

Mentoring Practices, School Heads' Support, and Teachers' Professional Development: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the relationships among mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development in public elementary schools in Quezon City, Philippines. It employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design involving 227 respondents, composed of 130 Master Teachers and 97 Teachers selected through stratified sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed and validated questionnaire and analyzed through mean, Welch's independent-samples t-test, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. Findings showed that mentoring

practices were moderately implemented, with an overall weighted mean of 3.00. School heads' support was perceived as moderate by Master Teachers and high by Teachers, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(224.84) = -23.39$, $p < .001$. Teachers' professional development was rated high, with an overall weighted mean of 3.99, particularly in classroom



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management, instructional strategies, curriculum alignment, and reflective practice. Mentoring practices had a weak but significant positive relationship with teachers' professional development ($r = .214, p = .001$), while school heads' support had a moderate and significant positive relationship with professional development ($r = .386, p < .001$). The findings indicate that both mentoring and leadership support contribute to teachers' professional growth, although school heads' support demonstrates a stronger association. Strengthening structured mentoring systems, protected mentoring time, resource provision, monitoring, and professional learning opportunities is therefore essential to sustain teacher development.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers serve as a cornerstone of educational quality and national development, as their knowledge, skills, and instructional practices directly influence learners' academic experiences and outcomes. In an increasingly complex educational environment, teachers are expected to continuously improve their pedagogical competence, adapt to diverse learner needs, integrate innovative teaching approaches, and engage in lifelong professional learning. However, achieving sustained teacher growth requires more than individual effort; it requires supportive professional environments where teachers are provided with opportunities for collaboration, reflection, feedback, and continuous improvement. Recent studies emphasize that effective teacher professional development is most successful when it is sustained, collaborative, practice-based, and connected to teachers' actual instructional contexts (Samundeeswari, 2024).

One important approach to strengthening teacher professional development is mentoring. Mentoring provides teachers with structured opportunities to receive guidance, feedback, coaching, and professional support from more experienced colleagues. In schools, mentoring practices such as classroom observation, demonstration teaching, instructional coaching, collaborative planning, and reflective discussions help teachers improve their instructional decision-making and professional confidence. Mwesigwa and Nakato (2025) emphasized that effective coaching and mentoring contribute to instructional improvement when they involve sustained interactions, individualized feedback, and opportunities for teachers to apply new learning in their classrooms. Similarly, Jones et al. (2019) highlighted that mentoring promotes professional learning by encouraging reflection, dialogue, and collaboration among educators. These findings indicate that mentoring practices serve as important mechanisms for supporting teachers' continuous professional growth.

However, the effectiveness and sustainability of mentoring practices are not dependent solely on the efforts of teacher mentors. School leadership support plays an equally important role in creating the conditions for mentoring activities to succeed. School heads influence the implementation of mentoring by providing adequate time, resources, professional learning opportunities, monitoring mechanisms, and recognition for mentoring efforts. Effective school leadership helps establish a culture where collaboration, peer learning, and continuous improvement are valued. According to Sacote-Labadan and Tantiado (2025), professional development initiatives become more effective when schools provide organizational structures that encourage teacher participation, collaboration, and application of new knowledge. Thus, school heads' support serves as an important contextual factor that may be associated with the extent to which mentoring practices contribute to teacher development.

Evidence from Asian educational contexts, including ASEAN member states, further demonstrates the importance of school leadership and collaborative structures in supporting teachers' professional learning. In a comparative study involving Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, Kim and Lee (2020) found that the influence of principals' instructional leadership on teachers' participation in professional development varied across different learning activities. Their findings suggest that instructional leadership can encourage teachers' engagement in collaborative professional development activities, including mentoring, peer observation, and instructional coaching. Similarly, a Malaysian study involving 612 teachers found that professional values, shared planning, and transformational leadership significantly influenced the implementation of professional learning communities (Jafar et al., 2022). The study emphasized the importance of school culture and leadership in promoting teachers' professional development through collaboration and continuous professional learning. Taken together, the evidence from Singapore and Malaysia reinforces the view that mentoring and teacher professional development are closely connected with the organizational conditions established by school leaders. However, limited context-specific evidence from Philippine schools examines the interrelationships among Master Teachers' mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development.

Despite the recognized importance of mentoring and leadership support, existing research has often examined these factors separately. Many studies have focused on the effectiveness of mentoring programs or instructional coaching, while others have examined school leadership practices and their relationship with teacher outcomes. However, limited empirical evidence explores the combined relationship between mentoring practices, school heads' support, and

teachers' professional development within a single school context. Furthermore, differences in perceptions may exist between Master Teachers, who directly participate in the implementation of mentoring, and Teachers, who experience mentoring support as recipients. Understanding these perspectives is important in determining how mentoring systems are experienced and supported within schools.

In the Philippine educational context, strengthening teacher professional development remains a continuing priority as schools seek to improve instructional quality and respond to evolving educational demands. While policies emphasize collaboration, mentoring, and school-based professional learning, there remains a need to examine how mentoring practices and school leadership support are associated with teachers' professional growth at the local level. Specifically, limited studies have examined the relationship between the mentoring practices implemented by Master Teachers, the support provided by school heads, and the professional development outcomes perceived by teachers.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development. Specifically, it seeks to determine the level of implementation of mentoring practices, assess the level of school heads' support for mentoring, identify the level of teachers' professional development, examine differences in perceptions of Master Teachers and Teachers regarding school heads' support, and determine the relationship among these variables. The findings of this study may provide valuable insights for strengthening school-based mentoring systems, enhancing leadership support mechanisms, and designing professional development initiatives that better respond to teachers' needs.

FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Transformative Learning Theory, which explains how individuals develop new understandings, perspectives, and professional practices through critical reflection, meaningful dialogue, and continuous learning experiences (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning emphasizes that individuals are not passive recipients of knowledge; rather, they actively examine their experiences, reflect on existing assumptions, and construct new ways of understanding that guide their actions and professional decisions (Wang et al., 2021). Within educational settings, this theory highlights reflective practice, collaboration, and dialogue as essential processes in developing professional competence and improving professional practice.

In this study, Transformative Learning Theory provides a foundation for

understanding how mentoring practices contribute to teachers' professional development. According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning occurs when individuals critically reflect on their experiences, engage in meaningful dialogue, and develop new perspectives that influence their future actions. Mentoring practices, such as coaching, classroom observation, feedback provision, collaborative planning, and reflective discussions, provide opportunities for teachers to examine their instructional practices, acquire new knowledge, and develop improved approaches to teaching (Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2024). Through continuous interaction with experienced mentors, teachers engage in professional reflection and collaborative learning that may strengthen their instructional competence, professional knowledge, and commitment to lifelong learning (Hamid & Zahrin, 2025). Thus, mentoring is viewed not merely as the transfer of skills from experienced teachers to less experienced colleagues, but as a collaborative process in which both mentors and mentees participate in professional growth.

Transformative Learning Theory also recognizes that meaningful professional development occurs within supportive organizational environments. In schools, teachers' opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and continuous improvement are influenced by the conditions established by educational leaders. Within this perspective, school heads' support represents the organizational condition that enables transformative learning experiences by ensuring that teachers have access to mentoring opportunities, adequate resources, sufficient time, and collaborative professional spaces. Through recognition, monitoring, encouragement, and the provision of professional learning opportunities, school heads help create an environment in which mentoring practices can be effectively implemented and sustained (Esguerra & Quinito, 2025). Their support may also encourage teachers to participate actively in reflective dialogue, collaborative learning, and other professional development activities that contribute to changes in their knowledge, perspectives, and teaching practices.

Therefore, Transformative Learning Theory provides a theoretical basis for examining the relationship among mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development. The theory suggests that teacher growth occurs through the continuous interaction of individual reflection, collaborative learning experiences, and supportive organizational structures. Guided by this perspective, the present study examines how mentoring practices and school heads' support are associated with teachers' professional development within the school setting.

This study is anchored on the premise that teachers' professional development is a continuous process influenced by learning opportunities, organizational

support, and collaborative professional practices. The framework is guided by Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the *Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*, which provides the legal foundation for improving the quality of basic education through curriculum reform, teacher preparation, and continuous capacity-building initiatives. The law recognizes the importance of strengthening teacher competence through appropriate training and professional development programs to ensure the effective delivery of the K–12 Basic Education Program (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013). Supporting this legal foundation is the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasizes that teachers must engage in continuous professional learning and development to enhance their knowledge, skills, and professional practices. The PPST highlights the importance of reflective practice, collaboration, and participation in professional development activities as essential components of teacher growth (Department of Education, 2017).

This study is further guided by Transformative Learning Theory, which explains how individuals develop new understandings, perspectives, and professional practices through critical reflection, meaningful dialogue, and continuous learning experiences (Mezirow, 1991). The theory emphasizes that individuals are not passive recipients of knowledge; rather, they actively examine their experiences, reflect on existing assumptions, and construct new ways of understanding that influence their actions and professional decisions (Mezirow, 2000). In the context of teaching, mentoring provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their instructional practices critically, engage in professional dialogue, and develop improved approaches to teaching.

In this framework, mentoring practices serve as an important mechanism for supporting teachers' professional development. Mentoring is viewed not merely as the transmission of knowledge and skills from experienced teachers to less experienced colleagues, but as a collaborative professional learning process where both mentors and mentees participate in continuous growth. Through practices such as coaching, classroom observation, demonstration teaching, feedback provision, collaborative planning, and reflective discussions, mentoring creates opportunities for teachers to strengthen instructional competence, expand professional knowledge, and improve teaching practices (Hobson et al., 2009).

Furthermore, school heads' support is recognized as an essential organizational condition that influences the effectiveness and sustainability of mentoring practices. School leaders play a significant role in creating an environment that encourages professional learning by providing administrative and instructional support, allocating time and resources for mentoring activities, monitoring implementation, recognizing teachers' efforts, and promoting a culture of

collaboration and continuous improvement (Hallinger, 2011). Without adequate leadership support, mentoring initiatives may encounter challenges in implementation and sustainability.

From this perspective, the study examines the relationships among three major constructs: mentoring practices, school heads’ support, and teachers’ professional development. Mentoring practices and school heads’ support serve as the independent variables, with teachers’ professional development as the dependent variable. The framework does not assume direct causation but recognizes that these variables are interconnected and may be associated with differences in teachers’ professional growth. Specifically, the study posits that effective mentoring practices provide teachers with meaningful opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and skill enhancement. In contrast, supportive school leadership provides the organizational conditions necessary for their successful implementation. Together, these factors contribute to improved teacher competence, professional knowledge, instructional effectiveness, and commitment to lifelong professional learning.

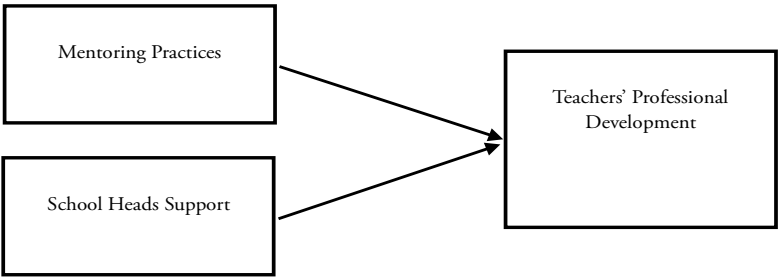


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram showing the interplay of the variables

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to: (1) Determine the level of implementation of mentoring practices as perceived by teachers, (2) Determine the level of school heads’ support for mentoring practices as perceived by Master Teachers and Teachers, (3) Determine the level of teachers’ professional development, (4) Examine the significant difference in the perceptions of Master Teachers and Teachers regarding school heads’ support in the mentoring process, and (5) Examine the significant relationship of mentoring practices and school heads’ support with teachers’ professional development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to determine the extent of mentoring practices, the level of school heads' support, and the level of teachers' professional development. It also examined the relationships among these variables. This design was appropriate because it described the variables as they naturally occurred and identified associations without manipulating the research conditions or establishing causation (Curtis et al., 2016).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in public elementary schools across the six congressional districts of Quezon City, Philippines. The locale provided an appropriate setting for examining mentoring practices, leadership support, and school-based professional development among Master Teachers and Teachers.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 227 respondents, comprising 130 Master Teachers and 97 Teachers from public elementary schools in Quezon City. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure adequate representation from each congressional district. The respondents were grouped by district and selected in proportion to each stratum's size. This procedure accounted for differences in the distribution of Master Teachers and Teachers across the six districts and enhanced the representativeness of the sample. Of the 227 respondents, 130 Master Teachers completed the section on school heads' support, while 97 Teachers completed the sections on mentoring practices and school heads' support, as well as professional development.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire composed of three parts. Part I was answered by Teachers and measured their perceptions of the mentoring practices implemented by Master Teachers. The indicators were adapted from Reeves (2004), Mentoring (2004), and Zepeda (2016). This section obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .82$, indicating good internal consistency. *The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .41 to .68.* All items exceeded the minimum acceptable criterion of .30, indicating that each item was adequately associated with the overall mentoring practices scale. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha for the deleted-item values ranged from .79 to .82,

indicating that removing any item would not substantially improve the reliability of the section. Thus, all items were retained. Part II was answered by both Master Teachers and Teachers, and assessed their perceptions of school heads' support for the mentoring process. The indicators were based on the Measurement Guidance Toolkit of the National Mentoring Resource Center (2024), Naka (2024), De La Rosa (2022), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), and Kane et al. (2011). This section yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .88$, indicating good internal consistency. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .46 to .74, demonstrating that the items were moderately to strongly associated with the overall school heads' support scale. The Cronbach's alpha if item deleted values ranged from .85 to .88. Since none of these values exceeded the overall reliability coefficient, all items were considered to contribute meaningfully to the scale and were retained.

Part III was answered by Teachers and measured their level of professional development across instructional competence, professional knowledge, collaboration, reflective practice, classroom management, and professional confidence. This section obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .84$, also indicating good internal consistency. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .39 to .70, indicating relationships ranging from acceptable to strong between the individual items and the overall professional development scale. The Cronbach's alpha if item deleted values ranged from .81 to .84, suggesting that removing any item would not meaningfully improve the section's internal consistency. Therefore, all items were retained in the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert-type scale. Responses for mentoring practices and school heads' support ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while responses for teachers' professional development ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The instrument underwent content validation by experts in education, mentoring, school leadership, and research. The validators evaluated the items for relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study variables. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire before its administration. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients and corrected item-total correlation results provided evidence of the instrument's acceptable internal consistency. The item-analysis results further indicated that all questionnaire items adequately contributed to the measurement of their respective constructs.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, permission was obtained from the appropriate

educational authorities and participating schools. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality safeguards before providing informed consent. The questionnaires were distributed according to the sampling allocation for each congressional district. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis. No personally identifying information was included in the analysis or reporting of the findings.

Data Analysis

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores were used to determine the extent of mentoring practices, the level of school heads' support, and the level of teachers' professional development. An independent-samples *t*-test was used to determine whether Master Teachers and Teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of school heads' support. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between mentoring practices and teachers' professional development and between school heads' support and teachers' professional development. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. An independent-samples *t*-test was initially considered to determine whether Master Teachers and Teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of school heads' support. Levene's test was conducted to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Because this assumption was violated, Welch's independent-samples *t*-test was used. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships of mentoring practices and school heads' support with teachers' professional development. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Respondents provided informed consent and were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, confidentiality safeguards, and right to withdraw without penalty. Anonymity was maintained using respondent codes, while the collected data were securely stored and accessed only by authorized individuals. The findings were reported accurately and objectively, with appropriate measures taken to protect participants from psychological, social, or professional harm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Level of Implementation of Mentoring Practices as Perceived by Teachers

Indicators	Mean	I
1. Conduct one-on-one coaching sessions with mentees	3.10	MU
2. Demonstrate model lessons for observation	3.08	MU
3. Observe classes and provides feedback to mentees.	2.99	MU
4. Asist mentees in lesson planning and instructional design	3.07	MU
5. Facilitate peer observation among teachers	3.00	MU
6. Organize or lead Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions	2.76	MU
7. Help mentees develop instructional materials and teaching aids	3.00	MU
8. Provide emotional and moral support to struggling teachers	3.07	MU
9. Guide mentees in classroom management techniques	3.16	MU
10. Give constructive, timely, and specific feedback after class observations	2.95	MU
11. Encourage reflective practice through journals or post-conference discussions	3.05	MU
12. Support mentees in using technology for teaching and learning	2.97	MU
13. Foster collaborative teaching or team-teaching opportunities	3.02	MU
14. Encourage mentees to set professional growth goals and monitors their progress	2.86	MU
15. Help mentees understand and implement curriculum standards effectively	2.94	MU
Overall Weighted Mean	3.00	MU

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very Highly Used (VHU); 3.41 – 4.20 Highly Used (HU); 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Used (MU); 1.81 – 2.60 Slightly Used (SU); 1.00 – 1.80 Not Used (NU)

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the implementation of mentoring practices by Master Teachers, as perceived by teachers, was moderately used with an overall weighted mean of 3.00. All fifteen mentoring indicators obtained mean ratings within the moderately used category, ranging from 2.76 to 3.16. Among the mentoring practices, guiding mentees in classroom management techniques obtained the highest rating ($M = 3.16$), followed by conducting one-on-one coaching sessions ($M = 3.10$), demonstrating model lessons for observation ($M = 3.08$), assisting mentees in lesson planning and instructional design ($M = 3.07$), and providing emotional and moral support to struggling

teachers ($M = 3.07$). Meanwhile, the lowest-rated practices were organizing or leading Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions ($M = 2.76$), encouraging mentees to set professional growth goals and monitoring progress ($M = 2.86$), and helping mentees understand and implement curriculum standards effectively ($M = 2.94$). These results suggest that teachers recognize the presence of mentoring practices in schools, particularly those involving direct coaching, instructional assistance, and interpersonal support.

The moderate level of implementation indicates that mentoring practices are present in schools, but some require stronger structure and more consistent, structured professional learning systems. The higher ratings for one-on-one coaching, classroom management guidance, and instructional assistance suggest that teachers experience mentoring primarily through direct, practical support that addresses immediate classroom needs. This finding supports Zaccarelli et al. (2026), who emphasized that effective teacher coaching is characterized by individualized interaction, instructional feedback, and opportunities for teachers to improve classroom practices through continuous guidance. Furthermore, mentoring serves not only as technical assistance but also as a mechanism for professional reflection and collaborative learning, as Quayson (2022) highlighted that mentoring relationships promote continuous improvement through professional dialogue and reflective engagement. However, the relatively low ratings for activities that require systematic implementation, such as facilitating Learning Action Cell sessions and monitoring professional growth goals, suggest that mentoring structures still need stronger organizational mechanisms. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2020) noted that effective teacher professional development depends on sustained support, collaboration, active participation, and follow-up processes that allow teachers to apply and refine their learning over time. Therefore, strengthening formal mentoring structures, allocating dedicated mentoring time, and integrating mentoring activities into school-based professional development programs may enhance the consistency and effectiveness of mentoring implementation.

The results presented in Table 2 on the next page reveal differences in the perceived level of school heads' support for the mentoring process between Master Teachers and Teachers. Master Teachers rated school heads' support as moderate with an overall weighted mean of 2.97, while Teachers rated the same support as high with an overall weighted mean of 4.01. Among Master Teachers, the highest-rated indicators were school heads' facilitation of capacity-building seminars or training to enhance mentoring skills ($M = 3.08$), regular monitoring and evaluation of mentoring activities ($M = 3.03$), and recognition and appreciation of mentoring efforts ($M = 3.01$). Meanwhile, the lowest-

rated indicators among Master Teachers included providing feedback based on classroom observations or mentoring reports ($M = 2.88$) and encouraging collaboration between Master Teachers and faculty members ($M = 2.90$). In comparison, Teachers gave high ratings across all indicators, with the highest ratings observed in providing necessary resources for mentoring sessions ($M = 4.13$), recognizing and appreciating mentoring efforts ($M = 4.13$), and ensuring a manageable teaching load to allow mentors time for coaching ($M = 4.09$). The overall findings indicate that while both groups acknowledge the presence of school heads' support, their perceptions differ in the extent and consistency of that support during the mentoring process.

Table 2
Level of School Heads' Support for the Mentoring Process as Perceived by Master Teachers and Teachers

The school head	Master Teachers		Teachers	
	Mean	I	Mean	I
1. allocates sufficient time for mentoring activities during the school year.	2.92	M	4.00	H
2. provides necessary resources (materials, venues, schedules) to support mentoring sessions.	2.98	M	4.13	H
3. encourages collaboration between master teachers and other faculty members.	2.90	M	4.05	H
4. recognizes and appreciates the mentoring efforts of master teachers.	3.01	M	4.13	H
5. includes mentoring in the school's professional	2.99	M	3.94	H
6. development plans.				
7. monitors and evaluates the implementation of mentoring activities regularly.	3.03	M	4.00	H
8. provides feedback to mentors and mentees based on classroom observations or mentoring reports.	2.88	M	4.02	H
9. creates a school culture that values professional growth and peer support.	2.91	M	3.97	H
10. facilitates capacity-building seminars or training to enhance mentoring skills.	3.08	M	3.98	H

11. communicates clear goals and expectations regarding the mentoring process.	2.97	M	3.94	H
12. provides moral and emotional support to both mentors and mentees.	2.95	M	3.97	H
13. ensures a manageable teaching load to allow mentors time for coaching.	2.99	M	4.09	H
14. participates in reviewing and approving mentoring plans actively.	2.99	M	4.04	H
15. provides opportunities for mentees to reflect and share their learning experiences.	2.96	M	3.92	H
16. promotes a system of accountability to ensure mentoring effectiveness and teacher improvement.	2.91	M	3.93	H
Overall Weighted Mean	2.97	M	4.01	H

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very High (VH); 3.41 – 4.20 High (H); 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate (M); 1.81 – 2.60 Low (L); 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low (VL)

The contrasting perceptions between Master Teachers and Teachers suggest that the experience and level of involvement in mentoring activities may influence how school heads' support is evaluated. Because Master Teachers are more closely involved in planning, implementing, and sustaining mentoring activities, they may have greater awareness of structural challenges such as limited time allocation, workload demands, and the need for more systematic monitoring mechanisms. In contrast, Teachers may primarily experience school heads' support through visible actions such as resource provision, encouragement, and recognition, leading to more favorable perceptions. This finding is consistent with Ermita and Baysa (2025), who emphasized that school heads play an essential role in creating supportive professional environments by strengthening communication, collaboration, and teacher development initiatives. Similarly, research on mentoring and professional learning highlights that successful mentoring programs require leadership support, including adequate scheduling, resources, and institutional structures that enable mentors to perform their roles effectively (Hryshchenko et al., 2025). Furthermore, effective teacher professional development is strengthened when school leaders establish conditions that encourage collaboration, reflection, and sustained professional growth, rather than relying solely on individual mentoring (Njouny, 2026). Therefore, strengthening school heads' support through protected mentoring

time, systematic monitoring, clearer communication of expectations, and continuous capacity-building opportunities may help create a more consistent and sustainable mentoring system.

Table 3
Level of Teachers’ Professional Development in Relation to Mentoring and School Leadership Support

Indicators	Mean	I
1. I have improved my instructional planning and lesson delivery due to mentoring support.	3.92	H
2. I apply more effective teaching strategies in the classroom as a result of guidance from my mentor.	4.13	H
3. I have increased my confidence in managing classroom behavior and student engagement.	4.15	H
4. I receive constructive feedback that helps me reflect and grow professionally.	3.88	H
5. I am more capable of using differentiated instruction to address diverse learners’ needs.	3.89	H
6. I can now better align my teaching practices with curriculum standards and learning competencies.	4.04	H
7. I have developed a habit of self-reflection and continuous learning.	4.02	H
8. I am more involved in collaborative planning and peer learning sessions.	3.94	H
9. I feel supported by school leadership in pursuing professional development opportunities.	3.94	H
10. I have become more adaptable in using innovative teaching tools and strategies.	3.99	H
11. I participate more actively in school-based in-service trainings and learning action cells (LACs).	4.01	H
12. I have improved my ability to assess and monitor student learning outcomes.	3.98	H
13. I am more motivated and satisfied in my teaching profession.	4.05	H
14. I have built stronger professional relationships with my mentor and colleagues.	3.92	H
15. I am more prepared to take on leadership roles or mentor other teachers in the future.	3.94	H
Overall Weighted Mean	3.99	H

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very High (VH); 3.41 – 4.20 High (H); 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate (M); 1.81 – 2.60 Low (L); 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low (VL)

Table 3 on the next page shows that teachers demonstrated a high level of professional development, with an overall weighted mean of 3.99. All indicators received ratings in the high category, suggesting that teachers perceive themselves as having developed important professional competencies in instructional practice, reflective learning, collaboration, and professional growth. Among the indicators, increased confidence in managing classroom behavior and student engagement obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.15$), followed by applying more effective teaching strategies in the classroom ($M = 4.13$), aligning teaching practices with curriculum standards and learning competencies ($M = 4.04$), and developing habits of self-reflection and continuous learning ($M = 4.02$). Teachers also reported high levels of professional growth through active participation in school-based training and Learning Action Cells (LACs), improving assessment practices, strengthening professional relationships with mentors and colleagues, and becoming better prepared to assume leadership or mentoring roles in the future. These findings indicate that teachers perceive mentoring experiences and school leadership support as important components within their professional development environment.

The high level of teachers' professional development suggests that mentoring and supportive school leadership structures are associated with stronger instructional competence, reflective practice, collaboration, and professional confidence among teachers. The higher ratings in classroom management, instructional strategies, and reflective practice highlight the importance of continuous guidance, feedback, and professional dialogue in strengthening teachers' capacity to improve their classroom practices. This finding is consistent with Smith and Desimone (2025), who emphasized that effective teacher coaching supports instructional improvement through individualized guidance, observation, and feedback. Similarly, Njouny (2026) explained that mentoring contributes to professional learning by promoting reflection, collaboration, and continuous improvement among teachers. Furthermore, Hussain et al. (2025) noted that effective professional development is sustained when teachers are provided with opportunities for active learning, collaboration, and application of new practices within their instructional contexts. The findings also support the role of school leadership in creating conditions that encourage teacher growth, as school leaders influence professional learning through resource provision, encouragement, and the establishment of collaborative cultures (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Therefore, strengthening mentoring systems, ensuring consistent leadership support, and providing structured opportunities for professional learning may further support teachers' continuing professional development.

Table 4
Significant Difference in the Perceptions of Master Teachers and Teachers Regarding School Heads' Support for Mentoring Practices

Groups	N	Mean	Levene's F	Levene's Sig.	Welch's t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Master Teachers	130	2.87	18.47	< .001	-23.39	224.84	< .001
Teachers	97	4.13	—	—	—	—	—

Table 4 presents the difference between Master Teachers' and Teachers' perceptions of school heads' support for mentoring practices. Master Teachers obtained a mean rating of 2.87, interpreted as moderate, whereas Teachers obtained a higher mean rating of 4.13, interpreted as high. Levene's test was statistically significant, $F = 18.47$, $p < .001$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. Therefore, Welch's independent-samples t-test was used. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups' perceptions, $t(224.84) = -23.39$, $p < .001$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings indicate that Master Teachers and Teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of the support provided by school heads during the mentoring process. The difference may be related to their distinct roles and levels of involvement in mentoring activities. Master Teachers are directly involved in planning, coordinating, and facilitating mentoring activities and may therefore be more aware of concerns regarding time allocation, workload, monitoring mechanisms, resources, and administrative assistance. In contrast, Teachers may perceive school heads' support through more visible forms of assistance, including recognition, encouragement, resource provision, and access to professional learning opportunities. The result supports Liu et al. (2023), who emphasized that effective professional learning requires supportive organizational conditions, leadership commitment, collaboration, and adequate structures for teacher growth. Culajara and Culajara (2024) similarly noted that coaching and mentoring initiatives are more sustainable when schools provide sufficient time, institutional resources, and feedback mechanisms. Njouny (2026) further explained that mentoring is strengthened when school leaders establish environments that encourage professional dialogue and continuous improvement. The significant difference in perceptions highlights the need for stronger alignment among School Heads, Master Teachers, and Teachers regarding mentoring structures, responsibilities, communication, resource provision, and administrative support.

Table 5
Relationship Between Mentoring Practices, School Heads’ Support, and Teachers’ Professional Development

Variables	Teacher Professional Development	
	<i>r</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Mentoring Practices	.214	.001
School Heads’ Support	.386	.000

Note. *p* < .05.

Table 5 reveals the significant relationships between mentoring practices, school heads’ support for the mentoring process, and teachers’ professional development. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis showed that mentoring practices had a weak positive and statistically significant relationship with teachers’ professional development (*r* = .214, *p* = .001). This indicates that increased implementation of mentoring practices by Master Teachers is associated with higher levels of teachers’ professional development. Meanwhile, school heads’ support demonstrated a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship with teachers’ professional development (*r* = .386, *p* < .001), suggesting that stronger administrative support for mentoring activities is associated with higher levels of teacher professional growth. These findings indicate that both mentoring practices and leadership support are related to teachers’ professional development, although school heads’ support shows a stronger relationship than mentoring practices.

The findings suggest that teacher professional development is associated not only with the mentoring practices of Master Teachers but also with the broader organizational support provided by school leaders. The weak positive relationship between mentoring practices and teacher professional development indicates that coaching, instructional guidance, feedback, and collaborative mentoring activities contribute to teacher growth; however, mentoring practices alone may not fully explain variations in professional development because institutional conditions, motivation, resources, and opportunities for continuous learning also influence teacher growth. This supports Zaccarelli et al. (2026), who emphasized that effective coaching contributes to instructional improvement when it involves targeted feedback, sustained interaction, and opportunities for teachers to apply new practices. Similarly, Zamudio (2026) highlighted that mentoring promotes professional learning through reflective dialogue and collaborative improvement. The stronger relationship between school heads’ support and teacher professional development further emphasizes the importance of leadership conditions in sustaining teacher learning. Kionisala and Mongas (2026) explained that effective

professional development requires supportive environments where teachers have access to collaboration, resources, and opportunities for active engagement. Likewise, Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2020) emphasized that professional learning becomes more effective when supported by organizational structures that encourage continuous participation and application of knowledge. Therefore, strengthening both mentoring practices and school leadership support may provide a more comprehensive foundation for sustained teacher professional development.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings presented in Tables 1 to 5 should be interpreted in light of several methodological limitations. First, the study relied on self-reported data, which may have been affected by recall bias, social desirability bias, differences in respondents' interpretations of the questionnaire items, and varying exposure to mentoring and leadership practices. Consequently, the reported levels of mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development reflect respondents' perceptions rather than objectively verified practices or outcomes. The use of self-report measures for the major variables may also have introduced common method bias, which could have affected the strength of the relationships reported in Table 5.

Second, the significant difference between Master Teachers and Teachers in Table 4 may have been influenced by their distinct roles, responsibilities, and levels of involvement in the mentoring process. Third, because the study employed a cross-sectional design, data were collected at only one point in time. Therefore, the findings cannot determine changes in the variables over time or establish causal relationships among mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development. The use of overall mean scores may also have concealed variations across schools and individual mentoring experiences. Finally, the absence of observational, interview, and documentary data limited the triangulation of the findings, while the specific sample and research setting restricted their generalizability to other educational contexts. Thus, the results should be understood as context-specific perceptions and associations rather than definitive evidence of actual implementation or causation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development are interconnected components of school-

based professional learning. Mentoring practices implemented by Master Teachers were moderately implemented, indicating that activities such as coaching, classroom observation, instructional assistance, feedback, and professional support are present but not consistently structured. Direct instructional and interpersonal support were more evident, while professional growth monitoring, Learning Action Cell facilitation, and systematic mentoring processes were less established.

School heads' support was perceived differently by Master Teachers and Teachers. Teachers rated the support as high, while Master Teachers rated it as moderate, resulting in a significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that perceptions of leadership support vary according to stakeholders' roles and involvement in mentoring. Master Teachers, who are more directly responsible for implementing mentoring activities, may be more aware of limitations related to time, resources, monitoring, and administrative support. Teachers demonstrated a high level of professional development in instructional competence, professional knowledge, collaboration, and reflective practice. The findings indicate improvements in instructional skills, classroom management, professional confidence, collaborative learning, and reflective practice.

The study also found that mentoring practices and school heads' support were significantly related to teachers' professional development. While mentoring contributes to professional growth, the stronger relationship between school heads' support and professional development highlights the importance of leadership, resources, recognition, and organizational conditions in sustaining teacher learning. Overall, the findings emphasize that mentoring should be viewed as a collaborative professional learning system supported by instructional leadership and shared responsibility among Master Teachers, Teachers, and School Heads.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings provide empirical evidence that mentoring practices and school heads' support are interconnected components of school-based professional learning. Although mentoring is already present in schools, its limited implementation suggests it operates primarily through direct instructional assistance and interpersonal support rather than through fully structured professional learning systems. This evidence may be translated into school-based models that integrate mentoring practices and leadership support as complementary components of teacher development.

The study's translation pathway may be expressed as Research Evidence → School Practice → Professional Learning System. Evidence on mentoring

implementation, school heads' support, stakeholder perceptions, and teachers' professional development can inform school practices centered on coaching, classroom observation, feedback, reflection, collaboration, and professional goal-setting. With adequate leadership structures and organizational support, these practices can form part of a continuous professional learning system.

The significant difference between Master Teachers' and Teachers' perceptions of school heads' support also indicates that leadership support is experienced differently depending on stakeholders' roles and involvement. This finding may be translated into greater alignment among School Heads, Master Teachers, and Teachers regarding mentoring responsibilities, available support, resource provision, monitoring, recognition, and time allocation. Moreover, the significant relationships among mentoring practices, school heads' support, and teachers' professional development indicate that teacher growth results from the interaction between instructional guidance and supportive organizational conditions. Mentoring provides the interpersonal and instructional dimension of professional learning, while school heads' support provides the structure needed to sustain it.

At the institutional, policy, and program levels, the findings may serve as a basis for developing data-informed mentoring frameworks that include structured activities, reflective processes, leadership engagement, collaboration, and mechanisms for monitoring professional growth. Specific translational outputs may include a school-based mentoring manual that outlines the roles of School Heads, Master Teachers, and Teachers; standardized procedures for coaching, classroom observation, feedback conferences, collaborative planning, and professional goal-setting; and sample mentoring schedules, forms, and documentation templates. A policy brief may also be prepared for school and division administrators to present the major findings and recommend protected mentoring time, manageable teaching loads, adequate resource allocation, mentor recognition, regular monitoring, and the integration of mentoring into school professional development plans.

The findings may further guide the development of training modules for School Heads and Master Teachers. Modules for School Heads may focus on instructional leadership, mentoring program management, resource provision, monitoring, feedback, and the creation of a supportive professional learning culture. Modules for Master Teachers may cover coaching techniques, demonstration teaching, classroom observation, constructive feedback, reflective dialogue, collaborative planning, and the monitoring of mentees' professional growth. A mentoring, monitoring, and evaluation toolkit may also be developed, containing needs-assessment instruments, mentoring logs, observation forms,

professional growth plans, progress-monitoring checklists, and evaluation surveys. These outputs may be pilot-tested and refined based on feedback from School Heads, Master Teachers, and Teachers before broader implementation.

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