

Mentors' perspectives in guiding professional teachers: A study of the pre-service teacher education program

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Abstract

This study examines the role of mentors in the Teacher Professional Education program (PPG) in Indonesia, exploring how mentors contribute to shaping prospective professional teachers. The PPG program integrates pedagogical theory with direct teaching practice in schools, wherein mentors serve as critical bridges between academic knowledge and the realities of educational practice. Employing a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design, this study involved four mentors and 30 PPG student-teachers from four subject areas at a teacher education institution in Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of reflective journals. The findings reveal that the role of mentors extends beyond technical teaching skills, encompassing four key dimensions: (1) mentor as professional role model exemplifying best practices, (2) mentor as learning facilitator promoting critical reflection, (3) mentor as provider of emotional support in navigating early teaching challenges, and (4) mentor as agent of socialization into school culture and the teaching profession. The effectiveness of mentoring is significantly influenced by the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship, the mentor's pedagogical competence, and institutional support systems. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of teacher professional learning and offers practical implications for developing more effective PPG programs in preparing prospective professional teachers.

Keywords: Critical reflection, Emotional support, Mentor, Mentor-mentee relationship, Pedagogical competence, Prospective professional teachers, Teacher professional education, Teacher professional learning.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

Mentoring practices for PPG student-teachers in professional education, particularly during field teaching practice (PPL), have not been implemented as intended. What typically occurs is that PPG field practice resembles undergraduate teaching practice in academic education programs. This study reaffirms the critical importance of the mentoring process, wherein the mentor's role is central to guiding PPG student-teachers toward becoming professional teachers.

1. Introduction

The quality of a nation's education is undeniably dependent on the quality of its teachers as the frontline implementers of curriculum in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2017). In this context, the pre-service teacher education program (PPG) in Indonesia represents an important stage and serves as a focal point in preparing prospective teachers who not only master subject content but also possess the three additional competencies required of a professional teacher: pedagogical, personal, and social. This underscores that the transformation from student-teacher to professional practitioner requires not merely the transfer of theoretical knowledge but also an intensive process of mentoring.

Research on PPG student-teacher mentoring in Indonesia reveals a notable imbalance between cognitive (hard skills) and soft skills, which often proves decisive for teaching success (Kuswandono, 2017). Mentoring processes frequently lack focus on developing student-teachers' capacity to internalize and reflect upon their calling as teachers. This is often linked to insufficient structured support for soft skill development within the teacher education curriculum.

Mentoring in the context of professional teacher education has been recognized as a fundamental component that distinguishes effective teacher preparation programs from those that merely satisfy administrative requirements. The presence of a mentor is essential, with the mentor serving as a bridge linking theories learned in higher education with actual classroom practice in partner schools, and facilitating the critical reflective processes essential to ongoing professional development (Schön, 1987).

Schön (1987) further elaborates that mentors function as bridges connecting university-acquired theory with actual classroom practice in partner schools, facilitating critical reflection essential to continuous professional development. This bridging function is particularly crucial given the persistent theory-practice gap characteristic of professional education (Korthagen, 2010).

A mentor must be capable of playing multiple roles: attentive listener, provider of constructive feedback, and professional guide. This enables the mentoring process aimed at preparing professional teachers to unfold as intended. However, the complexity of the mentor's role and how it contributes to shaping the professional identity of prospective teachers requires deeper investigation, especially within the Indonesian educational system, with its unique characteristics and the additional demands of twenty-first-century competencies associated with digital transformation.

Implementation of mentoring programs in Indonesia faces several challenges, including unequal access to educational facilities across regions and disparities in mentor quality between urban and rural areas. To address the shortage of qualified mentors, the Indonesian government, through the Directorate of Teacher Professional Education (Direktorat PPG) under the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, has organized mentoring skill workshops and produced a mentoring guidebook for mentors (Basikin et al., 2024).

This study aims to explore in depth the perspectives of mentors' roles in the PPG program and how those roles contribute to guiding prospective teachers toward readiness for real classroom challenges. It is expected to make a theoretical contribution by enriching the literature on teacher professional learning, while also providing practical recommendations for improving PPG programs in Indonesia, enabling relevant authorities to design more comprehensive programs and support systems for student teachers and mentors.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Mentoring Skills

Mentoring in the context of PPG field practice (PPL) is a process of accompaniment conducted by a mentor toward a mentee. Whitebook and Bellm (2014) define mentoring as a relationship-based adult learning strategy intended to promote and support a teacher's awareness and refinement of her professional learning process and teaching practices. From this definition, the goal of mentoring is to provide support so that mentees develop the awareness, commitment, and dedication to manage their learning and carry out teaching practice professionally. A mentor may: (1) show respect and provide support to the mentee; (2) serve as an identifier and role model; (3) provide tools, guidance, support, and feedback necessary for career success; (4) have traversed a similar path as the current mentee; and (5) offer advice about what has worked for them.

Mentoring in the context of teacher education can be defined as a professional development relationship in which an experienced teacher (mentor) guides, supports, and facilitates the learning of a student-teacher or beginning teacher (mentee) through ongoing, reflective interactions (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008; Kram, 1985). This concept is rooted in Vygotsky's social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction with more experienced practitioners within the Zone of Proximal Development to facilitate optimal learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

The goal of mentoring is to enhance teacher capacity through a process in which knowledge, experience, and skills are shared by experienced educators with less experienced ones. Effective mentoring leverages the knowledge, experience, and skills of experienced educators to improve the instructional practice of novices. A positive mentoring relationship is an indicator of mentoring success. When student teachers and beginning teachers feel supported and valued by their mentors, they are more receptive to feedback, more likely to seek support, and more willing to inquire about how they can improve their teaching practice. Building trust between mentor and mentee is a critical component of the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring is deemed effective when it: (a) supports continuous professional development by providing ongoing support, feedback, and knowledge sharing; (b) supports capacity development by promoting reflective dialogue

among teachers, building a sense of ownership and responsibility toward instructional practice; and (c) ensures that professional development is tailored to each teacher's individual needs and the context of their continuous learning, given that teachers' learning needs differ and a single workshop or training often fails to address the complex contextual realities of the teaching environment.

2.2. The Role of Mentors in PPG Field Teaching Practice

In the context of preparing student-teachers, mentoring between mentors (field supervisory lecturers and cooperating teachers) and mentees (student-teachers) aims to enhance the capacity of prospective teachers through a process in which knowledge, experience, and skills are shared by experienced teachers with student-teachers as mentees. At the early stages of teaching, student-teachers may experience a range of emotions: nervousness, excitement, intimidation, and joy. Gonser (2022) notes that the best mentors go beyond being helpers or guides; they are skilled yet approachable practitioners who transmit their knowledge through informal conversation and daily modeling. Mentors bear responsibility for supporting and facilitating the development of student-teachers' professional agency.

Mentoring optimizes the use of knowledge, experience, and skills to improve teaching practice. According to Rowley (1999), an effective mentor: (1) is committed to their mentoring role and responsibilities; (2) accepts the beginning teacher (student-teacher); (3) is skilled at helping beginning teachers find solutions to their problems; (4) is aware that each mentoring relationship occurs in a unique interpersonal context, demonstrating the mentor's deep understanding of communication styles and willingness to observe the mentee objectively; (5) serves as a model lifelong learner; and (6) balances expectation with optimism.

In the teacher education literature, mentoring is distinguished from supervision in terms of the nature of the relationship and goal orientation. Supervision tends to be evaluative and hierarchical, while mentoring emphasizes development and collaboration (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2010). Zanting, Verloop, and Vermunt (2003) identify that effective mentors not only act as models but also as facilitators who encourage critical reflection and learning from experience. Basikin et al. (2024) identify nine mentor roles: (1) resource person; (2) problem solver; (3) role model; (4) evaluator; (5) supporter; (6) challenger; (7) counsellor; (8) co-learner; and (9) co-inquirer.

2.3. Previous Research

Several prior studies have identified various dimensions of the mentor's role in teacher education. Wang and Odell (2002) categorize mentor roles into three main aspects: emotional support, pedagogical assistance, and facilitation of understanding the school context. Feiman-Nemser (2001) emphasizes the importance of the mentor as an agent shaping the educational vision of prospective teachers, rather than merely offering survival teaching tips. In Indonesia, research on mentoring in PPG programs remains relatively limited, despite the program being a national policy for improving teacher professionalism (Jalal & Musthafa, 2001).

Findings from previous research on the role of mentors in PPL student-teacher supervision highlight the importance of cooperating teachers and field supervisory lecturers in shaping student-teacher competencies (Sitompul, 2017). Merket (2022) demonstrates the importance of mentor education, but does not extend to identifying the roles of mentors and mentees in student-teacher supervision. Mentor education is necessary to enhance mentor competence, which ultimately impacts the competencies of prospective professional teachers, consistent with research across professional fields showing that expertise develops through deliberate practice, guided experience, and iterative cycles of performance, feedback, and improvement (Ericsson, 2008).

Merket (2022) further demonstrates how mentors tend to occupy a more dominant role than mentees, exercising control through active, direct, and varied mentor roles. Active, direct mentor roles are associated with reactive mentee roles, while more active mentee roles are linked to varied mentor roles. Hudson (2013) notes that student-teacher supervision programs should attend to the effects of developing and maintaining positive relationships and how mentors can support their mentees' development.

A comprehensive review of induction and mentoring research identifies significant positive effects on retention of beginning teachers, quality of instructional practice, and student learning outcomes when mentoring is implemented with adequate structural support and good mentor preparation (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Conversely, inadequately prepared mentoring programs lead to ineffective practices, perpetuate conservative pedagogy, and fail to support meaningful professional growth (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Research indicates that the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship, characterized by trust, openness, and mutual commitment, is the strongest predictor of mentoring success (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) identify several contextual factors that affect how mentors enact their roles, including time constraints, high teaching loads, and a lack of institutional recognition for the mentor role.

Regarding community building, the mentor's role as an agent of professional socialization confirms organizational socialization theory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) applied in the context of the teaching profession. Mentors not only prepare PPG students for the technical aspects of teaching but also facilitate their entry into the community of teaching practice (Wenger, 1998).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a full instrumental case study design to explore in depth the role of mentors in the PPG program, specifically during field teaching practice (PPL). The qualitative approach is grounded in the research aim of understanding the perspectives, experiences, and meanings constructed by participants regarding the mentoring phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The instrumental case study design enables the use of specific cases as vehicles for understanding the broader issue of the mentor's role in the professional development of student-teachers (Stake, 1995).

3.2. Participants and Research Setting

Research participants were selected through purposive sampling with specific criteria to ensure information-rich cases. The study involved four mentors from eleven subject-area mentors and 20 PPG student-teachers from Indonesian Language, Natural Sciences, Economics, and Culinary Arts. The four mentors corresponded to four educational levels: elementary school (Indonesian Language), junior high school (Natural Sciences), senior high school (Economics), and vocational high school (Culinary Arts).

The four mentors were drawn from four PPG partner schools in Bandung, West Java: UPI Laboratory Elementary School, State Junior High School (SMPN) 2 Baleendah, State Senior High School (SMAN) 4 Bandung, and State Vocational High School (SMKN) 1 Bandung. Mentor selection criteria included: (1) minimum five years of teaching experience; (2) having supervised at least two cohorts of PPG student teachers; (3) voluntary participation; and (4) recommendation by the principal as a professionally competent teacher.

3.3. Data Collection

Data were collected through three primary methods to achieve triangulation and depth of understanding.

First, semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting 30 to 40 minutes were conducted with each participant during intervals between teaching sessions. Interview protocols included open-ended questions about mentors' understanding of their roles, mentoring practices, and challenges encountered, specifically in emotional support, pedagogical support, and system socialization. Student-teachers' perspectives on mentor contributions to their professional learning were also explored. Interviews were recorded with participant consent, transcribed for analysis, and conducted with four mentors and 20 PPG student-teachers.

Second, participatory observation of mentor-student interactions was conducted across various contexts, including emotional support, pedagogical support, and system socialization. This involved classroom observation, post-observation discussion sessions, and reflection meetings. Each mentor-student pair was observed at least three times during the teaching practice period. Researchers systematically recorded notes to capture interaction dynamics relevant to the mentor's role across four selected subject areas.

Third, document analysis encompassed reflective journals written by PPG student-teachers, progress reports, and lesson plans that had been reviewed and annotated by mentors. This analysis provided additional perspectives on the mentoring process, mentoring skill practices, and student-teacher development throughout the program. Reflective journals from 20 selected PPG student-teachers across four subject areas were analyzed.

3.4. Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), comprising six phases: (1) familiarization with data through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes; (2) initial coding to identify meaning units relevant to the research questions; (3) searching for themes by grouping codes into potential thematic categories; (4) reviewing themes to ensure internal coherence and external differentiation; (5) defining and naming final themes; and (6) producing a final report with illustrative examples from the data.

For analytical purposes, coding was conducted to distinguish between mentor and student-teacher participants, considering interview and observation times. The four mentors were coded M1, M2, M3, and M4, while PPG student-teachers were coded Mhs.P.1 through Mhs.P.20. The analysis was conducted inductively and deductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data while remaining in dialogue with existing conceptual frameworks in the literature. NVivo 12 software was used to facilitate data organization and coding, along with member checking with selected participants to verify the researchers' interpretations.

Four main themes representing the dimensions of the mentor's role were identified: (1) Professional Role Model and Demonstration of Best Practices; (2) Reflective Learning Facilitator; (3) Provider of Emotional and Psychological Support; and (4) Agent of Professional Socialization.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval from the research ethics committee of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. All participants provided written informed consent after receiving a full explanation of the research purpose, procedures, benefits, and minimal risks. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of codes for all participants and institutions, and data were secured in an encrypted storage system. Participants were free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

4. Results

As described above, data analysis identified four main themes representing the dimensions of the mentor's role in guiding prospective professional teachers: (1) Professional Role Model and Demonstration of Best Practices; (2) Reflective Learning Facilitator; (3) Provider of Emotional and Psychological Support; and (4) Agent of Professional Socialization. Each theme is elaborated in detail with supporting empirical data from interviews, observations, and document analysis.

4.1. Theme 1: Professional Role Model and Demonstration of Best Practices

Findings indicate that the primary role of the mentor is as a professional role model who demonstrates high-quality teaching practice. All PPG student-teachers (n=20) reported that observing the mentor's teaching practice provided highly valuable learning that they perceived as more concrete than the theories studied on campus. A student-teacher in Natural Sciences (Mhs.P.1), speaking on behalf of peers, explained:

"Real learning cannot rely solely on textbooks. When I observed Ms. Ratna teaching, I gained invaluable lessons from her implementation of differentiated instruction. A teacher's genuine care for heterogeneous students is the central and most important element of successful teaching, not merely knowledge transfer." (Mhs.P.1; Mhs.P.3, Mhs.P.10, Mhs.P.11, Mhs.P.20).

From the mentors' perspective, they recognized the importance of maintaining consistency between what they say and what they do, demonstrating how a mentor performs as a resource person and problem solver. A mentor with twelve years of teaching experience stated:

"As a mentor, I must continuously reflect together with student-teachers so I can model how to interact with students, manage the classroom, and respond to every situation that arises, which can sometimes be unexpected. Being a mentor means not only setting a good example in terms of subject mastery." (Mentor 1/M.1).

Observational data confirmed these findings. Across observation sessions, mentors consistently demonstrated practices aligned with sound pedagogical principles: use of open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking, provision of constructive and specific feedback, and creation of inclusive and supportive classroom environments.

4.2. Theme 2: Reflective Learning Facilitator

The second dimension of the mentor's role encompasses functioning as evaluator, counselor, supporter, and co-learner, serving as a facilitator who encourages and guides PPG student-teachers' critical reflection on their teaching practice. Findings indicate that effective mentors not only provide advice or direct solutions but also use reflective questioning to help student-teachers analyze their own experiences and construct learning from those experiences.

Analysis of post-observation discussion transcripts revealed a characteristic interaction pattern among reflective facilitator mentors. Questions such as "How do you feel about the lesson?" or "What do you think went well, and why?" were common. One mentor explained the philosophy behind their approach:

"By reflecting together, student-teachers come to understand what their weaknesses are and what aspects of their instructional process have gone well. This makes them more receptive to advice and input from the mentor. Through their own awareness, they will strive to improve and grow as educators." (Mentor 2/M.2).

PPG student-teachers greatly appreciated this approach. They generally reported that reflective questioning, as part of the mentor's evaluative role, helped them develop habits of critical thinking about their teaching practice. In this regard, the mentor played the role of co-learner, fostering awareness among student-teachers, who viewed this as a skill that would continue to serve them throughout their teaching careers. One student-teacher (Mhs.P.7) shared:

"I did not feel under pressure; everything was enjoyable. The mentor never pointed out what was wrong with me, because the mentor always encouraged my peers and me to reflect on every instructional process we carried out. This accustomed us to thinking critically and questioning ourselves." (Mhs.P.7, Mhs.P.8, Mhs.P.9, Mhs.P.13, Mhs.P.16, Mhs.P.19).

4.3. Theme 3: Provider of Emotional and Psychological Support

The third theme that emerged consistently from the data concerns the mentor's role in providing emotional and psychological support, encompassing the roles of role model, counsellor, challenger, supporter, and co-inquirer. This role proved especially important when PPG student-teachers faced challenges and frustration during teaching practice. The transition from student to practitioner confronting the complex realities of the classroom frequently generates anxiety, self-doubt, and what is known as "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984).

Nearly all PPG student-teachers (17 of 20) reported emotionally challenging moments, such as difficulty managing a noisy class, dealing with students exhibiting challenging behaviors, or feeling unable to explain concepts in ways students could understand. In these situations, emotional support from the mentor proved critically important. One student-teacher (Mhs.P.10) shared:

"At one point, I experienced a situation I considered a failure, as I was unable to manage an unruly and chaotic class. Even so, my mentor, Ms. Rina, never blamed me, because according to her, everyone, including herself, had experienced the same. She said it was normal, especially for someone learning to become a teacher. What Ms. Rina said calmed me and motivated me to try again." (Mhs.P.2, Mhs.P.4, Mhs.P.5, Mhs.P.12, Mhs.P.17)

Mentors demonstrated empathy in various ways: listening attentively without judgment, sharing their own experiences facing similar challenges, affirming the efforts and progress of student-teachers, and helping reframe failures as learning opportunities. One mentor explained:

"A mentor must be sensitive to the process the mentee is going through and extremely careful when delivering messages. The key is that student-teachers receive appropriate attention and support so they do not experience frustration or feel they have failed as prospective teachers, which typically emerges in the early stages of teaching practice. The mentor must be able to build student-teachers' self-confidence so they are ready to face various challenges." (Mentor 4/M.4)

4.4. Theme 4: Agent of Professional Socialization

The fourth dimension of the mentor's role is as an agent facilitating PPG student-teachers' socialization into school culture and the norms of teacher professional ethics. Mentors teach not only technical aspects of instruction but also the broader dimensions of membership in the professional teacher community, including professional ethics, collegial collaboration, communication with parents, and administrative responsibilities. In this dimension, mentors function as resource persons, role models, co-learners, and co-inquirers.

Mentors introduced PPG student-teachers to various aspects of professional teacher life that may never have been covered or exposed during theoretical coursework on campus, involving them in teacher meetings, curriculum planning discussions, and even parent conferences. One mentor stated:

"There are so many aspects or activities that need to be understood, not just how to teach well, but also educational practices that a teacher must carry out, such as how to collaborate with fellow teachers, how to communicate with parents, and how to handle administrative tasks. A mentor must be able to expose student-teachers to the full picture of the teaching profession." (Mentor 3/M.3)

Mentors also played a role in shaping the professional identity of PPG student-teachers by conveying the values and ethics of the teaching profession, emphasizing the importance of commitment to teaching and learning, the significance of ongoing professional development, and the teacher's social responsibility as an agent of change. One student-teacher (Mhs.P.18) reflected on their mentoring experience.

"From Mr. Usman, my mentor, I learned that pursuing a career as a teacher is not merely a job but a calling. Mr. Usman is deeply committed to his profession as a teacher and continuously updates his knowledge and

understanding of teaching. This is truly remarkable and has inspired me to commit to being a professional teacher." (Mhs.P.6, Mhs.P.14, Mhs.P.15, Mhs.P.18)

5. Discussion

Supporting student-teachers in conducting field teaching practice is essential, as novice teachers often face doubt, awkwardness, and low self-confidence. They need mentoring assistance. It is unsurprising that the Indonesian government, through the Directorate of Teacher Professional Education (Direktorat PPG) under the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, has created a specific guidebook for mentoring PPG student-teachers. Why is mentoring considered important? Mentoring is a fundamentally human process. Gonser (2022) states that mentors play a broader role, helping new teachers manage the busy demands of the day and the challenges of the profession. Simply put, Wolpert-Gawron (2018) asserts that every teacher needs a mentor.

PPG student-teachers are guided to immerse themselves in their profession as educators who not only know how to teach but also go beyond the ability to teach, becoming professional educators. Student-teachers are guided under the supervision of experienced educators at partner schools (cooperating teachers) in the same subject area. In certain countries, mentors are selected from senior teachers and receive training in the mentoring process for beginning teachers and student-teachers (Thuong, 2022) based on the belief that a mentor's past experience and knowledge provide a sound foundation for guiding mentees.

Loosveld, Van Gerven, Vanassche, and Driessen (2020) note that mentors not only promote mentees' academic development, performance, satisfaction, and success, but can also help them navigate the competing demands of career development and personal life. How mentors shape their practice is influenced by their personal beliefs about the purpose and intent of mentoring, what mentoring activities are valuable, who should determine the focus of the mentoring relationship, and what strategies and methods should be employed. Given the unique and contextual nature of these beliefs, mentors have their own ways of interpreting and enacting their mentoring. Beutel and Spooner-Lane (as cited in Hudson, 2013) affirm that the success of a mentoring relationship depends not only on the mentor's skills and knowledge but also on the development of a professional-personal relationship.

The findings of this study provide a rich and multifaceted picture of the mentor's role in the PPG program. The four identified themes encompassing nine mentor roles, professional role model, reflective facilitator, emotional support provider, and socialization agent, demonstrate that the mentoring process in teacher education is far more complex than a mere transfer of technical skills. These findings are consistent with and extend existing literature, while also revealing aspects specific to the Indonesian context. All nine mentor roles are encompassed within this four-dimensional model.

First, the mentor's role as a professional role model confirms the importance of modeling in teacher professional learning, as articulated by Bandura (1977) in social learning theory. However, this study's findings indicate that effective modeling involves not only demonstrating practice, but also making the thinking behind that practice transparent and open for discussion. This aligns with Shulman's (1987) concept of "pedagogical reasoning," where the mentor not only shows what to do but also how to do it. In the Indonesian context, where the teacher as an authority figure remains fairly prominent, mentors who open their pedagogical reasoning processes for discussion represent a progressive practice that should be encouraged.

Second, the role as a reflective learning facilitator (functioning as a resource person) is a particularly significant finding, as critical reflection is the heart of ongoing professional learning (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1987). Mentors in this study demonstrated questioning strategies that encouraged PPG student-teachers to analyze and construct their own understanding, consistent with Feiman-Nemser's (2001) concept of educative mentoring, which distinguishes between mentoring that focuses on mere survival teaching and mentoring that facilitates long-term professional development.

It is worth noting that not all mentors in this study consistently applied the reflective approach characteristic of effective mentoring. Some mentors still provided directives rather than reflective facilitation. This illustrates that being a reflective learning facilitator requires specific competencies that necessitate structured mentor training, underscoring the importance of pedagogical tools for mentors as highlighted by Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010).

Third, the dimension of emotional support revealed in this study provides empirical evidence of the importance of the affective dimension in preparing professional teachers, an aspect sometimes overlooked in discussions that focus primarily on cognitive and technical aspects (Bullough, 2005). The transition from student-teacher to professional practitioner is a demanding phase, filled with uncertainty and emotional vulnerability, requiring mentors who can determine whether student-teachers are ready to continue growing or at risk of losing direction and motivation. These findings align with Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson's (2009) argument that emotional and psychological support is a fundamental component of effective mentoring.

In the Indonesian cultural context, the emotional support dimension appears particularly central, given Indonesia's collectivist culture and emphasis on harmonious interpersonal relations (Hofstede, 2001). PPG student-teachers value mentors who demonstrate social care alongside pedagogical competence, believing that sincerity and social care naturally foster warm relational bonds. This highlights the importance of considering cultural factors in understanding and optimizing mentoring practices.

Fourth, the mentor's role as an agent of professional socialization confirms the organizational socialization theory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) as applied in the context of the teaching profession. The findings reveal that mentors not only prepare PPG student-teachers for the technical aspects of teaching but also facilitate their entry into the community of teaching practice (Wenger, 1998). Mentors help student-teachers understand both written and unwritten norms, develop professional identity, and navigate the complexities of educational practice in schools.

A notable aspect of these findings is how mentors, as "role models," "problem solvers," and "resource persons," convey professional values not through explicit lectures but through direct examples and reflective discussions of practical dilemmas encountered in daily practice. This aligns with the theory of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where learning occurs through the joint participation of mentors and mentees in authentic community practices.

Overall, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of the mentoring process is determined not solely by the mentor's pedagogical expertise, but by their ability to holistically integrate multiple role dimensions, serving as role

model, resource person, evaluator, problem solver, counsellor, challenger, supporter, co-learner, and co-inquirer, providing both technical and emotional support while teaching skills as well as values. This implies that becoming an effective mentor requires multi-faceted competence.

This study also identifies several contextual factors influencing how mentors enact their roles. Time constraints, high teaching loads, and a lack of institutional recognition for the mentor role are challenges faced by many mentors. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) emphasize the importance of institutional support for the success of mentoring programs. To optimize the PPG program, policies providing adequate time allocation for mentors, continuous training to develop mentoring skills, and an incentive system recognizing their contributions are needed.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive picture of the mentor's role in the PPG program and its contribution to the formation of prospective professional teachers. The primary findings indicate that the mentor's role is multidimensional, encompassing four main dimensions: (1) as a professional role model demonstrating best practices and making pedagogical thinking transparent, encompassing the roles of role model, resource person, and problem solver; (2) as a reflective learning facilitator encouraging prospective teachers to develop critical analytical capacity toward their own practice, encompassing the roles of evaluator, counselor, supporter, and co-learner; (3) as a provider of emotional and psychological support helping prospective teachers navigate challenges and uncertainty in the early stages of teaching practice, encompassing the roles of role model, counselor, supporter, and co-inquirer; and (4) as a socialization agent facilitating prospective teachers' entry into the professional teacher community and instilling professional values and ethics, encompassing the roles of resource person, role model, and co-inquirer.

The effectiveness of mentoring is determined not only by the mentor's pedagogical competence but also by the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship, the mentor's ability to holistically integrate various role dimensions, and the institutional support system that facilitates the mentoring process. This study also reveals that cultural context influences how mentoring is practiced and valued, with the relational and emotional support dimensions appearing particularly important in the Indonesian context.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in enriching the understanding of teacher professional learning through the lens of multidimensional mentoring and in integrating diverse theoretical perspectives, from social learning theory and reflective practice to organizational socialization theory, to explain the mentoring phenomenon in teacher education. This study also provides empirical evidence of the importance of the affective dimension in professional learning.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are offered for the development of more effective PPG programs.

1. Mentoring skill training, conducted annually by the PPG Directorate for PPL supervisory lecturers and cooperating teachers, should be consistently implemented not only for universities newly implementing teacher professional education programs but also for all lecturers and cooperating teachers involved in PPG student-teacher supervision.
2. Structured and comprehensive mentor training programs need to be designed, particularly addressing mentor roles, implemented through experiential approaches, including mentor role simulations.
3. Mentor communities of practice should be established and developed as forums for discussion and exchange of experiences among mentors, to promote mutual reinforcement and a deeper understanding of the mentor role. Effective communication between universities and partner schools should be fostered to build commitment toward jointly guiding PPG student-teachers to become professional teachers.
4. Effective communication between the government (PPG Directorate), universities, and partner schools is necessary to evaluate the implementation of professional teacher preparation programs, especially concerning policies on teacher supply and the professional teacher preparation curriculum.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, although involving participants from four subject areas within Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, the generalizability of findings remains limited due to the context-bound nature of qualitative research. Future research might consider a mixed-methods approach to explore broader patterns while maintaining depth of understanding.

Second, this study focuses on the perspectives of mentors and PPG student-teachers during a single period of practice. Longitudinal research tracking the development of prospective teachers from early to final stages of their PPG journey and into their career development would deepen understanding of the mentor's role.

Third, this study has not yet thoroughly explored how specific mentor characteristics (educational background, mentoring training experience, or personality) and mentee characteristics (readiness level, learning orientation, or initial self-efficacy) influence mentoring effectiveness. Future research might employ person-centered analysis to explore individual variations and their interaction with the mentoring process.

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