

Flashbacks of Present English Mentors on Their Previous Mentoring Program Experiences

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Abstract: Mentoring programs have received increasing attention in educational institutions since their contributions were acknowledged. Mentoring programs have been employed to pass on knowledge from mentors to mentees with a well-developed annual plan. These programs are prevalent in many different fields apart from education. There are numerous studies to measure the effects of mentoring on mentees. However, a gap in literature has been noticed to get the perceptions of present mentors who used to complete their mentoring programs as mentees. In this regard, 40 current mentors who are responsible for training teacher candidates in 15 countries used the flashback technique to illustrate their previous experiences as mentees. In this qualitative study, the data were collected through a questionnaire and an interview within 8 weeks. The former was conducted via Quizizz application, while the latter was carried out via Microsoft Teams virtual meetings. Both platforms were chosen for their convenience. The findings revealed that present mentors had mostly positive views on the programs. However, they stated that further efforts are required on shared responsibilities, the tone of criticism and reserving time to socialize. The findings of the study can have some implications for future mentoring programs around the world.

Keywords: Mentor, Mentee, Teacher Training

1. Introduction

Mentoring plays an important role in passing on a senior's knowledge to a junior, so it is expected to ensure that juniors can get the highest benefits as long as the mentoring program continues. Mentoring has different dimensions to develop mentees personally and professionally. Personal development can yield good results in mentees' real lives, so their chance to earn respect in society increases (McKinsey, 2016). Similarly, professional development is fundamental meet the needs of the educational institutions, parents and students harmoniously. Once the mentoring program has been planned well, it is expected to support and encourage mentees. Thus, supported and encouraged mentees are expected to dedicate themselves to raising standards in their institutions. Additionally, educational institutions' effectiveness and reputation are closely related to training less experienced teachers with a well-designed annual plan. Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) classify mentoring in two groups which are career oriented and psychosocial oriented.

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Career oriented support refers to training mentees for expected and unexpected situations to handle any issues wisely, whereas psychosocial oriented support means forging a friendly relationship with mentees. He postulates that the mentoring program comprises many gaps if both points are not considered, so dissatisfaction rates can increase day by day as the program continues. Developing personally and socially, passing on the knowledge, career and psychosocial oriented policies are fundamental points of mentoring programs.

Mentoring programs have evolved significantly thanks to the advancements in technology. There were two types of mentoring previously which were one on one and group. However, distance mentoring programs have gained more popularity since Covid-19 closures in 2020 (Celik et al., 2022). To illustrate it, one on one mentoring program means matching a mentor with the mentee to initiate and finalize, while group mentoring programs are related to assigning a mentor for a group of mentees. Although one on one mentoring is more preferable, group mentoring can be compulsory in some institutions. The rationale to adopt a group mentoring program is that the number of experienced mentors can be limited. The latest mentoring type, which is distance, has some benefits and negative implications. It increases the chance to assign the best mentors because institutions are not required to assign a mentor working in the same school or district. Additionally, distance mentoring is useful to save time, money and the environment (Wilbanks, 2014). When they are connected through the internet, they do not have to meet physically, buy tickets to travel or consume oil to pollute the environment but the cost of acquiring the many pieces of technology required for engaging in online education is a new and distinct hardship (Bilgin et al., 2022). Moreover, the Covid-19 process caused problems all over the world, and it also caused problems in the education sector. One of these problems was the sudden switch to online education. Some teachers, as well as the content and curriculum of education, were not ready for this change (Yildiz, 2022). For instance, monitoring the mentoring process closely is impossible. Similarly, technical issues can arise during virtual meetings. Also, mentors and mentees cooperate or socialize physically, so their relationships can be distant. One on one, group and distance mentoring programs have been prevalent in educational institutions with their unique advantages and disadvantages.

Some prerequisites related to mentors` and mentees` characteristics have been stated to increase the success rate of mentoring programs. Catanese and Shoamanesh (2017) attest that a good mentor should be confident to take initiative, expert to pass on precious knowledge professionally, altruistic to make sacrifice, supportive to encourage in many ways, respectful to keep dignity, enthusiastic to act powerfully, patient to have a common sense, accessible to contact without any hesitation, an effective communicator to manage the communication successfully and visionary to plan the future with wisdom. In other words, lack of confidence, expertise, initiative, support and patience can undermine mentors` positions in mentoring programs. Apart from mentors` characteristics, mentees personal qualities play essential roles in increasing the mutual benefits of mentoring programs. Cho et al. (2011) state that a good mentee should be disciplined, confident, open-minded, inquirer, patient, considerate, enthusiastic. In other words, they need to be disciplined to complete the expected duties successfully. In addition, they need to have self-confidence to express their ideas or transfer the knowledge confidently. Also, they need to seek opportunities to gather the accurate information. If they are hesitant about any subjects, they need to inquire and crosscheck by multiple sources. Furthermore, being patient in troublesome situations, polite to earn the respect of others and enthusiastic to take action eagerly can be other positive traits of mentees.

These prerequisites expected from mentors and mentees can increase mutual benefits in mentoring programs.

Flashback is a technique which is widely used in literary genres and movies. Flashback can be basically explained as going back to the events in the past. It was used in literature and movies to illustrate the moments more effectively, so the readers or viewers will be more engaged (Cuddon, 2013). Apart from literature and movies, flashback technique has been widely used in people's lives. People adopt flashback technique to recall a previous memory which can be related to childhood, adolescence or adulthood. Flash technique has been employed to recall positive or negative experiences, and apply them to the current life, so they can be used as a reflection to guide people's present lives.

2. Literature Review

Mentoring is a nurturing period when a more skilled person serves as an advisor for a relatively less skilled person. Mentoring programs have arisen as a continuous need to support less experienced professionals in many fields as well as education. The earliest examples of mentoring were recorded in Ancient Greek. According to Greek mythology, king of Athica Odysseus assigned his close friend Mentor to educate his son Telemachus for his knowledge, experience and wisdom (Birkenfeld et al., 2021). Some reflections of this pioneering activity can be seen even in today's mentoring programs. It is essential to include assistance and challenge in mentoring programs. Turkan et al. (2016) conducted a study in Turkey on pre-service teachers which revealed that the teacher candidates who developed good social skills earned more respect and appreciation from their mentors, while others whose social skills were not as developed as others got less positive feedback. It can be argued that developing social skills of the mentees can be prioritized to take advantage of its proven benefits. It is inarguable notion that teaching is a challenging task that has numerous dimensions. Thus, less experienced teachers face some difficulties in their first year. Based on the Texas Beginning Educator Support System report, newly employed teachers mostly have problems related to motivation, classroom management, parent relations, differentiated learning and interaction with colleagues (Pan et al., 2000) The report reiterates that professional mentoring system is a necessity to eliminate such problems in educational settings. Also, standards and satisfaction rates increase accordingly if mentees are trained on how to take sensible actions in their first year.

Mentoring programs develop mentees' skills considerably if mentors and mentees assume responsibility fairly. To illustrate, Hudson (2010) states that teaching has different aspects including interpersonal, emotional and social ones, so it is a skill to be learned as well. He also postulates that learning how to master teaching alone can take long years with many troublesome experiences, however, mentoring programs can reduce this time considerably with a well-planned schedule. In this regard, some points should be considered while implementing mentoring programs. Bullock (2017) states that mutual trust and cooperation are essential to increase the benefits of mentoring programs. Once they earn their trust and cooperate harmoniously, they can work together to realize the goals of the program. On the other hand, if they lose the trust and have many conflicts, the outcomes of the program cannot be achieved. Castañeda and Montenegro (2015) contend that open communication and timely interventions are important considerations in mentoring programs. Being open to criticism and new ideas plays an integral role in mentoring. Otherwise, communication channels can be blocked, and they cannot brainstorm for the betterment of the program. Likewise, mentors should have the ability to take initiative on time if they

notice some points to be reconsidered. Taking notes on the observation form without informing the mentee can turn the program into a time-consuming activity. Mentors should take action and make a clear explanation to justify themselves, so mentees can consider this occasion as an opportunity to learn and show progress.

Mentoring has been implemented in state schools on a global scale to allow mentees to get more experience and sharpen their professional conducts. To name a few, it is compulsory for Turkish pre-service teachers to take part in a year-long teacher training program which has been designed to improve their teaching skills considerably (Aydin & Ahmet, 2022). During this program, pre-service teachers can observe mentors' lessons at first. In the second semester, they are expected to cover lessons as a substitute teacher under the guidance of the mentor. This program has been planned to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge. Similarly, senior pre-service teachers in Iraq are required to join a year-long mentoring program at different private or public educational institutions, so mentees can have a chance to observe a perfect model and convert theoretical knowledge into practical one (Kadir & Aziz, 2021). Likewise, Finland has been implementing Peer-group Mentoring (PGM) in all stages of education for long years. Mentoring program has been employed to support not only pre-service teachers but also all teachers. The program's main goal is to ensure that all teachers can show considerable progress during their career if mentors are matched with mentees in a well-planned format (Tynjala et al., 2021). Finnish model wants to encourage the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge to increase the positive outcomes.

Mentoring programs are not run by only public institutions. Mentoring has received increasing attention from foundations globally as well (Preston et al., 2019). To name a few, the German Senior Experten Service (SES) has created VerA initiative to support students in vocational high schools with volunteer retired mentors since 2008. The Germany-wide mentorship program revealed that mentees' successful completion rate, motivation and problem-solving skills improved considerably. Similarly, The Year Up Program in the USA aims to support young people aged 18-24 with mentors so that they can complete their education, get experienced and find a job successfully. The mentees reiterated that the program supported them in different aspects to adapt to difficulties and solve them rationally. Additionally, the Netherlands initiated Link 2 Work program to alleviate the transition from universities to workplaces. The participants attest those mentors guided them in each step to come to the best decisions about their careers.

An increasing number of research has been conducted regarding mentoring programs with positive and negative implications. To name a few, Ghanbari and Zare (2020) carried out a study in Iran on newly hired teachers whose majors were ELT. The study revealed that classroom observation and continuous feedback during the mentoring program were the most important gains of the program. Similarly, Kara and Abdulrahman (2022) conducted a study in Iraq on determining some tips of mentoring. The study revealed that 15 career-saving tips were stated by mentors to guide the mentees in their professional careers. In addition, Hall and Jaugietis (2011) conducted a study in the USA with mentors and mentees. The study revealed that the program was beneficial to foster constructive criticism, reflection and problem-solving skills. Also, Kwan and Lopez (2005) carried out a study in Hong Kong on mentors and mentees which uncovered those mentees developed themselves on how to behave professionally in educational institutions. Subsequently, Waring (2013) conducted a study in the USA on mentoring which revealed that

monitoring planned activities and offering written and verbal feedback clearly can increase the possibility of positive reflection in mentoring programs. Otherwise, communication channels can be blocked, so mentors and mentees cannot find common grounds to cooperate and succeed. It can be stated that mentees and mentors take advantage of mentoring programs if the whole planning can be made meticulously in advance by cooperation.

2.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to figure out present mentors' opinions regarding their previous experience in mentoring programs. Additionally, this study was conducted to have some information whether their previous mentors affected their teaching style positively or negatively. In this regard, the researcher requested the present mentors to recall their previous experience in mentoring programs by employing flashback technique which is widely used in novels and movies. The research questions in this study are:

- Can flashback technique be used effectively to recall the memories in mentoring programs?
- Can mentoring programs affect mentees' teaching careers positively or negatively?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A thorough questionnaire and an interview comprised the backbone of this qualitative study. The questionnaire included 11 items to gather data about the whole process in detail. The interview was also conducted to unleash mentee's genuine opinions. Subsequently, the findings of the questionnaire were correlated with the interview to come to a conclusion whether they complemented each other.

A 5-point likert scale style was adopted in the questionnaire to get the responses from the mentees. After getting the responses, the collected data were classified as mean, percentage and the number of respondents for each option. Classifying the data helped the researcher to make concrete interpretations about the mentorship program, mentors' attitude towards the whole process and perceptions of the mentees. The researcher also compared the findings to conduct a correlation test.

Apart from the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was held including 1 open ended question which was related to getting their ideas about their teaching experience. Additionally, the interviewer did not stick to this question if there was a chance to expand the topic with different questions. The primary question in the interview can be seen below:

- When you flashback to your mentorship program, how do you recall this period? Can you elaborate?

3.2 Research Process

This study was carried out in 6 phases, all of which can be clearly seen in Figure 1 and will be explained in detail in the following sections.

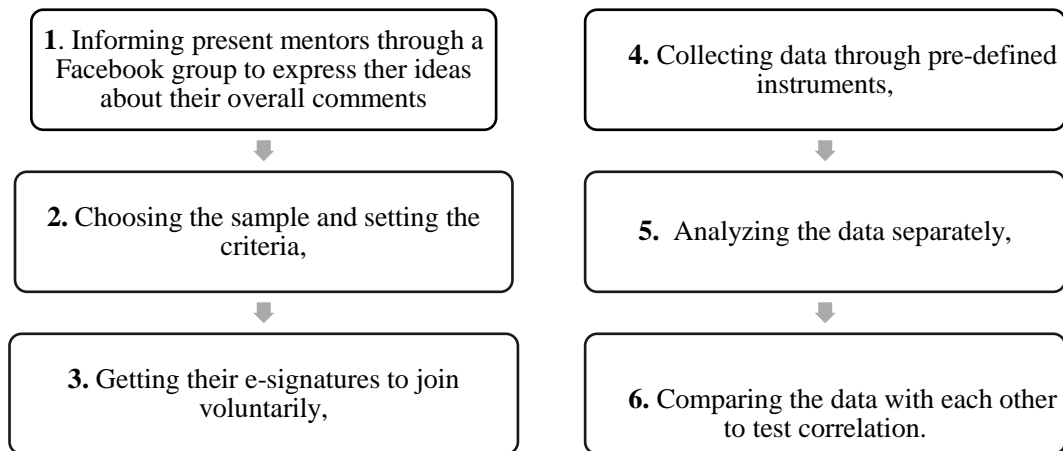


Figure 1: Stages of the study

As can be seen clearly, the questionnaire and the interview were organized to gather data by multiple instruments, so cross-comparisons could be made easily.

3.3 Setting, Participants, Sampling

In this study, virtual instruments which were the questionnaire created by Quizzes and the interview conducted by Microsoft Teams were adopted to collect data. Virtual instruments facilitated gathering data from interviewee who have been living in 15 different countries. Collecting the data by online instruments increased the scope of the study. The researcher was a member of a mentorship group on a social media platform for a long time. There were 120 members who are currently working in the same region, so they improved their relationship with each other by uncovering their opinions regularly. Systematic sampling method was employed to select samples from the population in this study, so the multiples of 3 were used to choose sample from 120 members who accounted for the population. 27 females and 13 male present mentors represented the population in this study. The study started after choosing the sample in an unbiased way.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of continents for the mentors.

Distribution of Continents for Present Mentors

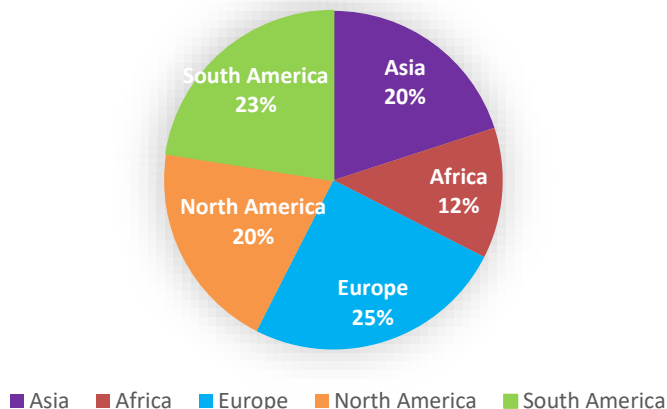


Figure 2: Distribution of Continents for Present Mentors

Figure 2 clearly represents those 5 continents were represented in this study with varying degrees. Africa was represented with 5 members which accounted for 12 %. Additionally, Asia and North America were represented with 8 members which accounted for 20 % respectively. Furthermore, South America was represented with 9 members which accounted for 23 %. Finally, Europe was represented with 10 members which accounted for 25 %.

Figure 3 depicts the number of years the mentors have worked so far.

Professional Careers of Interviewees

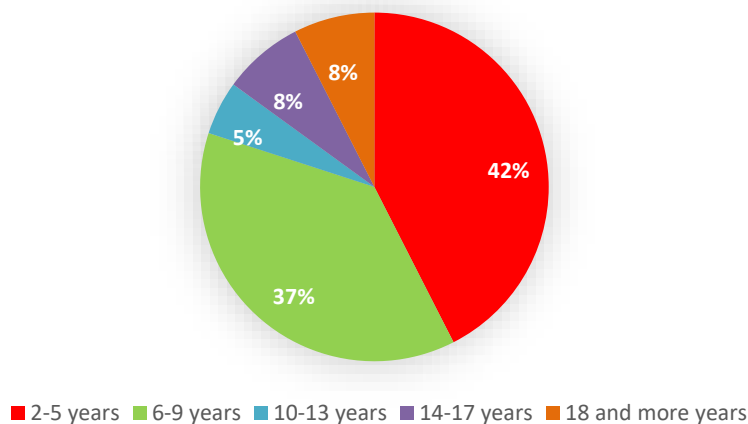


Figure 3: Professional Careers of English Mentors

As can be noticed clearly in Figure 3, 42 % (17) of the interviewees had a solid experience in teaching between 2 and 5 years. In addition, 37 % (15) of the interviewees worked between 6 and 9 years as a teacher. Moreover, 5 % (2) of the interviewees worked between 10 and 13 years. Additionally, there were

3 (8 %) interviewees whose career spanned between 14 and 17 years. Final category was about working 18 and more years which was represented with 3 (8 %) interviewees. These figures show that the around 80 % of the interviewees worked less than 10 years, so their chance to remember their memories on mentorship program was higher than others who worked at least 10 years.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher divided data collection process into manageable sessions within 8 weeks, so the interviewees had the opportunity to answer each item in a detailed way. In the initial step, the questionnaire was held in two weeks. In week 3, the items in the questionnaire were converted into numerical values to analyze. Subsequently, the interview was held between week 4 and 6. In the next stage, the recorded version of the interview was transcribed and classified by MAXQDA software program. In the final phase which included week 7 and 8, the data were compared whether the findings of the questionnaire and the interview were compatible with each other. Another point to emphasize was that the whole process was observed by a committee to make necessary modifications if needed, so more reliable results could be gathered.

4. Findings

Findings of this study were related to the analysis of the questionnaire and the interview respectively.

4.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table 1 illustrates the items in the questionnaire in a detailed way with mean score, percentage and the number of respondents for each option.

ITEMS	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
1. My mentor's instructions and suggestions were clear enough to understand.	4,07	65 %	26	12 %	5	10 %	4	5 %	2	8 %	3
2. My mentor's criticism was constructive.	3,97	60 %	24	10 %	4	10 %	4	8 %	3	12 %	5
3. My mentor was an awesome model for me.	4,1	60 %	24	15 %	6	10 %	4	5 %	2	10 %	4

4. We socialized together with my mentor from time to time.	2,3	10 %	4	12 %	5	18 %	7	18 %	7	42 %	17
5. My mentor offered supplementary materials to increase my knowledge.	5	100 %	40	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0
6. My mentor valued my ideas.	4,2	65 %	26	20 %	8	0 %	0	0 %	0	15 %	6
7. My mentor nominated me to work for an educational institution.	3,25	40 %	16	5 %	2	20 %	8	10 %	4	25 %	10
8. My mentor stayed in touch with me after mentorship program.	1,9	15 %	6	10 %	4	0%	0	0 %	0	75 %	30
9. I had mostly good relationship with my mentor.	4,2	60 %	24	20 %	8	5 %	2	10 %	4	5 %	2
10. My mentor helped me develop personally and professionally.	4,47	70 %	28	20 %	8	0 %	0	0 %	0	10 %	4
11. If a new opportunity arose, I would prefer working with the same mentor.	4,05	60 %	24	15 %	6	5 %	2	10 %	4	10 %	4

As can be observed precisely, some interpretations can be made regarding the questionnaire.

Once item 1 which was related to clarity of instructions and suggestions was analyzed in detail, it was observed that mean score was 4,07. 65 % (26) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 12 % (5) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Furthermore, 10 % (4) mentees chose neutral. The last options were disagreeing and strongly disagree which were chosen by 5 % (2) and 8 % (3) respectively. These figures show that some communication problems arose while conceiving the instructions and suggestions.

When item 2 which was related to the classification of criticism was examined in detail, the mean score was recorded as 3,97. 60 % (24) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 10 % (4) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Furthermore, 10 % (4) mentees chose neutral. The last options were disagreeing and strongly disagree which were chosen by 8 % (3) and 12 % (5) respectively. These figures show that some criticism was regarded as constructive, while some others were not regarded as constructive as others.

When item 3 which was related to the professional conduct of the mentor, the mean score was recorded as 4,1. 60 % (24) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 15 % (6) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Furthermore, 10 % (4) mentees chose neutral. The last options were disagreeing and strongly disagree which were chosen by 5 % (2) and 10 % (4) respectively. These figures show that mentees wanted to benefit more from the whole process which was missing for some mentees.

When item 4 which was related to the socialization together, the mean score was recorded as 2,3. 10 % (4) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 12 % (5) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Furthermore, 18 % (7) mentees chose neutral. The last options were disagreeing and strongly disagree which were chosen by 18 % (7) and 42 % (17) respectively. These figures show that mentees and mentors did not extend their relationship to their social lives.

When item 5 which was related to the offering supplementary materials, the mean score was recorded as 5. 100 % (40) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. No student chose other options. These figures show that mentors wanted to improve mentees` skills by offering extra materials.

When item 6 which was related to the being open to mentees` ideas, the mean score was recorded as 4,2. 65 % (26) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 20 % (8) of the mentees clicked on agree option. No student chose neutral or disagree. The last option was strongly disagreeing which was chosen by 15 % (6) students. These figures show that some ideas were not valued as expected by the mentees.

When item 7 which was related to the being a reference for the mentees for future job prospects, the mean score was recorded as 3,25. 40 % (16) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 5 % (2) of the mentees clicked on agree option. In addition to these figures, % 20 (8), % 10 (4) of the mentees chose neutral or disagree respectively. The last option was chosen by 25 % (10) of the mentees. These figures show that mentors were hesitant about being a reference for the mentees.

When item 8 which was related to staying in touch with the mentees, the mean score was recorded as 1,9. 15 % (6) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 10 % (4) of the mentees clicked on agree option. No mentees chose neutral or disagree respectively. The last option was chosen by 75 % (30) of the mentees. These figures show that communication between mentors and mentees halted in most cases

When item 9 which was related to having a good relationship during the mentorship program, the mean score was recorded as 4,22. 60% (6) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 20 % (4) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Additionally, 5 % (2) and 10 % (4) of the mentees opt in neutral or disagree. The last option was chosen by 5 % (30) of the mentees. These figures show that some conflicts arose from time to time between mentors and mentees.

When item 10 which was related to developing personally and professionally, the mean score was recorded as 4,47. 70 % (28) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 20 % (8) of the mentees clicked on agree option. No mentee chose neutral or strongly disagree. The last option was chosen by 10 % (4) mentees. These figures uncover that mentees regarded this period as a time to develop in different dimensions.

Once item 11 which was related to choosing the same mentor again, it was observed that mean score was 4,05. 60 % (24) of the mentees chose strongly agree option. Additionally, 15 % (6) of the mentees clicked on agree option. Furthermore, 5 % (2) mentees chose neutral. The last options were disagreeing and strongly disagree which were chosen by 10 % (4) and 10 % (4) respectively. These figures show that some mentees cemented a good relationship with their mentees, while others` relationship was not established as strong as others.

Once all items were examined in detail, the highest means were observed in item 5 and 10 which were related to offering supplementary materials and guiding mentees to develop personally and professionally. On the other hand, the lowest means were observed in item 4 and 8 which were related to socialization and staying in touch.

4.2 Analysis of the Interview

Apart from the questionnaire, the interview held an essential place in this study which could be explored precisely below. Although 40 interviewees joined the study, 13 common topics were included. Some common answers were merged in order not to take the valuable time of the readers.

It was a great privilege for me to join a mentorship program at a high school where all facilities were modern. Additionally, my mentor was the most supportive person I had ever seen. The school had a language laboratory where students could master English by watching videos, playing games, taking brief listening quizzes and reading e-books. Additionally, my mentor shared his archive with me, so I could reach books and videos related to classroom management. I also read his tips to cover engaging lessons based on his experiences throughout his career. Finally, my mentor covered many lessons as a perfect model until I had enough self-confidence to replace him. I stay in touch with him even today because he has all qualities to be a lifelong mentor for me. When I recall these days, I know the value of these days more because these days have a tremendous effect on my professional career. I am grateful to join such a great mentorship program. (Mentee 3)

My mentorship program at a primary school was a terrible experience for me because I struggled a lot until I completed it. First of all, the school did not have smartboards which made teaching difficult for me. We used to cover all practical lessons through smartboards at university. However, we only had the blackboard at a village school where we completed our training program. I used to learn how to integrate videos, presentations, online games and quizzes to the lessons, but none of them was possible in my training program. I learnt how to teach traditionally without getting help from technological items. I admitted that it was very hard for a pre-service teacher. Secondly, I had some problems about assumed roles with my mentor. Although my mentor was required to cover lessons for 6 weeks as a model, she only covered a week. In the following weeks, she only sat and followed my lessons. It was a challenging period

for me because I started teaching without observing my mentor's lessons sufficiently. Finally, I had some problems about classroom management. I wanted to be friendly towards my students. However, I lost the control in the class after a while. It was the gravest mistake I made. Now I know the balance between being friendly and professional. All in all, I learnt a lot from my bitter experiences. I hope promising pre-service teachers cannot encounter such issues. (Mentee 6)

I took part in a mentorship program at a secondary school where there were many refugees. This mentorship program affected me positively in different ways. First of all, the students fled from a war-torn country, so their levels were not satisfactory at first due to having gap years in education. On the other hand, the students were so willing to participate and improve their skills. We progressed a lot with their increasing enthusiasm. On the other hand, my mentor was a philanthropist as well. His family was wealthy and had connections to reach other rich people in the city. We collected large sums of money to donate. I cannot envisage the feeling I had at that time. Apart from teaching, we bought some toys and clothes for our students. I realized once more that having good relationship with students increased the quality of education and students' engagement in classes. As a result, mentorship program helped me to develop personally and professionally. (Mentee 8)

I took part in a mentorship program in a primary school. Although we simulated the same class at university, it was a great challenge for me. I did not know how to take actions in some problematic situations. Fortunately, my mentor was expert in teaching. She devised novel strategies to solve classroom management issues wisely. She also supported me with some videos related to classroom management. We spent some time together out of the class to socialize. I really appreciated the effort of my mentor to relieve my stress and contribute to my professional development. I wish everyone has an awesome mentor like her. (Mentee 11)

Mentorship program improved my computer literacy skills considerably. I completed my training in a secondary school. My mentor trained me to use many websites related to ELT. For example, I learned how to activate Kahoot quizzes to test students' learning with multiple choice questions. Additionally, I learned how to prepare questions and conduct through Zip Grade. It was a real time saver for me to grade the papers and analyze my students within seconds. Finally, he guided me to use PADLET application to activate an interactive online writing platform. The most important plus of this training program for me was to learn how to integrate technology into my lessons. (Mentee 14)

I learned many valuable lessons during my mentorship program at a high school. For example, I learned the value of keeping notes about teaching tips, so I can refer them whenever I need to use in my future career. Later, I learned the value of having alternative plans. Once the power was off, so I could not use the smartboard. My mentor had told me to have some games in my folder in these cases. I opened the box and organized the game to expand their vocabulary, so I saved the day. Finally, I figured out how to balance my intonation to capture students' attention. I used to teach with the same intonations but rising and falling intonation had incredible effects on keeping the students active in the class. All in all, this training program affected my teaching career positively. (Mentee 17)

My mentorship program undermined my self-confidence at first for several reasons. For instance, my mentor warned me about my minor pronunciation mistakes in class where students were watching us at a

high school. Also, he frowned when I could not complete to cover planned pages in one lesson. These actions undermined my self-confidence a lot. In the following weeks, I talked to him one on one to get more constructive feedback about my teaching skill. We agreed on getting feedback in the office. He took notes and informed me in his office. Although it started with some negative remarks, we completed the process with mutual understanding. Employing right means of communication eliminated the problems in our mentorship program. (Mentee 21)

My mentor was an expert to warn me about my mistakes in a kind way while I was getting my teacher training program at a secondary school. For example, he was taking notes about my pronunciation mistakes. When we met his room, he was asking me to recheck their pronunciation once more. Whenever he told me, I realized that I needed to correct them. In another case, he was warning me about a vicious circle to discuss with students. He recommended me to appoint another time for this issue after researching on the internet about the accurate form. We saved much time, and we were able to keep the peaceful atmosphere by doing so. I will remember my mentor with his insightful remarks as long as I teach professionally. (Mentor 24)

My mentorship program posed some problems for me due to not setting the schedule well. We were exchanging our roles with my mentor from time to time while I was joining a teacher training program at a primary school. However, my mentor did not set my lessons clearly in advance. For example, he asked me to cover a lesson one day without informing me in advance. My hands were trembling while I was covering it. It was the worst lesson I had ever covered due to not making preparations in advance. If I am appointed as mentor one day, I will set the schedule in advance spanning the whole year, so my mentee can prepare himself mentally, academically and psychologically. (Mentor 26)

My mentor was a great person to be inspired while I was taking part in a teacher training program at a secondary school. She had some knowledge about many fields of study ranging from technology to sport. We had so much in common to share together, so I had unbreakable bonds with her. During my mentorship program, I learned that teachers should have some interests with different fields to integrate into lessons when needed. Otherwise, the lessons can be monotonous and dull for each party. Teaching English means making connections between lessons and the real life, so my mentor applied it excellently in her classes. Now I follow her footsteps to be as inspiring as her. (Mentor 27)

Although I took advantage of mentorship program a lot, I could not improve my skills as much as I expected. The problem resulted from my mentor's tight program at a secondary school. The school administration assigned 7 mentees for one mentor, so we could not get close attention from our mentor about his valuable suggestions. He just directed us with some reference websites to find the resolutions. However, we did not get teacher training program to be directed about some educational websites. Our lecturers at university told us that you would get firsthand experience from your mentor as well as his timely guidance whenever you need. It was the missing point for us. Our first-hand experience was about not assigning 7 mentees for one mentor for the sake of successful implementation of mentorship program. (Mentor 32)

I joined a teacher training program at a high school where I met the best mentor I had ever seen. My mentor socialized with me. He played football, chess, basketball and badminton with me. He also visited my hostel

to eat dinner together. When my mood was not good to cover a lesson, he postponed it to the next week. Throughout my mentorship program, I learned that socializing with mentees and being understanding in some cases could offer numerous advantages to earn the respect and to be an inspiration. Mentees can improve their teaching skills even in the following years, however, humiliating remarks or being so strict can have adverse effects in this period. (Mentee 36)

My mentor was so interested in hybrid education while I was teaching in a secondary school. I had so much anxiety before covering the lessons in a real classroom atmosphere. My mentor scheduled a meeting with me the day before the real lesson. I covered the lesson online, and he behaved as if he had been a student. He recommended me to make some changes in some parts to teach better. He also invited some other teachers to welcome his ideas in a Zoom session. I learned how to overcome my stress after a while. Now I am a mentor at a high school to train pre-service teachers. Having been inspired by such a great mentor was a great motivator for me. As of now, I pass on the invaluable knowledge I learned from him to my mentees who are planning to have a career in education. (Mentee 39)

I completed my mentorship program at a secondary school. We had some conflicts with my mentor about the assignments. My mentor was assigning dictation homework which was more than tolerable. She argued that they would learn by dictation at first. They only needed to copy the text to their notebooks. My opinion was to use dictation and creative writing tasks both in harmony which was rejected by my mentor. After a while, she wanted to give it a try for my suggestions. Students started doing homework to unleash their creativity. We noticed that they had a great deal of sense of humor, different interests and many novel ideas. I was lucky in this respect to change my mentor's homework policy, so novel ideas could be welcomed by students. (Mentee 40)

5. Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

This qualitative study explored genuine opinions of present mentors who used to be mentees previously by employing the flashback technique. Significant points were uncovered in this study.

Considering the positive implications of these mentoring programs, highlighting some points can be helpful. A number of present mentors stated that the program was so productive because the responsible mentor at that time trained and guided them flawlessly. Balali et al. (2018) attest that mentor's primary role is to train and guide the mentees timely. Additionally, many present mentors argued that they learned how to plan in advance and behave accordingly during mentoring programs. Subsequently, mentors' efforts to offer supplementary materials were appreciated. Furthermore, many present mentors postulated that the program developed them personally, socially and professionally as it was in line with Siew's (2021) previous study. They reiterated that they learned how to solve classroom management or technical problems wisely. Mentoring programs' positive outcomes may increase according to the actions of mentors and mentees.

Present mentors emphasized some points to be reconsidered regarding their previous mentoring programs as well. According to the revealed data through chosen instruments, it was noticed that more clarifications were needed in terms of instructions and suggestions. They stated that there were some missing points about their instructions and suggestions, so mentees could not benefit from this period as much as they

expected. Comprehensible and clear instructions and suggestions are important considerations in mentoring programs (Alegria et al., 2019). Another point was about the way the mentors expressed their criticism. Constructive criticism plays an important role in mentoring programs (Hudson, 2010). They reiterated that some criticism served just one purpose which was to demotivate them. Mentees' concern was to be warned in a constructive way, so they can reconsider their behaviors and teaching style. Furthermore, some mentors argued that they did not benefit from the experience of the mentor to consider them as a good model. Mentors should be an observer and a role model harmoniously (LaFleur & White, 2010). Moreover, valuing or ignoring mentees' opinions matter a lot which was another concern stated by the present mentors. It seemed that they wanted to notice more encouragement to express their ideas freely without feeling any hesitation. It is of paramount importance to value mentees' opinions during mentoring programs (Izadinia, 2018) They argued that cooperation should be the essence of mentorship program. Otherwise, mentors and mentees cannot follow the same goals to teach efficiently. After that, the number of mentors who became a reference for mentees was quite low. It displays that mentees' teaching skills were not satisfactory enough at that moment to recommend for future job prospects. Afterwards, some mentees uncovered that they had some conflicts with their mentors due to scheduling, workload, sharing responsibilities issues. They postulated that meticulous planning in advance can eliminate such issues. In addition, a higher number of mentees uncovered that they developed in many ways at the end of this period. Final points to consider were about their socialization and post relationship. Only few respondents stated that they socialized together to know each other well. Likewise, only few respondents expressed that they stayed in touch with each other after the mentorship program. It shows that they stopped exchanging their opinions to learn from each other during their career. Hayes (2018) states that blocking the communication channels between mentors and mentees can have adverse effects on the professional development of mentees in the long run.

Some recommendations can be made for authorized bodies in mentorship programs. Although planning has been considered as essential in this period, observation of the whole process should not be neglected. As it is unobtrusive in this study, some initiatives or remarks can be misunderstood by the mentees. Also, humanitarian activities can increase the enthusiasm of the mentees towards teaching profession. In this way, interaction is a significant factor in education since it promotes the dissemination of knowledge. Knowledge can be transferred from mentor to mentee through interactive activities, taking them from where they are now to where they could be (Yildiz & Celik, 2020). In addition, they can find more means to be a teacher rather than only relying on the salary. Additionally, mentees expressed the need to have some extra materials to have engaging classes. Some funds can be allocated for mentees so that they can channel this fund for educational purposes in their mentorship program.

Further recommendations can be made for further studies. This study included 40 mentees from 5 different continents. More continents and mentees could be welcomed to represent the population more accurately. Additionally, this study was conducted based on the prerequisites of the qualitative data. A mixed method design could yield better reflections by considering the benefits of quantitative data. Finally, the mentors who used to be mentees previously comprised the core part of this study. The mentees who are pre-service or recently employed teachers can be included in future studies.

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