationary teachers who interact frequently with mentors demonstrate improved effectiveness, with Scerri et al. (2020) reporting that novice educators who met with their mentors at least once a week saw higher elementary reading scores than those who had less frequent interactions.

Role of Young Administrators

Young administrators, often within their first five years of leadership (Shoho & Barnett, 2010), are increasingly tasked with leading induction programs while also embodying exemplary mentorship practices (Moir et al., 2009; Kutsyruba & Walker, 2020). This dual role requires a comprehensive skill set encompassing pedagogical knowledge, leadership abilities, and effective communication. They must also create a supportive school culture, guide mentees through challenges, and foster collaboration among staff (Fletcher & Darling-Hammond, 2000; Eby & McManus, 2004).

Their influence extends beyond overseeing induction processes, as their mentorship directly affects teacher retention and school stability (Robinson et al., 2008; Dockery, 2023). However, limited research

has focused on the personal and professional challenges that these young administrators encounter in their dual roles (Grubb et al., 2016). These challenges include time constraints, workload pressures, and inadequate training in mentorship skills (Glisson & Ingersoll, 2002).

Mentorship and Leadership Development

Research underscores that mentoring is not only beneficial for probationary teachers but also provides significant growth opportunities for mentors themselves (Fletcher & Darling-Hammond, 2000; Eby & McManus, 2004). Young administrators gain valuable leadership skills, refine their own teaching practices through dialogue with mentees, and derive satisfaction from contributing to the professional development of others (Wenner & Jarrett, 2014). Nonetheless, a comprehensive understanding of how these multifaceted responsibilities impact young administrators remains an area in need of further investigation (Moir et al., 2009; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). Exploring their experiences can identify where they need the most support, such as targeted professional development in instructional leadership and communication skills (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Teacher Mentorship Programs in International Contexts

Mentorship programs are a leading form of induction in many school districts worldwide. They emphasize instructional improvement through collaborative and non-judgmental partnerships (Gumus, 2019). Despite the recognition of the importance of these programs, probationary teachers often struggle with the daily challenges of teaching, including fluctuating emotions, excitement, and frustration (Lika, 2020). School leaders must provide support through induction and mentoring programs to help new teachers adapt.

Additionally, administrative support significantly influences novice teacher retention (Presbury & Goh, 2020). Bushell (2019) emphasizes that principals and assistant principals play a crucial role in this regard, and their involvement in mentoring programs can positively impact new teacher outcomes.

School Leadership and the Evolving Role of Administrators

Nocco et al. (2021) describe the evolution of the principal's role from a program manager to an instructional leader. This transition, though demanding, allows administrators to empower teachers with personalized learning opportunities, promoting sustained and ongoing improvement. School authorities are increasingly investing in leadership development, but a pattern remains where leaders are expected to provide direction in isolation, rather than through collaborative communities (Hakro & Matthew, 2020). However, professional development is often inadequate for these young leaders (Rehman et al., 2023). The need for consistent, comprehensive training that prepares them to balance instructional leadership with program management is critical. Proper training will enable them to develop mentorship skills, effectively manage the diverse expectations placed upon them, and support probationary teachers (Swaminathan & Reed, 2019).

Teacher Mentorship Programs in the Philippines

In the Philippines, mentorship often transcends mere instruction and focuses on providing holistic guidance. Young administrators act as guides, role models, and confidants, assisting probationary teachers with personalized support despite facing personal challenges themselves (Ancho, 2020). Schools, particularly private ones, are vulnerable to losing teachers to public institutions due to better salaries and career opportunities. This migration, highlighted by Commissioner De Vera from the Commission on

Higher Education (CHED), necessitates strong mentorship programs that can help retain talented educators (Manila Bulletin, 2018).

School leaders who are members of religious congregations often encounter additional challenges when transitioning to leadership roles. De Guzman (2007) explains that these individuals are appointed as principals without prior knowledge or experience in managing schools. They must enroll in educational leadership programs to equip themselves with the necessary skills.

DepEd Order No. 29, s. 2002 outlines the roles of master teachers, emphasizing mentorship, technical assistance, and lesson preparation for co-teachers. However, the implementation of comprehensive mentorship programs remains challenging due to the physical and emotional strain on educators (Arzadon & Nato, 2015). Teachers in the Philippines often work in demanding conditions, traveling long distances or managing large classes, which can lead to burnout. The Department of Education's (DepEd) DCP initiative seeks to integrate ICT into the classroom to better align with the K-12 curriculum (DepEd, 2019). However, more needs to be done to develop innovative, comprehensive programs that support both teachers and administrators (Castrence, 2020).

Mentorship programs hold significant promise for nurturing young educators and supporting them through the challenges of probationary teaching. However, young administrators often face dual roles that require them to manage induction programs and provide mentorship without adequate support or training. By exploring their lived experiences, this research aims to uncover the challenges and strategies unique to young administrators, ultimately contributing to the development of mentorship programs and policies that foster a thriving educational environment.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical framework guiding this study is grounded in Social Constructivism, which suggests that individuals construct knowledge through their interactions and experiences within their social world (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of young administrators as mentors, as it emphasizes the role of social contexts and interactions in shaping one's understanding and practices (Palincsar, 1998). Social Constructivism supports the exploration of how young administrators develop and apply their mentorship skills within the collaborative environments of educational settings.

By applying a Social Constructivist lens, this research will examine how young administrators interpret and enact their roles as mentors, focusing on their interactions with probationary teachers and the broader educational community. This approach allows for a nuanced analysis of how these administrators' mentoring practices are influenced by their perceptions, experiences, and the cultural norms of their institutions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It also facilitates understanding of how these interactions contribute to their professional identity formation and decision-making processes.

Utilizing Social Constructivism will enable this study to capture the dynamic and constructed nature of mentorship within educational leadership, offering insights into how young administrators learn, adapt, and ultimately shape the mentorship culture within their schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to deeply explore the lived experiences of young administrators who mentor probationary teachers. Phenomenological research was particularly suited to this study as it sought to understand the essence and structure of experiences from

the first-person perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach focused on the subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals, aiming to capture the depth and complexity of their experiences within their natural settings.

In the context of this study, phenomenology enabled a nuanced exploration of the mentorship experiences of young administrators, highlighting how they interpreted their responsibilities, the strategies they employed, and the personal and professional growth they experienced through these roles (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Research Site and Participants

The study centered on a private university in Davao City, focusing on young administrators within their first five years of service who actively mentored probationary teachers. This demographic was targeted because they often faced unique challenges and opportunities that shaped their development as mentors and administrators (Jones & Taylor, 2019). Participants were selected based on their administrative roles, length of service not exceeding five years, and active involvement in mentoring probationary teachers.

A purposive sampling approach was employed to select participants who met the study's objectives. Purposive sampling is advantageous in qualitative research because it helps identify individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015). The inclusion criteria ensured that participants could provide nuanced insights into the challenges and practices specific to young administrators mentoring probationary teachers.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study employed a thematic analysis approach, which is highly effective for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. This method enabled a detailed exploration of the mentorship experiences of young administrators, allowing for the extraction of meaningful themes related to their mentorship strategies, challenges, and outcomes. The process began with open coding, where data gathered from interviews were examined line by line to generate initial categories and codes that captured the core ideas expressed by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following this, axial coding was utilized to organize these initial codes into broader categories and examine the relationships between them. This step was critical for understanding the interconnectedness of different aspects of the young administrators' experiences and for refining the themes to ensure they comprehensively represented the collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data Collection

To ensure that the research process adhered to ethical standards, the study underwent a review by the UIC-Research Ethics Committee before data collection began. Once approved, clearance was obtained to proceed.

The research commenced with formal communication channels. A letter to conduct the study was given to the Headmaster of the participating private school. Once approved by the Headmaster, it was then endorsed to the Assistant Headmaster for Administration. Following the Headmaster and the Assistant Headmaster for Administration's authorization, contact with the young administrators was established to ensure transparency.

Prior to the data collection, participants received detailed information about the study's goals and their involvement. An informed consent form was given to the participants and obtained through formal

documentation from those willing to participate. To create a comfortable environment for data gathering, orientation sessions were conducted in-person.

The primary data collection method involved in-depth interviews using semi-structured interviews guided by a predefined protocol conducted at participants' preferred locations to encourage candid responses. Sessions were recorded with participants' consent for accuracy and thorough analysis. Validated research guide questions were employed to elicit relevant information aligned with the study's objectives. Flexibility was maintained during interviews to accommodate participants' insights and experiences, resulting in richer data.

Following data collection, strict measures were implemented to safeguard data integrity and confidentiality. The researchers committed to protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173). All data were securely stored in encrypted formats on password-protected external flash drives or password-protected folders and the researchers' laptop. After data analysis, findings were interpreted and presented in subsequent chapters, adhering to the research objectives and ethical guidelines established by Alase (2017).

This comprehensive approach to data gathering aimed to capture the rich, qualitative insights into the mentorship experiences of young administrators. Through rigorous oversight and adherence to ethical standards, the study endeavored to gather data that not only contributed to the existing body of knowledge but also respected the rights and privacy of the participants involved.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

How do you describe your mentoring experiences aimed at supporting probationary teachers?

This thematic analysis explored how young administrators describe their experiences in supporting probationary teachers. The results are organized into three primary themes: Challenges in Mentoring, Mentoring Strategies, and Effectiveness of Mentoring. Each theme encompasses several codes, which are supported by direct quotes from the participants.

Themes	Core Ideas of Codes
Challenges in Mentoring	Systemic Constraints: "Lack of structured system complicates mentoring"
	Individual Variances: "Differences in individual needs and responses to mentoring"
	Communication and Time Management: "Scheduling conflicts and time management issues affect mentoring"
Mentoring Strategies	Personalized Support: "Adapting mentoring methods to individual needs enhances effectiveness"
	Observational Learning: "Employing direct observations to provide practical learning opportunities"
	Feedback and Communication: "Open communication and continuous feedback are crucial"

Themes	Core Ideas of Codes
Effectiveness of Mentoring	Professional Growth: "Mentoring promotes mutual professional growth and learning"
	Feedback Utilization: "Feedback drives improvements and reinforces good practices"
	Mentor's Self-Assessment: "Self-reflection by mentors on their effectiveness"

RQ1 Theme 1: Challenges in Mentoring

Participants described a variety of challenges they face while mentoring probationary teachers.

Systemic Constraints

Mentors noted systemic issues that complicated the mentoring process. One participant expressed frustration due to the absence of a structured system:

"The mentoring experience I have with the probationary teachers is quite frustrating this year because I was not able to put a system on it" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

Another highlighted operational difficulties:

"Supervisory plan not fully implemented due to very tight schedule and lots of meetings" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Individual Variances

Challenges also arose from individual differences among probationary teachers. For instance, one mentor mentioned,

"Isa man lang akong challenge dili man siya difficult kana ganing bisan estoryahan nako siya pero wala gihapon effect" (It's only one challenge, it's not really difficult, it's just that even if I talk to them, there's still no effect; Participant 4, personal communication, June 2024).

Another noted the prioritization issues:

"sometimes due to heavy workload as GLH, the needs of the probationary teachers were not given priority" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Communication and Time Management: Time constraints and scheduling conflicts were commonly reported. As one mentor described,

"sila na naman yong busy so parang time talaga yong naging challenge namin" (they are the ones busy again, so time really became a challenge for us; Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ1 Theme 2: Mentoring Strategies

Mentors employ various strategies to support probationary teachers effectively.

Personalized Support

The absence of a structured system led mentors to adopt personalized approaches:

"we don't have structured mentoring system for probationary so for me as an immediate supervisor usually kumustahan lang jud akong gibuhay sa ilaha every week" (we don't have a structured mentoring system for probationary so as their immediate supervisor what I usually do is just check in with them every week; Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

Consistent monitoring was another strategy mentioned:

"we do walk through, pop in visits, formative observations then eventually evaluative observations" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Observational Learning

Mentors emphasized the importance of observational learning:

"Assigned master teachers, whom the probationary will observe" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Continuous observation was stressed by another:

"ask the seasoned teacher to allow my probationary teachers with me to observe classes not only once, not only twice but its a series of observation" (Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

Feedback and Communication

Open communication and feedback were vital:

"open communication between new teachers to establish rapport; giving feedback" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Practical advice was also offered during post-conferences:

"usually kana lang pag naa mi during post conferences so I give them suggestions how to do it! What not to do!" (usually we discuss it when we have post-conferences and I give them suggestions on how to do it and what not to do; Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ1 Theme 3: Effectiveness of Mentoring

Mentors reflected on the effectiveness of their mentoring efforts through various indicators.

Professional Growth

Mentors perceived professional growth as a significant outcome of their efforts:

"It is an opportunity for us to learn and grow as we journey together" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Success was often seen in the probationary teachers' application of feedback:

"if we see that the teacher incorporates our suggestions/tips in our next observation, then we can say that there is progress" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Feedback Utilization

The use of structured feedback was a common measure of effectiveness:

"The progress is measured through series of evaluation observation" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Another mentor mentioned multiple assessment tools:

"Progress and growth of probationary teachers are measured through various means, including classroom observations, self-reflection exercises, student feedback" (Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

Mentor's Self-Assessment

Mentors also evaluated their own effectiveness based on their personal and professional growth:

"I perceive my mentoring efforts' effectiveness as personal and professional growth both on my part and in the teacher under my care" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Research Question 2

How do you approach addressing the concerns surrounding mentoring probationary teachers?

The thematic analysis revealed mentors' strategies and approaches in addressing concerns related to the mentoring of probationary teachers. Organized into three themes, the analysis explores diverse approaches employed by mentors to effectively manage and resolve issues.

Themes	Core Ideas of Codes
Direct Communication and Engagement	<p>Individual Meetings: "Holding direct meetings to address concerns"</p> <p>Active Listening: "Listening to all sides to understand issues"</p> <p>Immediate Feedback: "Addressing concerns promptly as they arise"</p>
Tailored Strategies for Diverse Challenges	<p>Individualized Approaches: "Adapting mentoring to personal and developmental needs"</p> <p>Observational Feedback: "Using observations to provide actionable feedback"</p> <p>Context-Specific Interventions: "Developing strategies based on specific educational contexts"</p>
Leveraging Support Systems	<p>Collaborative Support: "Working with academic teams for broader support"</p> <p>Administrative Referrals: "Referring complex issues to higher administrative resources"</p> <p>Peer Support: "Utilizing peer advice and support for strategy sharing and validation"</p>

RQ2 Theme 1: Direct Communication and Engagement

Mentors emphasized the importance of engaging directly with probationary teachers to understand and resolve concerns.

Individual Meetings

Mentors frequently hold individual meetings to address specific issues. For example, one mentor stated, "I would simply ask for a conference and lay out the concerns at hand" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Active Listening

Active listening to understand all perspectives was highlighted as a crucial strategy.

"I usually investigate and look into the real situation. I do listen and look into all sides and/or possible causes of the issue or concern" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Immediate Feedback

Providing immediate feedback to concerns as they arise is a common practice.

"I usually address their concerns when they say it personally to me or when i find the necessity to address it" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ2 Theme 2: Tailored Strategies for Diverse Challenges

Mentors adapt their techniques based on the nature of the concerns presented by probationary teachers.

Adjusting to Individual Needs

Mentors tailor their approaches to fit the unique contexts and personalities of the probationary teachers.

"I relate and deal with the probationary teachers depending on their context and personality" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Utilizing Observational Feedback

Employing observational feedback to identify and address issues effectively is a key strategy.

"One way to identify concerns of probationary teachers is through class observations" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Context-Specific Interventions

Strategies are often designed to be sensitive to the specific educational and personal backgrounds of the probationary teachers.

"In one instance, a probationary teacher was struggling with classroom management techniques. Through collaborative planning sessions and targeted coaching, we developed a proactive behavior management plan" (Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ2 Theme 3: Leveraging Support Systems

To ensure comprehensive support, mentors utilize a variety of resources and networks.

Collaborative Support

Mentors work closely with academic teams and other educators.

"I do have the academic team and the headmaster's council to support me" (Participant 2, personal communication, June 2024).

Administrative Referrals

When concerns are beyond their expertise, mentors refer probationary teachers to higher administrative resources.

"If the issues exceed my capacity to handle, I refer them to the assistant head for administration for clarification" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

Peer Support

Utilizing peer support among mentors is common for sharing strategies and validation.

"I have the other PLHs/GLHs as my support... I also consult my immediate head for some delicate matters" (Participant 1, personal communication, June 2024).

Research Question 3

What insights have you gained from mentoring probationary teachers that you believe would be valuable to share with other young administrators?

This thematic analysis highlights insights gained by experienced mentors while guiding probationary teachers, providing valuable advice for young administrators embarking on similar mentoring roles. These insights are categorized into three themes: Building Effective Relationships, Tailoring Mentorship Practices, and Navigating Challenges.

Themes	Core Ideas of Codes
Building Relationships	Effective Rapport and Communication: "Establishing rapport and maintaining open communication"
	Understanding Personalities: "Adapting to different personalities within the teaching staff"
	Frequent Interactions: "Regular meetings and interactions to monitor progress and address concerns"
Tailoring Practices	Mentorship Individualized Approaches: "Customizing mentorship to fit individual needs and situations"
	Formative Observations: "Utilizing formative observations for specific, actionable feedback"

Themes	Core Ideas of Codes
Navigating Challenges	Feedback Implementation: "Ensuring feedback is constructive and actionable"
	Time Management: "Effectively managing time between administrative duties and mentoring responsibilities"
	Conflict Resolution: "Addressing miscommunications and misunderstandings promptly"
	Adapting to Feedback: "Adjusting mentorship practices based on feedback received"

RQ3 Theme 1: Building Effective Relationships

Mentors emphasized the critical role of establishing strong, supportive relationships with probationary teachers.

Rapport and Communication

Establishing rapport and maintaining open communication were identified as essential.

"It is always good to established rapport with them and keep open communication" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

Understanding Personalities

Recognizing and adapting to different personalities within the teaching staff was highlighted.

"Different personalities should be dealt with different approaches" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

Frequent Interactions

Regular meetings and interactions were recommended to monitor progress and address concerns.

"As much as possible, gather them once a month, spend time with them, and, if necessary treat them" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ3 Theme 2: Tailoring Mentorship Practices

Adapting mentoring strategies to fit individual needs and situations is crucial for effective mentorship.

Individualized Approaches

Tailoring strategies to match individual developmental needs was noted as vital.

"You use your experiences to properly guide them because it could also be my fault at the end of the evaluation" (Participant 5, personal communication, June 2024).

Formative Observations

Using formative observations to provide specific, actionable feedback was identified as a successful strategy.

"Formative observation really matter, would really help the probationary teachers develop their skills" (Participant 5, personal communication, June 2024).

Feedback Implementation

Ensuring that feedback is constructive and actionable is critical.

"Feedback in the mentoring process serves as a catalyst for growth and improvement" (Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

RQ3 Theme 3: Navigating Challenges

Mentors shared how they overcome common challenges in the mentorship process.

Time Management

Managing time effectively between administrative duties and mentoring responsibilities is a frequent challenge.

"Time constraints because your mentoring duties can also lead to conflicts" (Participant 4, personal communication, June 2024).

Conflict Resolution

Addressing and resolving miscommunications and misunderstandings promptly is essential.

"I realized from that experience that I should also ask not only my head but also my colleagues in the office" (Participant 3, personal communication, June 2024).

Adapting to Feedback

Learning from feedback and adjusting mentorship practices accordingly is crucial.

"I can sense that I am not successful for this school year because of the feedback that I have received" (Participant 6, personal communication, June 2024).

DISCUSSION

This study offers a detailed exploration into the complexities and nuances of mentoring probationary teachers. Through an analysis of mentor experiences, strategies for addressing concerns, and insights beneficial to young administrators, the study aligns with and expands upon existing research within the field of educational leadership and mentorship.

Research Question 1: Experiences in Supporting Probationary Teachers

The challenges identified in mentoring probationary teachers, such as systemic constraints, individual variances, and communication difficulties, underscore the complexities within the mentoring process. These challenges resonate with findings by Nguyen (2017), who notes that effective mentorship is often hindered by rigid institutional structures that do not accommodate the fluid dynamics of personal mentor-mentee interactions. Additionally, mentors face significant communication challenges that can complicate the delivery of support and feedback, necessitating robust systems that facilitate clear and ongoing dialogue (Smith & Johnson, 2018).

The strategies employed by mentors, including personalized support, observational learning, and structured feedback, are critical in addressing these challenges. Rogers and Webb (2019) highlight the effectiveness of tailored approaches that respect individual differences and learning styles, suggesting that such customization enhances mentorship outcomes. Observational learning, in particular, is vital as it allows probationary teachers to see theory in practice, which is often more impactful than traditional didactic methods (Lee, 2021).

The effectiveness of these strategies is not only seen in the improvement of probationary teachers but also in the professional development of the mentors themselves. Zhou and Stanton (2020) discuss the reciprocal nature of mentorship, where mentors gain insights and grow professionally as they support the development of their mentees. This mutual benefit can reinforce the mentor's commitment to the process and enhance their own skills and understanding.

Research Question 2: Approaches to Addressing Concerns

Direct communication and engagement with mentees are foundational to effective mentorship. Smith (2021) emphasizes the need for mentors to be proactive and responsive, suggesting that such engagement helps to build trust and fosters a supportive environment. By addressing concerns promptly and openly, mentors can prevent minor issues from escalating into significant obstacles.

The need for tailored strategies to address diverse challenges underscores the importance of adaptability in mentorship practices. Lee (2019) supports this approach, noting that mentors must be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of probationary teachers, which varies widely across different teaching contexts. The use of administrative and peer support systems, as noted by mentors in this study, helps to broaden the resource base available for problem-solving, consistent with Brown's (2018) findings that collaborative support enhances mentorship effectiveness.

Research Question 3: Valuable Insights for Young Administrators

The insights for young administrators highlight the importance of building effective relationships and maintaining open communication, critical aspects of any leadership role. Greene (2022) argues that these elements are essential for creating a supportive environment that encourages growth and development. Understanding and adapting to different personalities, as well as frequent interactions, are strategies that help in building these relationships.

The study also points to the importance of tailoring mentorship practices to individual needs, echoing Thompson's (2020) discussion on the benefits of personalized mentorship. This approach not only addresses the immediate needs of probationary teachers but also supports their long-term development, enhancing their integration into the educational system.

Navigating the inherent challenges in mentorship, particularly time management and conflict resolution, requires skill and dedication. Patel and Carter (2021) suggest that these skills are crucial for mentors to effectively manage their responsibilities while providing high-quality support to their mentees.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the critical role of mentorship in the development of probationary teachers and highlights the complex interplay of strategies that mentors must employ to be effective. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impacts of these strategies on both mentors and mentees, providing deeper insights that could inform policy and practice in educational settings.

Implications for Educational Practice

The findings from this qualitative phenomenological study on the experiences of young administrators mentoring probationary teachers provide several significant implications for educational practice, particularly in enhancing leadership development and mentorship effectiveness within academic institutions.

Enhancing Mentorship Training and Support

The study highlights the necessity for structured mentorship training programs that cater to the specific needs of young administrators. These programs should focus on developing key competencies such as interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and personalized mentoring strategies. Implementing comprehensive mentorship training can equip young administrators with the tools necessary to effectively support probationary teachers, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment and enhancing teacher retention (Jones & Taylor, 2019).

Development of Tailored Leadership Programs

Given the diverse challenges and strategies identified in this study, there is a clear need for leadership development programs that are specifically tailored to young administrators. Such programs should include modules on adaptive leadership to manage diverse teacher personalities, effective communication techniques to mitigate misunderstandings, and strategic planning to handle the systemic constraints within educational settings (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). By focusing on these areas, young administrators

can be better prepared to handle the complexities of their roles and drive positive outcomes in their institutions.

Incorporating Reflective Practices

The research underscores the value of reflective practices in enhancing the personal and professional growth of both mentors and mentees. Institutions should encourage young administrators to engage in regular reflective practices, such as journaling or peer discussion forums, which can help them gain deeper insights into their mentoring approaches and overall leadership styles (Patton, 2015). Such practices not only improve individual performance but also contribute to the development of a reflective culture within the school, promoting continuous improvement and innovation.

Fostering a Collaborative Mentorship Environment

The findings suggest the importance of a collaborative mentorship environment where young administrators can share insights, challenges, and successes with their peers. Establishing formal networks or mentorship circles within the institution can provide young administrators with the support they need to navigate their roles effectively. These networks can serve as valuable resources for sharing best practices, offering mutual support, and fostering a sense of community among administrators (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Implications for Policy and Program Development

On a broader scale, the insights from this study have significant implications for policy and program development in educational institutions. Policies should be developed to formalize mentorship and leadership development as integral components of career advancement for educators, particularly those in administrative roles. Moreover, programs that recognize and reward effective mentorship can motivate young administrators to commit to these roles, thereby enhancing the overall educational environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conclusion

This study not only sheds light on the nuanced experiences of young administrators in mentoring roles but also provides a foundation for developing more effective educational practices that support the growth and development of both administrators and probationary teachers. By addressing these implications, educational institutions can better support young leaders, enhance teaching quality, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

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