

**Teacher Mentoring Relationships in One School in South Kazakhstan: Experiences,
Benefits and Challenges**

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Abstract

**Teacher Mentoring Relationships in One Schools in South Kazakhstan: Experiences,
Benefits and Challenges.**

Teachers in Kazakhstan, both novice and experienced, develop some of their skills by attending different professional development courses, both at their schools and outside of it as well. One of those courses that a school can offer is regarded as ‘mentoring,’ when a recently employed teacher works in cooperation with a more experienced teacher to provide a smooth induction into the profession. In this study, the question under discussion is the relationship that can occur between a mentor and a mentee. Even though mentoring is effective in teachers’ retention and advancement of professional skills, not all schools organize mentoring programs for novice teachers. Additionally, there is little information available on how mentoring is organized in those schools, how teachers establish their relationship with mentor teachers, and what benefits and challenges they experience during mentoring. The purpose of this study is to examine novice teachers’ experiences during mentoring and identify effective components of mentoring relationships in the Kazakhstani context. The research questions that will lead this study are: RQ1: How do novice teacher mentees and more experienced teachers build their mentoring relationships in one secondary school in Kazakhstan? SQ1: What are the key components of an effective mentoring relationship in the opinion of novice teacher mentees? SQ2: What benefits and challenges do mentees experience during their mentoring relationships with more experienced mentors? A qualitative case study approach was implemented where eight novice teachers participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. In general, the results of this study suggest that novice teachers tend to view mentoring as a way of professional development that has provided a smooth induction into a new work environment. The finding also reveals nine components of mentoring relationships that have been successfully built during mentoring, promoting a positive experience for novice teachers. Moreover, the results show some benefits of mentoring as timely feedback and individual meetings, along with some

challenges like time constraints and additional stress. This study contributes to mentors' understanding of how mentoring relationships should be built, taking into account mentees' preferences and needs. The findings of the study are especially relevant to teachers, who consider entering mentoring programs to assess and adapt their behavior according to the description of key components. It also has the potential to support the school administration in preparing a school policy on mentoring and the Kazakhstani policymakers in designing mentoring programs in the country.

Абстракт

Оңтүстік Қазақстан мектептерінің біріндегі мұғалімдердің тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынас құрудағы тәжірибесі, артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктері.

Қазақстандағы мектеп ұстаздары, жұмыс жолын жаңа бастап жатқан жас мамандар мен тәжірибелі мұғалімдер өз біліктілігін дамыту мақсатында мектепшілік немесе одан да тыс жерлерде әр түрлі курстарға қатысады. Мектеп ұсына алатын біліктілікті арттыру курстарының бірі - «тәлімгерлік» деп қарастырылады, яғни, жұмыс жолын мектепте енді бастаған жас ұстаздар, мұғалім кәсібіне сіңіп кету үшін тәжірибелі мұғаліммен бірлесіп жұмыс жасайды. Тәлімгерлік үдерісі кезінде тәлімгер мен тәлімалушы арасында тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынас орнайды, ал бұл зерттеу осы тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынасты зерттеуге бағытталды. Тәлімгерлік үдерісі жаңа ұстаздарды осы мамандықта сақтап қалуға және кәсіби шеберліктерін жоғарылатуға тиімді болғанымен, барлық мектептер жаңадан келген мұғалімдер үшін тәлімгерлік бағдарламаларын ұйымдастырмайды, бұл мұғалімдердің қиналып, өз мамандықтарынан бас тартуына әкеледі. Сонымен қатар, сол мектептерде тәлімгерліктің қалай ұйымдастырылғандығы, тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынас қалай орнайтыны және тәлімгерлік үдерісі барысында жас ұстаздар қандай артықшылықтар мен қиындықтардан өтетіні жайлы мәлімет аз. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – жас мұғалімдердің тәлімгерлік тәжірибесін зерделеу және қазақстандық контексттегі тәлімгерлік қатынастардың тиімді компоненттерін анықтау. Осы зерттеуді жүргізетін зерттеу сұрақтары: С1: Оңтүстік Қазақстан мектептерінің біріндегі жаңадан келген мұғалімдері мен тәжірибелі ұстаздары тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынастарын қалай қалыптастырады? С1: Жаңадан келген мұғалімдердің пікірі бойынша тиімді тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынастың негізгі компоненттері қандай? С2: Тәжірибелі тәлімгерлермен тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынас кезінде тәлімалушылар қандай артықшылықтар мен қиындықтарға тап болады? Сапалық зерттеудің кейс-стади әдісі жүзеге асырылып, мектепке жаңадан орналасқан сегіз мұғалім сұхбатқа қатысты. Жалпы алғанда, осы

зерттеу нәтижелері жаңадан келген мұғалімдерді жаңа жұмыс жағдайына бейімделуді қамтамасыз ететін және кәсіби дамудың тәсілі ретінде қарастыратындығын көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, алынған нәтижелер тәлімгерлік үдерісі кезінде орнаған тәлімгерлік қарым-қатынастың тоғыз компонентін көрсетеді. Одан бөлек, алынған нәтижелер уақытылы кері байланыс және жеке кездесулер сияқты тәлімгерліктің бірқатар артықшылықтарымен қатар уақыт шектеулері мен қосымша стресс сияқты бірқатар қиындықтарды көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеу тәлімалушының қалауы мен қажеттіліктерін ескере отырып, тәлімгерлік қатынастарды қалай құруға болатындығы туралы түсінуге ықпал етеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері мұғалімдерге қатысты, олар негізгі компоненттердің сипаттамаларына сәйкес мінез-құлқына баға беру және бейімдеу үшін тәлімгерлік бағдарламаларын енгізуді қарастырады. Сондай-ақ, бұл мектеп әкімшілігіне тәлімгерлік бойынша мектеп жадынамасын дайындауға және қазақстандық саясаткерлерге елдегі тәлімгерлік бағдарламаларын іске асыруды қолдау көрсету үшін көмектеседі.

Абстракт

Наставнические отношения учителей в одной школе в Южном Казахстане: опыт, преимущества и недостатки.

Учителя в Казахстане, как начинающие, так и опытные, развивают свои профессиональные навыки, посещая различные курсы, как в своих школах, так и за ее пределами. Один из тех курсов повышения квалификации, которые школа может предложить, является «наставничество», когда недавно нанятый учитель работает в сотрудничестве с более опытным учителем, чтобы обеспечить плавное введение в деятельность. В этом исследовании обсуждается вопрос о взаимоотношениях между наставником и подопечным. Несмотря на то, что наставничество эффективно для удержания учителей в профессии и повышения профессиональных навыков, не все школы организуют программы наставничества для начинающих учителей, в результате чего учителя уходят из профессии. Кроме того, имеется мало информации о том, как наставничество организовано в этих школах, как учителя устанавливают свои отношения с наставниками и какие преимущества, проблемы они испытывают во время наставничества. Цель данного исследования - изучить опыт начинающих учителей в этом процессе и определить эффективные компоненты наставнических отношений в Казахском контексте. Исследование руководствуется данными вопросами исследования, ГВ1: Как начинающие учителя-подопечные и более опытные учителя строят свои наставнические отношения в одной средней школе в Казахстане? В1: Каковы ключевые компоненты эффективных отношений наставничества, по мнению начинающих подопечных? В2: Какие преимущества и затруднения испытывают ученики во время наставничества с более опытными учителями? Был применен качественный подход исследования, в котором восемь начинающих учителей приняло участие в полуструктурированном интервью. В целом, результаты этого исследования показывают, что начинающие учителя склонны рассматривать наставничество как способ

профессионального развития, обеспечивающий плавное введение в новую рабочую среду.

Открытие также показывает девять компонентов отношений наставничества, которые были успешно построены во время наставничества, способствуя положительному опыту для начинающих учителей. Кроме того, результаты показывают некоторые преимущества наставничества, такие как своевременная обратная связь и индивидуальные встречи, а также некоторые проблемы, такие как временные ограничения и дополнительный стресс.

Это исследование способствует пониманию наставниками того, как должны строиться отношения наставничества, с учетом предпочтений и потребностей подопечных.

Результаты исследования особенно актуальны для учителей, которые рассматривают возможность участия в программах наставничества для оценки и адаптации своего поведения в соответствии с описанием ключевых компонентов. Это также помогает администрации школы подготовить школьную политику по наставничеству и казахстанских политиков в поддержку реализации программ наставничества в стране.

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Chapter one: Introduction

Professional development is important for novice teachers because it helps them to develop their teacher professionalism and identity and can influence teachers retention in the profession (Cook, 2012). Through constant professional development, novice teachers can also acquire effective teaching skills and get professional support that positively affects their well-being and increases motivation to work. There are many forms of professional development for novice teachers and one of those professional development forms that a school can offer is regarded as 'mentoring', when a recently employed teacher works in cooperation with a more experienced teacher (Brandau, et al., 2017). Effective mentoring relationships are crucial for the mentoring process because they can boost the efficiency of the whole process.

In this study, the question under discussion is the relationship that can occur between a mentor and a mentee. In other words, the purpose of this study is to analyze the experience of novice teacher mentees to identify which types of mentoring relationships have been practiced, as well as some benefits and challenges.

Novice teachers in one school in the South of Kazakhstan were interviewed in person on this subject matter and data was collected based on their responses. The data was then coded and analyzed to understand the factors that novice teachers believe make it difficult for mentoring to succeed. The findings were then interpreted, discussed and used to make recommendations aimed at informing mentors of the factors that may hinder their efforts to develop the skills of novice teachers. This study thus serves to provide important findings which will improve the effectiveness of mentoring in meeting the needs and requirements of novice teachers on mentoring matters.

This chapter is organized into seven sections. In the first section, I provide information on my experience as a mentee and answer the question of why mentoring is an important process that each novice teacher should undergo. The second section dwells on mentoring relationships in the context of Kazakhstan. In the third section, the statement of the problem is highlighted,

and in the fourth section the purpose of the research is outlined. In the fifth section, research questions are provided, finally finishing with the significance of the study in the sixth section.

1.1. Background

When I first started working as a teacher back in 2005, I was a novice teacher with very limited teaching experience. In my first years as a teacher, I faced many challenges, including the preparation of a thematic calendar, writing lesson plans, classroom management, and getting accustomed to the school culture. Unfortunately, this was a time when mentoring of novice teachers was not part of the induction process of secondary schools in Kazakhstan and I had to deal with these issues all on my own. The only support available to me at that time was another novice teacher who joined the school the same year as me and was also new to the system. Without her support, I would have probably left the profession.

My personal experience described above can serve as an example of how the absence of a mentor or an insider to education can negatively influence novice teachers' perceptions of the profession. Such difficulties lead many young teachers to drop out of the teaching profession in their first year of work (Hudson & Hudson, 2016). Mentoring, in this case, can be used to build a supportive climate that gives the novice teachers an opportunity to develop their personal and professional competences (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017).

Nine years later, when I started working in another school, mentoring gained momentum and was being implemented in many schools around Kazakhstan. This was not only a support targeting novice teachers, but was also a way of providing continuous professional development for teachers with many years of experience. Along with other colleagues in the teaching profession, I was assigned to a mentor colleague who had worked in the school for almost five years. Mentoring was immensely useful in the understanding of how to structure a lesson plan based on the new syllabus, learning how to select effective activities to achieve the goals and some ways of adapting authentic material into the classroom.

However, it equally proved to be a challenging endeavor occasioned by lack self-reflection, critical analysis of the lesson conducted, and understanding the weaknesses and the possible ways of overcoming them in subsequent lessons. In most cases, feedback mainly identified negative aspects of the lesson with little coverage of any positive, constructive components of the lesson. This, in most cases, worsened the situation as far as the next lessons were concerned. Even though mentoring is not teaching and it takes place mostly at the end of the school teaching hours (McKinsey, 2016, p. 2), mentors were usually unavailable leading to a disconnect in the effectiveness of the entire program.

Mentoring is indeed an efficient way of enhancing teachers' professional development (Brandau et al., 2017; Dağ & Sarı, 2017; Gholam, 2018; Suchánková & Hrbáčková, 2009), but what is more important, mentoring is important in ensuring retention of novice teachers in the profession (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Garza et al., 2019; Warsame & Valles, 2018). Furthermore, there is accumulated empirical evidence that trying to establish a positive experience in mentoring can be a frustrating experience, both for mentees and mentors (Hudson, 2013). Despite a range of studies on mentoring skills, forms, benefits, challenges and mentoring relationships in the European context, there is little information about mentoring processes in the context of Kazakhstan. Hence, there is a strong need to investigate teachers' experiences in establishing mentoring relationships as a key tool in the retention of newly qualified teachers in the profession. This study thus provides additional knowledge about mentoring experiences, preferences and challenges in building mentoring relationships in the teaching profession in Kazakhstan.

1.2. Teacher mentoring relationships in the context of Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, in addition to the curriculum delivery and the application of various teaching methods and contemporary educational technologies, teachers' are requested to constantly take part in professional development (OECD, 2014). In this regard, mentoring can be considered as one way of professional development organized within the school system. In the

course of mentoring, teachers share their knowledge and have the opportunity to adjust their professional development under the mentor's guidance as it is a less classical type of teachers' support targeted at meeting individual needs and general assistance (Manning, 2005; Suchánková & Hrbáčková, 2009).

In the Kazakhstani context, only experienced and effective teachers support novice teachers during their induction period by directing and teaching them in their role as mentors. A parallel with the European context can be drawn here when only senior teachers can become mentors as well (Dağ & Sarı, 2017). According to OECD (2014), mentor's responsibilities in Kazakhstan are limited to lesson observations, giving feedback after the lessons and making notes on progress. In many cases, a mentor is assigned by the school's administration, which adds some workload for teacher mentors. OECD (2014) mentions a three-step program, when during the first step both counterparts sit together, identify the needs of a novice teacher, plan the work and start their relationship. The second step targets the development of a novice teacher in terms of teaching methods and promotion of self-learning. The third step is about the establishment of such skills as "self- reflection and self- evaluation" (p. 174). This process is initiated by the administration of the school (p. 28). Hence, it can be speculated that mentoring is a rather continuous process that can last for a certain period of time as it is observed by the school's administration in schools where it is practiced.

Koroleva's (2017) study on mentoring in the Kazakhstani context suggests that mentoring can make a positive contribution to professional development and the smooth induction into the industry. On the other hand, divergent views on mentoring identify inconvenience of schedules and time pressure as the major drawbacks to the process (Koroleva, 2017). Moreover, there is a lack of research-based information on mentoring relationships that can give informed opinion on what both mentors and mentees experience in terms of close collaboration and communication with each other and if the nature of the relationship can influence the outcome of the whole process.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The teaching profession in Kazakhstan is experiencing some challenges, such as a lack of qualified teachers to cover the teaching demands and the absence of standardized and efficient approaches to professional development of faculty members in higher education, which contributes to a lower quality of teacher education in Kazakhstan (Seitova, 2016). This could partly explain why many new teachers opt out of the profession. A significant number of novice teachers start teaching every year, yet the available data reveal that many of them quit the profession during the first five years (Hudson & Hudson, 2016), due to “possible anxiety and burnout” (Çobanoğlu & Ayvaz-Tunçe, 2018, p. 99) and the lack of in time and appropriate support (Spooner-Lane, 2017).

The induction period of novice teachers is a crucial period of their teaching career, as it is when they get their first impression of the profession and decide whether to leave the profession or stay and continue (Çobanoğlu & Ayvaz-Tunçe, 2018).

Therefore, teacher mentoring can be capital in building a relationship that yields a productive working climate that promotes not only the retention of novice teachers in the teaching profession but also the development of their expertise (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). Nevertheless, it should be admitted that not all the schools in Kazakhstan implement a mentoring program for new teachers and, as result, novice teachers might have difficult times at school, given the demands of the profession that lead to demotivation and generally poor job performance. As Kadyrova (2017) states, the examples of the mentoring relationship in Kazakhstan appear to suggest that it is mostly happening in self-governing, private schools. However, even though most of the private schools in Kazakhstan started practicing mentoring as a part of inside professional development programs, there is little known about the process of its implementation, issues that might arise throughout the process, and how a relationship between two teachers can affect the outcome of the mentoring program.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

Mentoring in the context of education is based on human relations and relationships that occur between a novice teacher and a mentor and is important for an effective mentoring outcome (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine mentoring relationships between novice teacher mentees and more experienced mentors in the teacher education reform context of Kazakhstan. More specifically, this study aims to identify key components of effective mentoring relationships, as well as the benefits and challenges experienced by the mentees during their mentoring relationships

1.5. Main Research Question

The study is focused on identifying mentoring relationships between a mentor and mentee teachers through an inquiry into the experiences of mentees. It seeks to explore the constraints and challenges that teachers face during the process. The following research questions are thus considered for this inquiry.

Main research question:

- How do novice teacher mentees and more experienced teachers build their mentoring relationships in one secondary school in Kazakhstan?

Research sub-questions:

- 1) What are the key components of an effective mentoring relationship in the opinion of novice teacher mentees?
- 2) What benefits and challenges do mentees experience during their mentoring relationships with more experienced mentors?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The findings of the present study may be beneficial both for novice and mentor teachers as their reflections experiences can provide insight into how to organize the process in a way that promotes positive work experiences. The findings of this study also have the potential to provide senior mentors, as well as those who intend to be mentors, with relevant insights into how to build

a positive mentor-mentee relationship. School administrators interested in educating and developing a new generation of teachers can better supervise the process through a review of these findings. Regional and local education departments may develop new in-service courses based on the results of the study.

Moreover, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on teacher mentoring by providing interesting insights from a non-Western context, particularly here in Central Asia.

1.7. Summary

This chapter explained the rationale behind choosing the topic of mentoring to conduct this study. It also demonstrated how a lack of research on mentoring relationships in the Kazakhstani context has made way for this timely study, showing mentoring as a core process in the retention of novice teachers and their professional development. The chapter identified the research questions that directed this study, such as what effective mentoring relationships are established during mentoring, as well as its benefits and challenges. Finally, it explained the significance of the study in providing insights for potential mentors on building positive mentoring relationships, some suggestions for school administrators on developing teachers' mentoring skills, and providing some directions for education departments on organizing in-service courses for teachers.

In the next chapter, a critical analysis of the literature on the mentoring process is provided, taking into account key ideas, findings and some debates in the field. It also covers some challenges and benefits that can be faced during mentoring, giving this study a firm theoretical basis. Additionally, it draws attention to effective components of mentoring relationships .

Chapter two: Literature Review

In this chapter, a critical analysis of the literature on teacher mentorship and teacher mentoring relationships is provided to explore key ideas, findings, and debates in the field, give a theoretical base for my research, and highlight some gaps in the existing research literature. More specifically, this chapter provides a summary of the literature about mentor and mentees' experiences, mentorship preferences, and some challenges that can be faced during the process. Additionally, it provides a discussion on existing procedures to build positive mentoring relationships as one of the most important aspects of promoting beneficial experiences that achieve successful outcomes in the mentoring process.

The chapter is organized into six sections. In the first section, a brief discussion on the conceptualization of teacher mentoring is provided. In the second section, a discussion on the skills and attributes required to build effective, positive mentoring relationships are indicated. In the third section, benefits of undergoing mentoring programs are highlighted, and in the fourth section some challenges emerging from the mentoring process are provided. The fifth section focuses on the conceptual framework the given study is based on. Finally, in the sixth section, I provide a summary of the reviewed literature and touch upon areas that require further investigation.

2.1. What is teacher mentoring?

Mentoring has adopted several definitions in the literature (Cinkara & Arslan, 2017; Vula et al., 2015). Traditionally, mentorship has been defined as a “professional guidance relationship in which an experienced, intellectually and socially valued mentor acts as adviser for a less experienced employee and helps this ‘mentee’ develop his/her work” (Heikkinen et al., as cited in Kupila et al., 2017, p.4). However, more contemporary definitions argue that mentorship goes beyond advising, and involves other activities such as following, cooperating, respecting, and accepting someone's view and trusting someone (Vula, et.al, 2015). Further elaborating on the conceptualization of mentorship, Spooner-Lane (2017) synthesizes most of the definitions into

three types of mentoring: (1) Classical mentoring is regarded as the intent to direct and reinforce a novice teacher to develop his/her proficiency; (2) instrumental mentoring refers to a way of enhancing mentee's learning outcomes; and (3) the 'two-way relationship', understood as a tool for two-way professional development (Spooner-Lane, 2017, p. 260). In this study, I consider teacher mentoring as a two-way relationship when the dyads become reflective practitioners by being involved in the self-development and this is reported to strengthen the process of teaching because both of the counterparts share their teaching practices (p. 260).

Mentoring is generally considered as one form of teachers' professional development (Suchánková & Hrbáčková, 2009) and as way to advance teachers' professionalism (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Not only novice teachers are assigned a mentor, but experienced teachers as well. In order to become a mentor, in some cases it is enough to be more experienced in a certain field of teaching or a management system of the workplace. Mentors can simply be more competent peers (Ambrosetti, 2014), that are involved in the process of establishing "a strong professional culture of teaching and learning", enhancing teachers' teaching practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, as cited in Vula et al, 2015, p. 111), and forming a common two-way possibility of personal, professional and academic development and learning for both the mentor and the mentee (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016).

2.2. Teacher mentoring relationships: The key to success

When talking about mentors, it is important to mention that (1) being competent in delivering a lesson and (2) having a good knowledge of the subject and effective teaching methods are not the only characteristics of a good mentor. In addition to these, demonstrating the capacity of building a positive relationship with a mentee is also considered as a requirement to be an effective mentor (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). As McCann (as cited in Izadinia, 2017) asserts, mentors must be skillful in knowing how to establish a good relationship with someone, be aware of the mentoring process, and promote reflexivity. However, the available research depicts that very often mentors view their mentoring roles based only on their experiences as mentees, thus

they can lack knowledge of various mentoring purposes and roles which leads to their ineffectiveness in personal development (Garza et al., 2019). In this regard, among skills that a mentor should possess, a study conducted by Rowley (1999) proposes: a) effective communication with fresh teachers as well as peers; b) the ability to give feedback; c) classroom management as well as planning effective lessons; d) being tactful when having open discussions; and e) stimulation of reflective skills. It is evident that a mentor is to be chosen among senior professionals of the school as not all teachers are able to acquire those skills.

In addition, the mentoring process is time consuming, so it is be more beneficial to assign a mentor among those individuals who is willing to share with their experience. Mentoring is limitless if a mentor is willing to work with a mentee (Garza et al., 2019; Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Konca & Taşdemir, 2018) and the mentor can transfer all above- mentioned skills. On the other hand, the extra work and responsibility, stress and lack of appropriate mentor skills might be limitations of mentoring (Walkington, as cited in Ambrosetti, 2014). Hence, mentors should be assigned among those teachers who possess those mentioned skills, but above all are willing to be involved in the process.

As mentoring is about human interactions to achieve professional development, it requires trust and shared understanding, mutual contribution and time investment, but above all is the communication (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). It is important for both mentors and mentees to have awareness of their duties prior to their relationship (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016), which is the basis of partnership (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). In other words, it is a relationship when both benefit when starting a process with high responsibility. However, it should be admitted that nothing can be achieved without a friendly and caring relationship that a mentor can establish.

Types of mentoring relationships. There are different approaches to classify mentoring relationships. Several authors indicate that mentoring can be “formal” or “informal” (Leidenfrost et al., 2014; Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016; McKinsey, 2016; Tummons et al., 2016). In formal mentoring relationships, a mentor is assigned by an administrator and communication is time-

bound, while in informal mentoring the mentor-mentee relationship occurs spontaneously and unintentionally. Even though a spontaneous relationship might be beneficial as it is voluntary, it can be short in time. At the same time, a formal relation is planned, hence purposeful and scheduled, but can lead to the feeling of limited independence.

Similarly, Hadi & Rudiyanto (2017) differentiates between “congenial” and “collegial” relationships. The former refers to friendly personal relationships, while the later focuses on both counterparts working together to develop a professional community (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). It can be assumed that a congenial relationship is less stressful as it is based on friendly communication, whereas the second type of relationship is to be more beneficial as it promotes mutual growth and shared responsibility, although it might be harder to build.

Yet, the available evidence suggests that the most important part about mentoring relationships is the articulation of expectations of both stakeholders (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Prior to any process, it is advised to sit together for open communication when both mentor and a mentee reveal what they expect from each other. When the goals are clear and the duties are distributed, mentoring is likely to be successful. Research further indicates that mentees’ expectations tend to be “open communication, trust and respect and attentive listening”, while mentors anticipate their mentees to be “risk takers with high level of professionalism” (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018, p. 10).

2.3. Benefits of mentoring novice teachers

Mentoring is a core process in supporting novice teachers during their induction period by boosting the process of adjustment to a new working environment and building positive relationships with the other members of a school community. Moreover, it is a helping tool in addressing the requirements set by the school administration and building a positive relation not only with students but the parents as well (Barrera et al., 2010).

Effective mentoring programs can be important in the retention of novice teachers. The positive outcome of novice teachers’ retention in the profession can be connected to a well-

organized mentoring program as they play an important role in the first year of their teaching profession (Brandau et al., 2017; Garza et al., 2019; Gholam, 2018; Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Warsame & Valles, 2018). Additionally, “access and availability”, timely, one-on-one communication, and a careful approach in pairing a mentor and a mentee seem to increase the effectiveness of the process (Spooner-Lane, 2017, p. 269).

Mentoring is also advantageous in establishing a supporting environment when teachers can deal with stress after a working day or collaborate with a mentor while having their first classroom experiences (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Tummons et al., 2016), communicate openly and get timely constructive feedback (Izдания, 2017). Indeed, novice teacher mentorship is crucial in assisting an individual by showing the best direction to follow and giving advice on how a teacher should behave not only in the classroom but with other stakeholders of the school community as well (Bowman, 2014). Thus, mentoring is used as a supporting tool helping teachers to deal with challenges during the induction period, especially for those teachers who have difficulties with the requirements of the workplace (Garza et al., 2019).

It has been argued that mentoring can also contribute to bridging the gap between theory and practice in the teaching profession. In this regard, Mkandawire (2016) argues that one common challenge experienced by teachers is the discrepancy between what they learn in the university with the actual situation they come across at a workplace. Various educational organizations set different requirements of teachers' duties at schools than most students expect to have which means that in many cases young teachers struggle to put their knowledge and practice together. In this context, a mentor can pilot young teachers at this stage and help them in understanding where they are positioned in career and life and where they want or should be going further (Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

Also, a mentor takes the responsibility for the mentee's development in a way that is appropriate with the school culture and his/her being an efficient and a beneficial employee of the workplace (Dağ & Sarı, 2017). In other words, mentors can help the mentee to overcome the

challenges and the difficulties he/she might face at work, which can result in low levels of motivation and in some cases poor performance. And because of difficulties in culture adaptation, the new teachers may find it hard to establishing “a level of respect” with the school leaders or administration (Shamatov, as cited in Kadyrova, 2017, p. 28). Therefore, mentoring can assist the mentee to meet the requirements of the school administration, become a fully qualified member of a school community, and integrate the norms and values of the school.

Apart from dealing with the school community and administration, novice teachers must work with their students` parents as well. A study conducted by Dağ and Sarı (2017), states that many fresh teachers think of leaving the profession because of failing to interact with their students` parents, which leads to increased stress at work and low self-esteem. In this cases, the authors suggest that a skillful mentor could provide emotional support as well as encourage the mentee to communicate freely by modelling the conversation themselves. This type of encouragement has the potential to help the mentees to improve their sense of self- confidence and self-value, while at the same time making them feel supported and safe.

Hence, mentoring is crucial in supporting a novice teacher during their first years of teaching in terms of emotional stability, personal and pedagogical development of a professional, improving the skills of dealing with the classroom environment as well as the school staff and the student`s parents.

2.4. Challenges in teacher mentoring relationships

Even though mentoring can offer different multiple opportunities for professional development and create a positive experience for novice teachers in their first years in the profession, it can also result in negative experiences. For example, mentors can force their own understanding of the teaching profession on the mentee which can result in several consequences such as: a) mentees with low self-esteem can loose their confidence in teaching; b) mentees become dependent on their mentors and struggle to act independently, and c) mentees might feel pressure which can bring to demotivation and additional stress (Dağ, & Sarı, 2017).

Another challenge that novice teachers may face during mentoring is a loose and unstructured mentoring relationship (Walkington, 2005). For example, Vumilia and Semali (2006) found that there was not a solid mentoring structure across several schools in East Africa and the process of mentoring depended on individual teacher mentors, and this resulted in different understanding of the mentoring process. For instance, if mentoring was regarded as a close supervision in some cases, then in another one it was perceived as coaching that was less structured and more restricted in time. A closer look at the data indicated that lack of available mentors, but those accessible lacked motivation to mentor and had additional workload that prevented from monitoring mentees properly were among mentioned problems (p. 18). In other words, mentoring is a process that can be efficient only when fully structured and guided by the school management by lessening mentors` duties and motivating them to work with novice teachers.

Further evidence supporting the idea that mentoring should be more organized and structured may lie in the findings of Wang and Apraiz (2018), who view lack of effective communication among all stakeholders to be resulted in the “disorganized and confusing” mentoring, that causes nothing but additional stress for teacher mentees (p. 51). Therefore, stress caused by not properly organized mentoring is another challenge experienced by mentees that is to bring to mentee’s dissatisfaction.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study emerged from the literature analyzed in connection to the research questions posed in this study. The central phenomenon of the study is mentoring relationships, which is investigated through teachers’ mentoring experiences and the challenges they come across during the process. This research will use the framework proposed by Eller, Lev and Feurer (2014), which identifies eight components of an effective mentoring relationship, which included “(1) open communication and accessibility; (2) goals and challenges; (3) passion and inspiration; (4) caring personal relationship; (5) mutual respect and

trust; (6) exchange of knowledge; (7) independence and collaboration; and (8) role modelling”
(p. 817) (see Figure 1).

1. Open communication and accessibility	2. Goals and challenges	3. Passion and inspiration	4. Caring personal relationship
<i>“easy to communicate with, open to questions and accessible beyond office hours”</i>	<i>“setting an appropriate pace, possesses time management and flexible”</i>	<i>“inspire critical thinking, creativity and confidence”</i>	<i>“mutual friendship a supportive (caring, nurturing) relationship”</i>
5. Mutual respect and trust	6. Exchange of knowledge	7. Independence and collaboration	8. Role modelling
<i>“two-way confidence and respect for one another”</i>	<i>“convey knowledge in an interesting way, real world communication”</i>	<i>“be team players, provide opportunities for co-authorship and increasing sense of responsibility”</i>	<i>“lead by example, model interactions with others”</i>

Figure 1: Key components of an effective mentoring relationship provided by Eller, Lev and Feurer (2014, p.817).

Figure 2 represents the conceptual framework used in this study, which includes all key aspects mentioned by Eller et al., (2014) in their study of effective components of mentoring relationship and incorporates other relevant components of teacher mentoring relationships as identified in the literature. The diagram shows mentoring relationship with two-sided arrows as central to mentoring process pointing to eight effective components of mentoring relationship because they are equally important in contributing to positive relationship between a mentor and a mentee. These components are placed in a circle at the core of the framework representing teacher professional development. Outside of the circle possible challenges and benefits of the process that a novice teacher might experience during mentoring are indicated. Finally, the circle is crossed with an arrow showing the trajectory of novice teachers that reflects their professional journey from initial teacher education to teacher professionalism (see Figure 2).

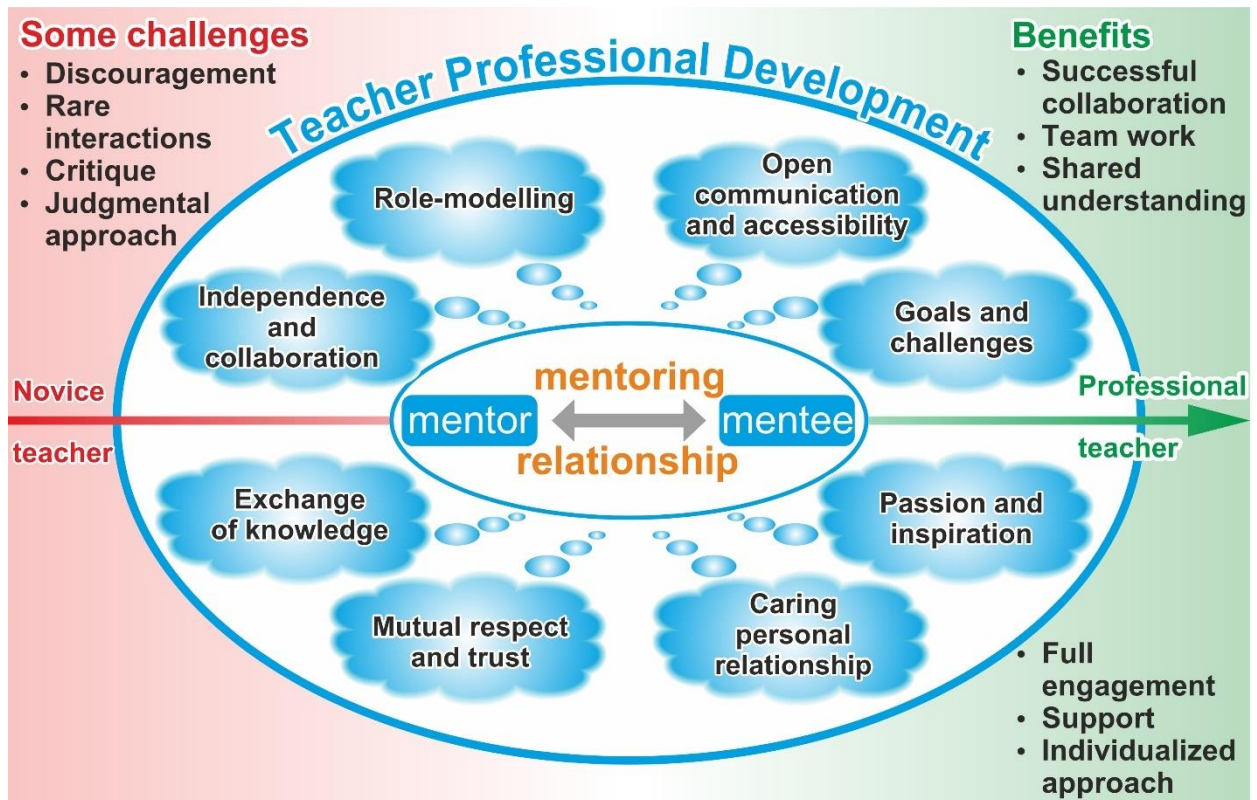


Figure 2: A diagram recapping all the main points of the conceptual framework (Eller, Lev and Feurer, 2014).

However, it should be admitted that not all of these components might characterize mentoring relationships in the Kazakhstani context, thus in the following research the participants will have to reflect on their experiences of the process by expressing which of the mentioned components will likely influence their decision to participate in the mentoring, what benefits the components give and what possible drawbacks they might have.

2.6. Summary

This chapter explained the reasons why mentoring is regarded in the literature as one form of professional development of novice teachers that contributes to teachers' retention in the profession. It also demonstrated how teacher mentoring relationships can be the key of successful mentoring, differentiating between formal/ informal and congenial/collegial types of relationship. This chapter provided some benefits of mentoring such as development of teaching skills, teacher collaboration, establishment of positive mentoring relationships, retaining novice teachers in schools, and development of interpersonal and leadership skills reflected in the

literature reviewed. Along with existing benefits, the chapter also revealed some drawbacks of the mentoring process as mentor's hierarchical attitude, unwillingness to cooperate due to the time-consuming nature of mentoring and varied requirements to the process that can lead to mentees' dissatisfaction. Finally, the chapter introduced the conceptual framework identifying key elements that led to building effective, positive mentoring relationships between novice teachers and their mentors, which is the core of this study

In the next chapter, a detailed information on the rationale behind choosing a qualitative approach for this study, as well as procedures on participants recruitment, data analyzing and ethical considerations that have been considered during the study are also provided.

Chapter three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe and justify the choices I have made in developing a qualitative, interview-based study that will help me answer the research questions. This study aimed at examining teachers' experience on how mentoring relationships have been built and was directed by the research questions as how mentoring relationships are established, what effective components of mentoring relationships are built, and what benefits and challenges are faced by mentees during mentoring.

The chapter is organized into seven sections. In the first section, I provide a brief introduction into the chapter. The second section clarifies the rationale behind a selected research design, and the third section describes the sampling procedures and answer the question how the participants have been selected and recruited to take part in the study. In the fourth section, a detailed information on the data collection tools are highlighted, and in the fifth section, an explanation on how the data have been analyzed is provided. The sixth section explains ethical considerations that are considered prior to the actual research to guarantee the minimized potential risks, finally recapping the main points given in this chapter in the seventh section.

3.2. Research design

A qualitative research approach was chosen for the study with the goal to provide an in-depth understanding of teacher relationships between novice teacher mentees and more experienced teacher mentors in one school in South Kazakhstan. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this study because it promotes the exploration of novice teachers' lived practice in order to explain why certain advantages or challenges are experienced in the context of a specific school, hence provides richness of data focused on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 11).

More specifically, a case study approach of a qualitative research ensured to uncover not only what the novice teacher mentees' experience of mentoring relationship was, but to

investigate deeper their mentoring preferences and difficulties when building the communication in the specific context of one school that had been implementing mentoring programs for novice teachers for a considerable period of time. Glesne (2011) and Lucas (2018) assert that a case study incorporates in-depth and long-term examination, critiquing an experience in the context based on obtained data. Therefore, the gathered data promoted the understanding of how mentoring relationships were established within the school and why they were built a certain way within the school.

Another important factor when conducting a study was the researcher's stance throughout the research. As Shannon-Baker (2016) identifies, a paradigm encourages a more specific engagement with the research in the future. Constructionism was selected as it identified the interviewees in the role of knowledge constructors who provided context to the phenomenon (Crotty, 2003), mentoring relationships in this study. My stance throughout the study was constructivism, that promoted the researcher's focus on interviewees' individual experiences as mentees. According to Candra and Retnawati (2020), constructivism is a view when individuals form or acquire knowledge through active participation in the process. Therefore, interviewing the participants of the study, will provide the opportunity to adapt existing knowledge connected to mentoring relationships to a new context.

3.3. Participants

Eight novice teachers who had participated in a mentoring relationship with a more experienced teacher mentor in the research site over the last three years were selected in this study using maximal variation sampling procedures. Maximum variation sampling was deemed appropriate in this study in order to select participants who have, on the one hand, a deep understanding of the central phenomenon of the study, and on the other hand, different backgrounds that may provide diverse perspectives in the issue under investigation (Creswell, 2014). More specifically, maximum variation procedures were implemented to ensure variability

in terms of participants' gender, years of experience (from 1 to 3 years) and subject area (Languages, Science and Math).

The research was conducted in one school in the South of our country with about 800 students and 138 teachers. The research site had been selected, primarily, because it was considered a flagship education institution that, among other many innovations, had been implementing mentoring programs for novice teachers over the last eight years. Therefore, the research site constitutes an interesting case to study the central phenomenon of the study. Moreover, many novice teachers with high proficiency in English language are hired every year to support the implementation of the trilingual policy in the school. However, approximately one third of novice teachers leave the school after their first year, but the reasons that lead teachers to abandon the school are still unclear. In this context, a better understanding of novice teachers' experiences, preferences, benefits and challenges in their relationships with their mentors might provide valuable information to develop more effective strategies to build positive, effective novice teacher mentoring relationships, support their induction period, and likely increase their retention.

Another reason behind the selection of this site was that I worked at this school for six years, so it was easier for me to adjust the time of the interviews to the schedule of the participants, to conduct the actual interview in a various site across the school, and to talk to the school administration about the research itself. More importantly, working at the research site promoted the understanding of the context better and could make better sense of participants' experiences. An insider researcher enables to contribute to "knowledge, meaning and understanding" of lived practice related to the context of a research site deeper (Fleming, 2018, p. 312), which might be an opportunity of a research location to develop its existing practice.

3.4. Data collection tool

Individual semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection tool to understand the nature of central phenomenon in the study (i.e., mentoring relationships). Semi-

structured interviews were appropriate for the present study because they gave an opportunity (1) for the researcher to adjust the questions during the actual interview that supported to gather detailed information of the central phenomenon (Ary et al., 2013) and (2) for the participant to describe his/ her “life world”, to reflect on that experience, and to uncover new relationships of the discussed topic (Miles et al., 2015, p. 37). The interviews started with some general questions to set a positive atmosphere, afterwards proceeding with some open-ended questions that gave the participants the opportunity to create open-ended responses (Creswell, 2014), which helped to examine interviewees’ understanding, expectations, preferred components of mentoring relationship and justifications behind that.

Before the interview itself, a pilot testing was conducted with pilot respondents drawn from those not involved in the study to reflect critically on “the usability” of interview questions (Glesne, 2011). Once the usability of interview questions had been confirmed with the pilot respondents, the researcher proceeded to the actual interview.

3.5. Data procedures and analysis

Interview protocols were developed beforehand to promote note taking and flexible direction of questions (Creswell, 2014) (see Appendix 1). Along with protocols, interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants to ensure a detailed and accurate record of what the interviewee was saying. In addition to that, follow up questions were asked to deepen in participants’ responses. Participants were offered the possibility of conducting the interview in Russian or English languages. All interview voice-recordings were transcribed for further analysis and those in Russian were translated into English by the researcher.

Before starting analyzing the data, the researcher checked both the recordings and the transcripts in order to identify if the recordings matched with what was written in the transcripts. Afterwards, a preliminary exploratory analysis was applied in order to process the obtained data that involves exploration, memoing and organizing the data (Creswell, 2014). The researcher read through the interview transcripts looking for the ways to organize the ideas into subtopics

(see Appendix 2). Descriptive coding was used because it was appropriate to create topics “for indexing and categorizing” the data (Miles et.al, 2015, p. 75) in accordance with their similarities and thematized afterwards to develop a hierarchical tree diagram which assisted to visualize the themes from broad to narrow ones (see Appendix 3). When the codes were prepared, the process of member checking was applied to ensure correct interpretation of participants ideas. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define member checking as an effective process in assuring appropriateness of interpretations and conveyed information by the participants. Therefore, the participants were asked by the researcher to read through the transcript of their interviews individually to check for correct interpretation of their ideas. Once the ideas conveyed were confirmed appropriate, the researcher started analyzing the data.

3.6. Ethical issues

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained ethics clearance from the GSE Research Committee. The data collection process did not started until ethics approval was granted. Once approval was granted, and in order to gain the access to the research site, the researcher organized an appointment with the school administration where a detailed description of the research project was provided to promote the understanding of the nature of this qualitative interview study. After getting access to the site, a gatekeeper forwarded an invitation letter (email) to all novice teachers at school inviting them to participate in the study and requesting them to contact the researcher if they were interested in being part of the study. Additionally, the information about the voluntary nature of their participation and the possibility to withdraw at any stage of the research process was emphasized in the invitation. If the participants were interested in being part of this study, they were asked to write an email back to a gatekeeper telling about their affirmative decision. The consent forms were sent to volunteered participants along with the questions as when it was comfortable for them to meet for the interview and what location they preferred for the interview (see Appendix 4). They were also welcomed to ask any questions connected to the study via email or at the beginning of the actual interview. The paper

version of the consent forms were signed in two copies, for the participant and the researcher to be kept before the interview.

The interview was conducted in a place suggested by the interviewee himself/ herself because their willingness and convenience were of primary importance in this study. When the interview was completed, the researcher thanked the participants and reassured that their identity would not be revealed to anyone external to the research study. Also, participants were offered the possibility to receive a summary with the research results if they were interested (Creswell, 2014).

At the beginning of the interview, the participants were acquainted with the purpose of the research as well as their rights throughout the process. The anonymity of participants' identity could not be fully guaranteed in the present study, as it was revealed when they showed up for the interview. Still, in the assurance of confidentiality, the obtained information during the process had not been discussed with anyone else other than the thesis supervisor (Cohen et al., 2011). In addition, all the participants were guaranteed that their names would not be used in the thesis report, as they would be substituted with the use of pseudonyms. In this regard, Creswell (2014) say that stories are to be told but the identities are not to be revealed. All the data and interview protocols were stored on the researcher's personal password protected laptop and the paper variants of protocols and notes were stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.

The study did not involve more than minimal risk. In order to further minimize the risks, the following steps were taken. As though the researcher and the interviewees worked at the same school, other staff members might have seen them together, hence identify who the participants were. Therefore, the researcher did not discuss anything connected to the study itself with any stakeholder at the workplace.

Another risk was that the participants might have felt discomfort thinking that somehow the data could be disclosed as the researcher knew them and their mentors as well. In such case, the researcher assured the participants about the confidential nature of the research to gain

trust. Additionally, the interviewees might have had some negative feelings remembering unpleasant moments that they had gone through; hence, the researcher needed to observe the participant's emotions being more sensitive throughout the process.

3.7. Summary

This chapter demonstrated that a qualitative case study design was appropriate for this study because it helped to explore the experience of novice teachers in one school and to identify why certain preferences in building mentoring relationships occurred. It also explained that eight novice teachers were chosen based on maximal variation sampling that was convenient in selecting the participants with different experiences, but with a deep understanding of mentoring relationships. Furthermore, it dwelled on the research site and explained some reasons why it was chosen. The reasons included: a) even though the site was considered an educational organization with many qualified teachers, still one or two novice teachers resign from; therefore, it was important to identify the reasons why this happened; b) the researcher worked at the school, so it was easier to organize the interviews in the most convenient way for the participants of this study. This chapter also included a detailed information on why individual semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection tool and explained the way the data was gathered and analyzed. Additionally, the chapter reviewed the steps the ethical issues were considered such as obtaining ethics clearance from the GSE Research Committee, getting approval from the research site administrators, writing an invitation letter for the participants and sending it with the help of a gatekeeper, finally signing the consent forms. The chapter also provided some ways the potential risks were minimized; for instance, not revealing any information connected to the nature of study at school, ensuring the participants about the confidentiality of the research during interviews, and being sensitive with participants throughout the process.

In the next chapter, the findings collected from one-on-one interviews will be considered focusing on effective components of mentoring relationships, benefits and challenges experienced by the participants of the study during mentoring.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the findings of the study collected from the interviews with the participants taking into consideration the purpose of the study, which is to identify key components of effective mentoring relationships, as well as the benefits and challenges experienced by the mentees during their mentoring relationships. The chapter discusses how mentoring is implemented in the school in terms of how a mentor is assigned and what type of mentoring relationship components are preferred to be built throughout the process. Additionally, it reveals some benefits that can occur as well as challenges that emerged during mentoring relationship. The study was directed to answer the following main research question: How do novice teacher mentees and more experienced teachers build their mentoring relationships in one secondary school in Kazakhstan?

This chapter is organized into five sections. In the first section, a brief discussion of the main points raised in this chapter are given. In the second section, teachers' experience in mentoring in terms of mentors' allocation and induction period is provided. In the third section, key components to build a positive relationship during mentoring are described, and in the fourth section, benefits and challenges of the mentoring process that are experienced by the mentees are highlighted. The final section recaps the key findings of the study.

4.2. Teachers' Experiences in Mentoring

To understand how interviewees perceived the process of mentoring and what experience they have gone through, they were asked certain questions about the mentoring and their involvement as a mentee that helped to obtain their views and understanding of mentoring. Two subtopics emerged from the mentee's experiences on these issues.:

4.2.1. Allocation of a mentor

All the novice teachers interviewed have been in the teaching profession for a maximum of three years and a minimum of one year. Hence the research site in which they were teaching at

the moment of the interview has been their first working environment and a venue of their first teaching experience. According to participants responses, two approaches are followed to assign every novice teacher a mentor: automatic assignment and provision of a list in which mentees should choose their preferred mentors. In this regard, four mentees have experienced automatically assigning mentors, while four of them have had the privilege of choosing a mentor from a list of two to four available mentors.

This shows that there are no strict rules when coming to the allocation of a mentor and every department head decides how to assign a mentor. However, when it comes to a mentee's preference, an overwhelming majority still prefers having a chance to select their mentors. The following direct quotation provides evidence in this direction:

Rather than assigning one, a mentee should have a possibility to choose because there are people I cannot work with, no matter what I do. That is why we should choose [be able to] (Mentee 7).

Although it was perceived that senior teachers (i.e., older in age) tend to be more experienced and effective teachers, most of the participants have expressed their willingness to be mentored by the teachers of relatively the same age as themselves. The reasons for this include: a) comparatively younger colleagues are more accessible at establishing friendly and relaxed relationships which promote a positive perception of an induction period; b) these mentors have been mentees not long ago, hence have a broader understanding of the mentees' needs; c) it is easier to express a different point of view in a given issue under discussion with a mentor of relatively the same age than with a mentor who is older, as more often the mentee would choose to remain silent as a way of respecting an older mentor. Additionally, "younger mentors are less likely to act superior as their age difference would not let look at mentees as their students but rather as an equal member of the community" (Mentee 6).

Less than half of the participants deem that "working at the same speed" as their mentors is another important factor to be considered when assigning a senior teacher. Some mentors

might be fast when explaining the material compared to their novice fellow teachers whose speed might be slow in the acquisition of new knowledge. This difference in speed seems to hinder the mentoring process as mentees feel incapable of working on an equal level with their mentors, therefore their motivation decreases. Contrarily, mentees that are fast at understanding and completing the tasks tend to benefit from being paired with the same-paced (speeded) mentors, as indicated by one participant:

I think it would be hard for me if my mentor was a slow-paced person. My mentor when I was a trainee, was very slow-paced but systematic. I had learned a lot from her yet as a mentor I chose a person who is fast paced as me (Mentee 5).

One more issue identified is connected to the grade level the mentees teach. Almost half of the novice teachers preferred their mentors to be teaching in the same grade as the mentees, as initially they were not paired with those to be teaching in the same grades:

Sometimes I would ask her to share her lesson plan. However, as though we didn't work in the same parallel of classes, her lesson plans didn't help me a lot. In most of the cases, I had to go and ask for help from the teacher who was teaching in grades 2 as I did (Mentee 1).

First, my mentor was one teacher but two days after they changed my mentor because my second mentor was teaching in grade 1 too. As both of us were teaching grade 1, it was easier for me to adapt with a mentor having the same classes as me (Mentee 6).

The given data suggest that mentees benefit through observing a relatively same environment, gain larger experience when attending the lessons in the parallel grades, and benefit more from watching students' behavior of the same age as those they teach. If in the first case, the mentee had to approach the department head requesting to change the mentor because the mentor was not teaching in the same area than the mentee. The department head of the area where the mentee was working was sensible enough to understand the difficulty the mentee was encountering, hence initiated the process of changing the mentor. The fact shows again that, even when working in the same school, several approaches to mentoring might still exist due to the

different perceptions of mentees' needs from the perspective of their department heads, hence becomes apparent that these factors that must be considered when assigning mentors.

4.2.2. Induction period

Most interviewed perceived mentoring as a process when a less experienced teacher was supported by a colleague with more experience in teaching to overcome the difficulties they may have encountered when starting to work. In this regard, all novice teachers have indicated that mentoring is a must process that promotes a clear understanding of teachers' duties and that the school considers it a critical stage in developing an effective teacher. In this regard, a mechanism should be created to ensure that everyone undergoes a prescribed form of mentorship. However, the obtained data revealed that there are multiple understandings of the mentoring process at this initial stage, as each mentor has a different approach to the process and duties. In some cases, novice teachers have gone through the mentoring process following a clear action work plan with an identified set of goals, requirements, and expectations from the mentee's perspective, which promoted a smooth transition from the induction period into the actual teaching. In this kind of clearly outlined mentoring approach, the time of the meetings was strongly regulated, leading to the formation of strong management skills along with the capability to model, design and deliver engaging lessons.

In most cases, however, a less structured mentoring approach is implemented. For example, there were cases when a mentor would conduct a series of special workshops after surveying a mentee on the number of certain questions to facilitate the process and once the needs were identified the mentee's expectations of mentoring were met, the needs were addressed. This is reflected in one of the responses:

There were not any special work plans. I think, she just knew what a novice teacher would probably need. So, she kept asking me if I knew this or that, and when I said no, she would immediately explain it to me (Mentee 3).

Still, even though there was not displayed any action plans at the initial stage of mentoring, it did not prevent the mentors from effectively addressing mentees' needs.

Regardless of the level of organization of the mentoring experience, there seems to be an agreement among most of the participants that having a set of clear requirements is of utmost importance during the process. The participants' responses reveal that, at the initial stage, mentees prefer to be clearly directed by the mentors and their roles as mentees as well as mentor's roles are to be clarified at once. Despite this, there was one (Mentee 1) unaware of the mentor's functions and what the final expectations were supposed that has led the mentee to be challenged at the beginning of the process and be forced seeking for support from different colleagues within the department.

Initially, I did not understand why I needed someone watching me all the time, nor I had any knowledge about what the mentoring was. My mentor did not explain to me either. Sometime after, I started asking who the mentor was and why I needed one; hence, I got acquainted with the mentor's duties.

Not only clear expectations matter during the mentoring process; close supervision over a mentee seems to be equally important in enhancing mentoring relationships further. The available data suggest that three mentees (1, 2 and 6) among the participants prefer being closely supervised by their mentors as it enhances the mentees' performance and helps them to meet all the set deadlines. In some cases, novice teachers need close supervision over themselves as this promotes the feeling of a total discipline, hence results in the betterment of their performance as teachers, writing the lesson plans in time and attending all the meetings required. As one mentee noted:

When someone controls you, you try your best, you try to reach your mentor's goals and not to disappoint (Mentee 1).

Thus, addressing mentees' needs through setting clear expectations, setting achievable goals and requirements, and avoiding a mismatch when assigning mentors, can be a boost of the mentoring process.

4.3. Mentoring Relationship Components

Mentoring is a process that is built on relationships. The more positive the relationships are, the more successful the process becomes. In order to identify what components of mentoring relationships were established between the mentors and the mentees, the mentees were asked a set of interview questions that were based on the components mentioned in the conceptual framework section of the literature review. The questions helped to understand what components of relationships were experienced and preferred by the participants of the given study. The following subtopics have been formed and listed below in the order of their importance for the interviewees.

4.3.1. Mutual Respect

All the participants agreed that mutual respect is of primary importance when building relationships with their mentors. Three interviewees (1, 2, and 8) believed that a mentor should be respected only because of the willingness to work with a novice teacher and the desire to support the mentee. They further speculated that their opinion could have been affected by the age of the mentor that was much older in comparison with theirs as it was highlighted by one interviewee: “Indeed, respect is very important, especially, from a mentee’s perspective. As though, a mentor is someone older than a mentee, he should be respected for his age and experience” (Mentee 2). However, because of age difference between the mentors and the mentees, the participants claimed to experience a one-way respect, where mentees respected their mentors but had the feeling of being treated as a student but not as a junior colleague from their mentors’ side.

Another group of mentees suggested that they have experienced mutual respect with their mentors whose age was comparatively same, which promoted a friendly atmosphere when working together and furthered mentoring relationships to the point when mentees appreciated their mentors for allowing becoming one part of the school community. Mutual respect was also seen to act as a motivational tool in the sense that when there was respect, teachers could

develop new skills and knowledge about teaching easily through collaboration and open inquiries. One mentee noted: “You respect your mentor when he is qualified, you believe you can learn and benefit a lot from this cooperation” (Mentee 3).

On the other hand, the absence or lack of mutual respect was noted as a demotivational factor impeding positive mentoring relationships and resulting in mentees’ discouragement.

4.3.2. Open Communication and Accessibility

Another effective component of establishing mentoring relationships mentioned by the participants was open communication. The majority of the interviewed asserted that open communication smoothed the mentees’ induction process and boosted the development of teaching skills. Openness in communication was especially important when observing the lessons and giving constructive feedback, as expressed by one participant:

I appreciate it when a mentor can give constructive feedback not only focusing on positive aspects but the areas for improvement as well. When a person is open, I become open myself (Mentee 2).

Besides, open communication stimulated the mentees to express their opinions willingly:

When the mentor is giving feedback, you know that in case you disagree you can always tell about it freely, so you just follow this person and learn from him as much as possible (Mentee 3).

According to mentees, open communication also promoted a safe zone for them to share with the challenges they were facing during the first months at school. Through open conversations with the mentors, three mentees (2, 6, and 7) became more confident in dealing with students’ misbehaviors and developed the skill of involving all learners into the lesson. The more mentees interacted with the mentors, the less stressed they were when discussing the most challenging aspects of lessons conducted.

Open conversations promote the feeling of relief, you become free because you do not stress about what the mentor will think about you. You are not ashamed of asking for help and you do not worry when your mentor is observing the lesson because you feel comfortable with him (Mentee 3).

However, one mentee was not convinced about the importance of open communication and believed that it was not necessary for him consulting a mentor each time when having questions because any individual could find what he needed by searching on the Internet or asking any teacher at school in case it was needed.

Well, I don't think that having an open relationship is so important because if a person needs something, I think he can find it anyway. You can search for the information on the Internet or ask someone else (Mentee 7).

The majority of the participants also emphasized that accessibility of their mentors was beneficial in addressing their needs during the induction process. Half of the mentees said that they could approach the mentors at any time of the day including late evenings as well as weekends. They portrayed their mentors as seniors available all the time being ready to help and support their mentees. Interestingly, the mentors did not seem to object to being contacted as well as mentees that did not feel they were interfering with someone's private life.

In most cases, the mentees could contact the mentors either via "What's up" app on the mobile phone or a corporative email to get consulted on; 1) what teaching methods would it be better to use during the lesson the other day, 2) some teaching resources that could have been sent by the mentor at once, 3) and even some issues connected to a mentee's personal life.

Indeed, a constant communication with the mentor stimulated on-time feedback of the mentee's lessons as was pointed out by one mentee:

There are cases when you conduct a lesson and once you finish it you want to listen to your mentor's thoughts about it, so if he is accessible you can talk to him straight away which in turn raises your productivity. Just imagine, you've finished the lesson and you keep making notes, preparing the questions for the next meeting, mostly your feelings about the lesson will not be as vivid some days after, so you will probably not ask about it. But if you can discuss the matters that worry you at once, the stress is relieved, and you just move on teaching (Mentee 3).

Still, some mentees though it was appropriate to disturb their mentors after work hours. These teachers were against exploiting the mentor's time pointing out to the mentor's general workload and duties as a teacher, researcher and member of the school community. One

participant revealed: “My mentor teaches, communicates with other colleagues at school, and has her personal life. I can’t ring her at 1 a.m. just because something is not clear for me. There should be certain time frames” (Mentee 2).

4.3.3. Exchange of Knowledge

Exchange of knowledge emerged as another core element when building positive teacher mentorship relationships. Most of the participants perceived that both the mentor and the mentee should be ready to learn from one another for the relationship to survive.

More than half of the mentees believed that mentors were the ones responsible for the exchange of knowledge as they were the more skilled and experienced counterpart. According to the responses, mentors were responsible for the demonstrating effective pedagogical approaches and transmitting subject knowledge. Pedagogical experiences were mostly shared through lesson observations when mentees attended their mentors’ lessons and was particularly useful to learn on how effective lessons were structured.

Subject knowledge was generally transmitted through the mentor sharing materials and building a useful resource pool for mentees. There were cases when mentors suggested what to read, how to teach the topics that mentees felt challenged to explain, and sent all the needed resources for the lesson via e-mail regularly. This, in its turn, promoted the understanding of how efficient the mentor’s role was and the realization of the fact that shared knowledge and openness were interrelated and resulted in a deep respect for the mentors.

Still, a considerable segment of the respondents supported the claim that mentors themselves should have been open to learning from their mentees too. The participants believed that there were areas where they could also contribute by sharing their deep knowledge. The idea can be illustrated by the given quote: “It is not a one-way process and mentors should also learn from their mentees. For example, we can teach them how to work with more updated versions of some IT programs or how to say something in English” (Mentee 1). The interviewees further

speculated that mentor's interest in the mentee's knowledge could have been an additional factor to feel significant during mentoring.

4.3.4. Trust and Collaboration

Trust was stated as important amongst most of the interviewed due to several reasons. Initially, it was essential when mentees trusted in the mentor's skills and rich experience in effective teaching, therefore followed each direction shown by their mentors unconditionally. On the other hand, rather than one-way trust, mutual trust seemed to have a more positive influence on establishing mentoring relationships. One participant described the experience of trust and pointed out:

Trust can also motivate when you feel that your mentor trusts you. When my mentor said that she believed in me, I tried my best not to disappoint her. It was a motivational tool for me to improve my skills. Her trust in me made me believe myself, in my skills (Mentee 3).

In other words, the more mentors and the participants themselves trusted in their abilities, the more confident mentees felt and less stressed they became. Having trust in the skills the mentees were acquiring, they tended to be more open with other members of the community and were able to share with the challenges they were facing.

Nevertheless, there was a participant who could not refer to the notion of trust without another process called close supervision and she explained:

It is impossible to trust blindly, a mentor cannot say 'yes, you can do it, go and conduct the lesson, I believe you' he should still observe the lesson and give constructive feedback, attend the lesson a second time and see what progress has been made. In this regard, I'd say trust and close supervision go together for at least the first three years (Mentee 6).

Half of the mentees pointed out the effectiveness of collaboration stating that it helped them to become the member of a dyad. Collaboration of the pair advanced the comprehension of subject key terms, effective teaching methods, and techniques. It also provided the opportunity to interact with larger groups as other subject departments and school's focus groups. In addition,

teamwork boosted the relationships between the counterparts in making up an action plan of achieving the set of goals by discussing what steps to follow and how it should have been done.

4.3.5. Independence

Whereas all the respondents agreed that the mentor's accessibility was to the success of mentorship, they were quick to point out that independence was also essential to ensure professional growth. According to respondents, independence meant the opportunity to think and act freely, making mistakes and learning from them. The data illustrated that independence was also important in diagnosing teacher's shortfall and hence improving independent class activities and teacher practice. Further, it was seen important to the extent that it strengthened most of the novice teachers who tend to fear making mistakes hence independence should prevail: "This is my second year and I can complete most of the tasks independently. When we discuss something today, she just advises me and gives the chance to choose my direction and I appreciate this" (Mentee 8).

Yet, there were three mentees with a different opinion. If one of them did not even know if independence mattered, another felt not confident enough to be independent from their mentors.

Mostly, I would be afraid of being independent because I feared making mistakes. That is why I followed every direction I was given. Only sometime after, I understood that to be independent you need to have the courage to bring something new into your teaching and take responsibility for that (Mentee 6).

4.3.6. Common Goals

Even though sharing common goals was less prominent in comparison to other characteristics featuring a positive mentoring relationship, most of the respondents still reported that they had shared goals with the mentors and that the mentors understood their needs to develop into effective and efficient teachers. According to mentee 2, both the mentee and the mentor worked in sync to prepare the students for the scientific projects' competition, as well as

to write an article and to publish it which provided the understanding of how working collegially in achieving the same goal could have a positive effect on mentoring relationships.

Meantime, some mentees reflected on the fact that having different goals was as natural as sharing one which could be understood by the next quote:

A mentor's goal is to teach something and to show his level of proficiency and the mentee's goal is to learn something and to become as skillful as his mentor. In this regard, this component is indeed important (Mentee 6).

4.3.7. Passion and Inspiration

The component of passion and inspiration as a determinant of success in mentorship experienced a dichotomous divide in which most of the respondents enumerated its importance in enabling mentees to learn from the mentor's example and making the mentee teacher to explore many of the teaching strategies/options. Additionally, it was also efficient in developing students' well-being and serving as a source of motivation to the mentee teachers to cope with the demanding tasks in their new career. In this regard, one of the mentees shared:

Attending her lessons, I could see her activeness, the way she was involving her students in the lesson, the way she was passionate, and inspired herself. This made me feel the same way, I mean, I also wanted to be a teacher like the one she was, to be attentive to my students and engage them as she did (Mentee 6).

Even so, three of the respondents expressed their views that the component of passion and inspiration was not important because mentors were ordinary teachers and they did not have to inspire their mentees. Their main task was to teach students but not to become an inspirational tool for mentees.

4.3.8. Caring Personal Relationships

Almost half of the respondents believed that caring personal relationships was an essential part and that its pivotal role permeated the entire process. More specifically, it helped in developing teacher's morale and understanding that empathy and encouragement were important in increasing mentees' motivation. Its importance also spread to making mentees feel safe within

the work environment and be able to cope with difficulties along the way. According to one mentee:

Caring relationships are important, as any novice teacher might have various problems connected to personal or work life, so having someone beside ready to support you is indeed helpful in coping with difficulties (Mentee 6).

Their colleagues, on the other hand, suggested that it did not play a critical role in the establishment of mentoring relationships. One of the interviewed responded that open and strict relationships should be preferred over a caring one. This was confirmed by the fact that mentees had a tendency not to show initiative in the desire to learn from a mentor when a caring relationship prevailed: “If a mentor is too careful with a mentee, it might decrease his performance. A mentor should be demanding because the requirements at school are high” (Mentee 3).

4.3.9. Role-modelling

There was a sharp divide over the role of the role-modeling component in fostering good mentoring relationships. The proponents argued that it was important in building a sense of respect from mentees to the mentor and that they could benefit by adopting the style and pace of their mentors in teaching. Other benefits cited included integrating views, preferences, skills and abilities in teaching to blend mentees’ teaching practice. “It is important when a mentor inspires you and you perceive him as a role model. That is why you should choose a mentor that is close to you with his teaching style” (Mentee 5).

The other side of the divide cited that role modeling was a non-issue. Even though there was a slight agreement that this component was important in other aspects of life and not necessarily teaching, they still believed that it did not matter in building positive relationships with the mentors.

4.4. Benefits and Challenges

When it comes to benefits of the mentoring process, almost all the interviewed spotlighted a positive effect mentoring has had on the mentees’ professional life. The following

section of the study describes some key advantages of mentoring for the mentees and some minor challenges as well.

4.4.1. Benefits of mentoring

Apart from having a positive experience by building collaborative relationships with the mentors, most of the mentees highlighted the importance of mentoring as an effective tool in the development of their professionalism as teachers. Constant two-way lesson observations, constructive feedback, support, and shared resources were noted to enhance participants' professional skills. This opinion prevailed amongst most of the interviewed and one of them pointed out:

I still remember how supportive she was. Once, the school administration decided to send me to another school with a workshop on a topic of formative assessment. She provided me with all the resources I needed and directed me on how to conduct it (Mentee 3).

Additionally, the interviewees responded that mentors were helpful in understanding the structure of a lesson plan. The workshops the mentors held boosted the knowledge on the lesson plan stages and helped to identify the difference between assessment types:

The assigned mentor helped me a lot during the first months of work. She started with the explanation of the lesson plan structure and proceeded with the difference between the learning/lesson objectives. We wrote lesson plans together (Mentee 8).

Two of the respondents stated that they had undergone university practice at school which helped them during the induction period. In most cases, they were aware of the school requirements and had already had the experience of working with their mentor before they started working.

One reason for our successful collaboration might be the fact that I've had my trainee period here, at this school. Therefore I'd known the mentor for some months by the time I decided to enroll in school. She was my supervisor at that time, and she was the one to invite me to work here (Mentee 2).

Another advantage of implementing a mentoring scheme stated by the participants was the opportunity of having individual meetings with their mentors. In comparison with the

professional development courses, individual meetings were more beneficial in advancing mentees' teaching skills because: a) the meetings were perceived as the time for individual consultations when mentees could ask for advice on any issue that mattered them; b) the meetings were held without delays giving the opportunity for a more individualized approach; and c) the meeting provided additional time when the dyads got to know each other better, hence established a friendly atmosphere which positively affected the mentoring process.

The data obtained revealed that as though the mentoring process length ranged from one to three years, it was essential in the induction process of novice teachers. All the interviewed noted that mentoring helped them to understand the teachers' functions, adapt to their new duties and build friendly relationships with students, their parents and the whole school staff at the same time. This promoted the understanding of mentees' role as teachers, therefore contributing to stay motivated and remain in the teaching profession.

4.4.2. Challenges

The study did not reveal major challenges experienced by the participants and possible reasons could be; 1) these were the novice teachers and they did not have the experience of specific challenges and mostly they approached the problems as work-related moments, 2) these were the teachers who remained working at school after three months of a probation period; therefore, those who have already demonstrated certain professional success.

Yet, most of the respondents indicated that they had challenges amongst them being inadequate time to get feedback and to ask questions concerning lesson plans and execution of the lesson plan. One of the mentees reported incoherent responses that were not structured and that they did not address the concerns raised. Even those who cited not having serious challenge, were still concerned about the lack of time and this seemed to be an issue between the mentee and the mentor. Partly this was due to the workload that the mentors had hence not having more time to address issues raised adequately. Age and personality differences also emerged as an issue in having a fruitful relationship with the mentor. Most of the mentees cited that they would

want a mentor who not only understood them but also demonstrated the same personality as them.

One mentee (Mentee 7) did not feel confident enough to ask questions concerning exam tasks in grades 12 because of the fear to be misunderstood, hence perceived as less knowledgeable in terms of the subject they taught. Consequently, the issue remained unasked resulting in additional stress as shared in the following example: "...if the knowledge gap between these two people is too big, then it might bring additional inconveniences like discomfort for a mentee" (Mentee 7).

These challenges were dealt with by changing their mentors for those who also taught in the same grades and availing their time after school to meet the issue of limited time during school hours. Harmonizing timetable was another strategy that was used to curb the challenge of unavailability of the mentor as well as timely submission of concerns beforehand that also worked for most of the mentees.

4.5. Summary

This chapter demonstrated the findings related to the research questions of the given study. The received data showed that the mentees perceived mentoring as an assisting tool in adapting to a new working community of novice teachers as well as a possibility to develop professional skills. The chapter described mentees experience of mentoring in terms of how the mentors were allocated and how helpful mentoring was during their induction period. The findings showed that mentees preferred to be mentored by seniors whose age and personality were similar. Along with this, the chapter dwelled on the components of mentoring relationships that have been established successfully between the dyads promoting a positive experience for newly employed teachers. The components of mentoring relationships are as following: a) respect, b) open communication and accessibility, c) exchange of knowledge, d) independence, e) common goals, f) trust and collaboration, g) passion and inspiration, h) caring personal relationships, and i) role-modelling which are described in order of their importance for the

interviewees and show their value for the mentoring process. Furthermore, the chapter described positive aspects that involve professional development, timely feedback and individual meetings that helped the mentees to stay in the profession and some challenges of mentoring for the participants connected to time constraints and a big gap in knowledge that has caused additional stress, finally reporting how the challenges were dealt with.

In the next chapter, interpretations of the findings and their alignment with existing studies will be discussed in details.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides interpretations of the findings introduced in the previous chapter and aims to answer the research questions of this study, that is to identify how novice teachers build mentoring relationships in one secondary school, mentee's opinion in relation to key components of an effective mentoring relationships, and what benefits and challenges the participants have experienced when establishing mentoring relationships with more experienced colleagues. A case study approach of qualitative research was applied to conduct an in-depth analysis of teacher relationships during mentoring and eight teacher mentees with work experience of up to three years were chosen to participate in the study. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted to understand teacher relationships between novice teacher mentees and more experienced teacher mentors in one school in the South of Kazakhstan.

The chapter is organized into four sections. The first section discusses mentees' mentoring experience and describes how mentoring relationships have been built and why these relationships are built in a certain way. The second section comments on key components of mentoring relationships and why they are important. The third section explains why certain benefits and challenges of the mentoring process have been experienced by the participants of the study. Finally, the fourth section summarizes all the key points included in this chapter.

5.2. Mentoring experience

Most of the studies in the international context perceive mentoring as a process in which a more competent teacher shares knowledge and skills with a less experienced colleague (Brandau et al., 2017; Dağ & Sari, 2017; Gholam, 2018; Suchánková & Hrbáčková, 2009; Vula, et al., 2015), and when the latter gets an opportunity to develop his/her personal and professional capacities (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). Likewise, the data available in this study revealed that all the interviewed share this viewpoint as well. They stated that mentoring helped them to understand what they lacked in terms of teaching and develop their teaching skills.

Mentoring is a process in which two teachers work collaboratively; therefore, it is important to match a mentor and a mentee carefully in order to boost the effectiveness of mentoring (Spooner-Lane, 2017). The given study shows that proper matching is indeed necessary, considering the age, personalities, speed of work, and the grades that both a mentor and a mentee teach. When it comes to age, the participants clarify that working with a mentor with a similar age is more advantageous because it promotes open dialogues between the two. On the contrary, being paired with a mentor who is relatively older in age might bring certain disadvantages, resulting in the mentees not expressing opposing viewpoints as a way of showing respect to their older mentor. The reason behind this may lie in the culture of the interviewed participants where disagreeing or talking openly about everything that matters with elder people is not acceptable.

The participants also highlighted the importance of having similar personalities and teaching in the same grades as their mentees. Possible reasons for this included a) it is easier for mentees to learn from individuals whose personality is similar to theirs because they can understand and justify mentors' behavior, which is important in building a collaborative working atmosphere, and b) teaching in the same grades gives mentees the opportunity to watch how mentors would conduct lessons on the same topic and examine students' behavior of the same age group they teach. Indeed, a similar finding was revealed in Turkey, where the participants found it beneficial to learn "through modeling or imitation" (Dağ & Sarı, 2018, p. 115). Therefore, sharing similar "personalities" with mentors or teaching through imitation can be efficient at the beginning stages of teaching.

Once the dyad is paired, it is efficient for both counterparts to be aware of their duties (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016). Nevertheless, the findings in this study showed that there was one mentee that was not familiarized with the mentor's functions, which raised some misunderstandings between the pair when building their relationships at the initial stage. The mentee shared that he was not aware of why he needed a senior teacher to assist him

and what his duties were in relation to his mentor. In this regard, Galamay-Cachola et.al. (2018) suggest that clear expectations of the process and the articulation of roles of both counterparts are the core of any such relationship. The fact that there is a mentee unaware of mentors' functions shows that even though mentoring is becoming a common practice in schools in the last twenty years (Cook, 2012), there are still teachers who need additional clarification of the process and mentors should start with the introduction of duties and functions for both mentors and mentees.

Most of the studies in the teaching sphere suggest that mentoring is essential to the retention of novice teachers (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Garza et al., 2019; Warsame & Valles, 2018). Therefore, the school organizes mentoring programs to address the difficulties that novice teachers may encounter during their first years of teaching. According to respondents, a less structured approach was implemented in most cases to ensure that mentees' needs had been addressed. However, some of them further pointed to close supervision from their mentors' side as a more motivational tool during mentoring. This shows that mentees are willing to follow their mentors and prefer being closely supervised by them rather than working more independently. In other words, mentors can guide novice teachers through the initial stages, help to identify their needs, and form their aims in career (Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

Previous studies suggest that relationships that develop during mentoring are regarded by novice teachers as core in the mentoring process and that positive relationships established between the dyad are believed to increase the effectiveness of mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hessenauer & Law 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2016). When it comes to the given study, the data gathered show that the participants have experienced both formal mentoring relationships, where mentors are assigned by the head of department, and informal, where they could select mentors themselves (Leidenfrost et al., 2014; Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016; McKinsey, 2016; Tummons et al., 2016). Even though the mentees whose mentors were formally assigned to them did not note

any significant disadvantages, they still preferred being provided with the opportunity to make their own choices.

On the other hand, the relationships that were established during mentoring in this study can be characterized as congenial and collegial, with the participants experiencing both friendly personal communication and teamwork to develop a professional community (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017). The respondents shared that mentors supported the mentees through each step taken by directing and offering advice connected not only regarding teaching itself but also their personal lives. Additionally, they empowered the mentees by developing confidence in their abilities to perform not only as teachers but also as members of a new community.

5.3. Key components of mentoring relationships

In order to establish the most preferred components of mentoring relationships in the context of Kazakhstan, the participants had to elaborate and express their opinions on the key components of mentoring relationships identified by Eller et al., (2014), which proposed eight effective components in number. The findings of this study revealed the following key components of mentoring relationships: mutual respect, open communication and accessibility, exchange of knowledge, trust and collaboration, independence, common goals, passion and inspiration, caring personal relationship, and role-modelling.

A closer look at the above- mentioned finding shows that there is a strong alignment between the preferences of mentees in the given study with their colleagues in the study conducted by Eller et al., (2014). The participants of the study have found the given components important; therefore, there was no significant contrast between the way they were positioned in the previous research and in this study. Still, a slight difference in the participants' choice was noted, showing that mutual respect was of utmost importance for the respondents of this study in comparison with the respondents of Eller's study, where mutual respect was only fifth in the list of preferences. One reason for this could be that, in traditional Asian cultures, showing respect

and being obedient in relation to elder people is a sign of a good upbringing, and social intelligence is favored more than academic intelligence (Shariff, 2009).

A deeper analysis of the key components of mentoring relationships was conducted to categorize them according to their similarities. Consequently, three categories were revealed as being important. First, participants' leadership skills can be elicited when they elaborate on such components as mutual respect, exchange of knowledge, and common goals. The finding shows that respondents express their willingness to be not only those who receive knowledge but also those who can teach their mentors. They are aware of their effectiveness in foreign language competences and the usage of modern IT programs; therefore, they are willing to take the initiative and lead the mentors. In addition, the participants aspire to be acknowledged and respected by their mentors and share common goals with them. In other words, even though the participants were novice teachers and the research site became their new working environment, the leadership skills they possessed increased their effectiveness in building mentoring relationships. A similar finding was illustrated in the study of mentoring conducted by Laughlin and Moore (2012), where leadership style is raised as one of the most important factors to be developed during mentoring along with mentees' understanding of their teacher personalities and learning styles. Therefore, mentoring should be viewed not only as a process to help the mentees to stay in the profession but also as a process increasing mentees' leadership skills as well.

Second, components of mentoring relationships such as open communication, trust and collaboration, and caring personal relationships were beneficial in building participants' confidence in teaching. Through communicating openly and building caring relationships with mentors, the participants had the opportunity to share all the challenges they have experienced; hence, the participants learnt how to deal with students' inappropriate behavior, and ineffective teaching and gain some confidence in their roles as teachers. Trust from the mentor's side increased the participants' confidence in their abilities to learn and collaboration helped the mentees to become members of larger communities within the school. Therefore, through given

components, the participants became confident members of the school community ready to interact with larger groups of teachers and ready to face challenges. This is consistent with previous studies suggesting that mentoring is a process which can contribute to the development of novice teachers' confidence and self-efficacy by "providing opportunities to build success" (e.g., Chelberg & Bosman, 2020).

Third, such components as accessibility, independence, passion and inspiration, and role-modelling supported the participants to build their professional identity. Mentor's accessibility promoted timely constructive feedback through which mentees could understand what their teaching lacked and how to further develop their teaching skills. At the same time, passion and inspiration to teaching that was demonstrated by mentors was a motivational tool for the participants to grow professionally in teaching. Along with the model of effective teaching, the mentors supported mentees' independence when the participants could act based on their personal perception and learn from their mistakes. A similar parallel was drawn in the study of Khojah and Asif (2020) who identified mentoring of novice teachers as a way of forming professional identity through reflecting on teaching and advancing teaching practices.

In addition, one of the key findings of the study was that two-way relations, when the key components of mentoring relationships were shared between the mentor and the mentee, were of utmost importance. The participants noted that they have experienced both one way and mutual respect with their mentors and the second type of relation was more motivational for them. They also shared that it was important for them when their mentors expressed the same level of respect, trust, and openness during communication, making them feel a valuable member of the dyad. Mathipa and Matlabe (2016) suggest that mentoring is an opportunity for a two-way possibility of personal and academic improvement and learning for both counterparts. Moreover, through mentoring, not only do mentees develop their teaching skills, but mentors also benefit by experiencing a "two-way relationship" when both reflect on their performances and share teaching practices (Spooner-Lane, 2017, p. 260). Hence, mentors should perceive mentoring not

as a top-down process in which a mentor instructs and a mentee learns, but as more of an opportunity to develop their mentoring skills and personal traits. In this regard, Vula et al., (2015) assert that mentoring is more than just advising; it is more about working in collaboration, respecting, sharing the views of others, and total trust. Therefore, once again, even though all components are important in building successful mentoring relationship, it seems that their efficiency increase when they are shared, mutual, or two-way communicated.

5.4. Benefits and challenges

The study depicts that mentoring is the core of teachers' professional development and can be beneficial for mentees. The participants have highlighted the role of mentoring in building their perspectives as teachers. This aligns with numerous previous studies that have proved mentoring's efficacy in the development of teachers' professional skills (Brandau et al., 2017; Dağ & Sari, 2017; Gholam, 2018; Suchánková & Hrbáčková, 2009). Starting their teaching careers with no experience, the respondents noted that through participating in the mentoring programs they have gradually learned how to organize proper lessons and the way they should be delivered. Villegas-Reimers (2003) noted that through exploring and using different technologies mentees can become more experienced in terms of teaching. Hence, by attending their mentors' lessons and by being observed, the participants have had real-life practice which was important in understanding how to move more flexibly from one lesson stage to another.

Another important factor is constructive feedback, which helped them to understand what their teaching lacked and how to improve it. The finding in Izдания's (2017) and Manning's (2005) research confirm that constructive feedback given in time can reflect in openness in communication and increase the effectiveness of mentoring. On the other hand, it seemed that constructive feedback was important only when given right after the lesson when the mentee still remembered all the stages of the lesson clearly, but not after several days when most of the impressions of the lesson may have already been forgotten. Additionally, it was felt that

interviewees preferred receiving positive comments first rather than immediately starting with negative feedback.

Mentoring requires investments of time and effort from both members of the dyad; therefore, individual meetings organized by mentors have been efficient in addressing their needs. Mentoring is not teaching, and such meetings are mostly held at the end of lessons (McKinsey, 2016); therefore, the participants have had their meetings mostly at the end of the working day. According to the respondents of the study, during the meetings, they had the opportunity for one-on-one communication with mentors when they could discuss the issues connected not only to teaching but also to such additional problems as stress after a teaching day, students' unpleasant behavior or how to build relationships with the school community as a whole. This finding aligns with some other studies that have identified the nature of mentoring to be beneficial in dealing with mentees' stress during the first year of teaching (Hadi & Rudiyanto, 2017; Tummons et al., 2016), in building collaborative relationships with the school community (Bowman, 2014), and dealing with issues connected to students' behavior and parents (Dağ & Sarı, 2017). However, it seemed that the participants did not favor the idea of having such meetings after the workday, as they were tired and wanted to leave school as soon as working hours were over.

Along with those benefits that have already been mentioned, the participants have encountered some minor challenges as well. The participants shared that there was not enough time to have individual meetings every week because of the discrepancy in the timetable of both members of mentoring. In addition to mismatches in the schedule, the mentors often had extra workload apart from mentoring that added responsibilities to existing ones. A similar trend was found in the studies conducted by Spooner-Lane (2017), in which participants claimed lack of time as a demotivational factor of mentoring, and Koroleva (2017), in which the mismatch of schedules was identified as one of the main limitations of the process.

Another challenge that was noted by one participant is a fear of repeating questions. The participant had to study in high school, but the obtained knowledge was insufficient to prepare exam questions independently. The reason for that might have lied in the discrepancy between the knowledge and skills acquired at university and the modern demands of the workplace. The findings generated in this study validate the view that a major challenge experienced by novice teachers is the misalignment between what has been learned at university and the actual situation at school (Mkandawire, 2016).

5.5. Summary.

Overall, the results of this study align with many other studies previously conducted in terms of mentoring efficacy in providing a smooth induction for novice teachers, their experience in working in collaboration with more experienced teachers that resulted in successful establishment of mentoring relationships. During the interviews, it was clearly seen that participants were able to increase their confidence to act as successful members of the school community, form their professional identities as teachers and develop leadership skills. The study also confirmed some benefits of mentoring connected to professional development and the advantage of having one-one-one conversations on the advancement of teaching expertise. Along with similarities, there were some unique findings that make this study a novel contribution to the literature. For instance, it was important for participants to work with mentors of similar age and personality, which was not the case in the studies reviewed. Some countries emphasized the importance of mentoring skills and attending special courses to learn how to provide proper mentoring programs; however, this was not the case in the context of this study as the participants highlighted mentors' expertise in conducting mentoring. Moreover, nothing was revealed connected to "the speed of work" of both members in the context of other studies, which was important for the mentees of this study. The participants highlighted the importance of "the speed of work" to be similar because it seemed to increase the effectiveness of collaboration.

In the next chapter, the final conclusions of the study, as well as its implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research will be provided.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the final conclusions of the study, as well as its implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research. This qualitative study aimed at exploring the experience of novice teachers when building mentoring relationships with more experienced mentors and was guided by the following research questions (one main, two sub-questions): a) how mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees are built, b) what key components of an effective mentoring relationship are established, and c) what benefits and challenges are experienced by novice teacher mentees during mentoring.

The chapter is organized into five sections. In the first section, I provide an answer to the research questions in the light of the findings of the study and discuss to what extent the study provides an understanding of the research problem. In the second section, the implications of the study are addressed. In the third section, the limitations and the strengths of the study are highlighted, and in the fourth section recommendations for future research based on these aspects are provided. In the fifth section, a concluding statement recapping the most relevant findings and implications are provided to close this thesis.

6.1. Revisiting Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine novice teachers' experience and to identify key components of an effective mentoring relationships. The findings from this study allow to respond to the research questions that guided this study as follows.

RQ1: How do novice teacher mentees and more experienced teachers build their mentoring relationships in one secondary school in Kazakhstan?

Findings of this study suggest that mentoring is a school requirement, so each teacher enrolling to school must undergo some kind of mentoring process. Even though all the participants are novice teachers and their primary aim at undergoing mentoring is a smooth induction into a new work environment, they also highlight the efficiency of mentoring in their

professional advancement. It is also identified that there are no standard procedures to mentoring allocation as in some cases the mentors are simply assigned by the senior leadership team and in others they are selected by the mentees. Although both ways are acceptable and can bring to collaboration between the members in the eyes of the novice teachers, an opportunity to choose a mentor is still more preferable among the participants. In addition to that, it was found that such factors as mentors' personality, age, teaching grades and speed of work are also important and should be taken into consideration when matching the dyad. These factors seem to boost the effectiveness of mentoring relationships and support to build two-way relationships when mentees would view themselves as not only knowledge receivers, but as important members of the school community that can share knowledge, skills and advice too. A conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that in order to build positive mentoring relationships it is important for mentees to feel themselves as valuable members of the process and be acknowledged by their mentors. In this regard, it can also be concluded that a two-way communication, when mentees' opinion is appreciated and considered, must be central to mentoring.

SQ1: What are the key components of an effective mentoring relationship in the opinion of novice teacher mentees?

A major finding of this study was that all novice teachers expressed their opinions on mentoring relationships which provided a further description of key components of effective mentoring relationships in the context of Kazakhstan. These descriptions involved specific patterns of mentor-mentee behaviors as communicational skills and the ability to listen, the way the dyads interacted building caring personal relationship, mentees' needs as individual meetings and constant support when building relationships at a workplace, and preferable personal qualities as friendliness, work-ethic and accessibility for both mentors and mentees. Participants also indicated that lack of such components as mutual respect, trust, independence, and open communication were demotivational factors for mentees that decreased their effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. A conclusion emerging from the findings is that novice teachers'

confidence (i.e., self-efficacy) in teaching skills, motivation and willingness to take initiatives that mentees acquire during mentoring are one of the most important takeaways mentees expect to get. A related conclusion is that developing mentees' confidence to teach and the constant motivation that a mentor can give are equally important when establishing positive mentoring relationships.

SQ2: What benefits and challenges do mentees experience during their mentoring relationships with more experienced mentors?

Findings of this study suggest that mentoring was perceived to be an efficient tool in increasing novice teachers' retention at school. Participants also highlighted its benefit in developing teachers' professionalism because through two-way lesson observations and constant feedback the mentees could accelerate their professional knowledge, lesson planning and teaching skills. In addition, individual meetings seemed to increase mentees' enthusiasm since their needs in terms of getting in time support and having the questions been answered were addressed. On the other hand, participants expressed their concern on lack of time to get proper feedback due to discrepancy in schedules both mentors and mentees. A conclusion emerging from this is that lack of time could be the reason for some mentors not to introduce mentors' duties and functions.

6.3. Implications for theory, practice and policy

Collectively, this study has the potential to become the first study conducted in the context of Kazakhstan to inform what types of mentoring relationships are preferable from the perspectives of novice teacher mentees. Theoretically, this study offers interesting insights for the understanding of what components of mentoring relationships are preferable among novice teacher mentees and how they are established at school. The findings from the present study strongly support the theory-based predictions suggested by Eller et.al. (2014), who argued that key components of mentoring relationships can be identified as aspects of successful mentoring. The study identified that the findings of this study can be used to inform a dialogue between

mentor-mentee pairs who are planning to undergo mentoring relationship. The study indicated that identified components of mentoring relationships were indeed effective when establishing mentoring relationships and should be a consistent part of any mentoring program. In addition, this study is significant with its novel contributions to the existing literature with such findings as the importance of having similar personality and age with mentor teachers and teaching in the same grade levels.

The practical implications of this study are that for schools similar to the research site investigated in this study, mentoring can be most successful when a proper matching of the dyad and clarity on the functions for both mentors and mentees prior to the process are taken into consideration. Also, mentors need to consider these key components of mentoring relationships when establishing their relations with mentee teachers. The findings of the study are especially relevant to teachers, who consider entering mentoring programs to assess and adapt their behavior according to the description of key components; hence, increase the efficiency of mentor-mentee relationship to guarantee positive outcome of the mentoring process.

In terms of policy implications, school principals should consider the findings of this study in order to prepare a school policy on mentoring, or revise the existing policy to check if the given aspects are addressed: a) clearly identified functions, rights and responsibilities for both counterparts of the process, b) meeting timeliness, c) a clear description of the program with written aims and expected outcomes.

Also, the findings of the study are relevant to teachers, who consider entering mentoring programs to assess and adapt their behavior according to the description of key components; hence, increase the efficiency of mentor-mentee relationship to guarantee positive outcome of the mentoring process. Policy makers can also consider the findings of this study and support the implementation of mentoring programs throughout Kazakhstan. They can also organize professional development trainings for mentor teachers and develop their mentoring skills and

the ability to establish effective components of mentoring relationships basing on the results of this study.

6.4. Limitations and Strengths of the Study

The results of the study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the number of participants and recruitment procedures do not permit to generalize the data of the study as only eight novice teachers participated in the study. Second, the sample lacked ethnic diversity, so it was not possible to assess whether ethnicity plays an important on mentoring relationships. This is important considering the wide ethnic diversity in the context of Kazakhstan. Third, the participants had to elaborate only on effective components of mentoring relationships; therefore, no negative components were identified which could also enrich the results by enlisting the example of negative experiences that could be avoided in the future. It is also necessary to acknowledge that the voices of mentors were not heard during the study which could add to results by showing the opinion of another counterpart which might be different or in consensus with the participants of this study. Most importantly, those interviewed are still in the teaching profession; therefore, only the experience of “successful teachers” that is mostly positive is taken into account.

Despite these limitations, this study uses a qualitative case study approach that offers a novel approach and meaningful contribution to the study of mentoring relationships in the context of Kazakhstan. Using preliminary exploratory as a primary unit of analysis produced an understanding and description of key components of an effective mentoring relationship from mentees’ perception. Thus, the findings of this study might be useful for teacher who plan to enter mentorship as mentors to acquire additional knowledge about mentees’ needs and preferences.

6.5. Future Research

Based on the findings of the study and the limitations indicated above, some recommendations for future research can be outlined. For example, future studies could replicate

the findings of this study using quantitative methodological approach that addresses some limitations of the study as small sample size and at the same time involvement of mentor teachers to make their voices be heard. Also, other studies should consider exploring the same topic by examining the voices of mentor and mentees together in order to examine both positive and negative components of mentoring relationships in order to help mentees with negative consequences of mentoring. Additionally, further research should take a closer look at ethnic and gender differences when establishing mentoring relationships and what variations it might bring to results of the study.

The present study highlights the importance of building positive mentoring relationships as the key factor of successful mentoring programs. Overall, the study suggests that a mentor becomes central to the whole process and mentor's ability to direct a mentee leaving the feeling of being acknowledged and valued is an important factor when building mentoring relationships. These findings were consistent with all the previous studies conducted in the context of other countries. The implications of these findings are that novice teacher mentees have similar needs and the aim of mentoring is to address them.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date:

Participant code:

School code:

Interview components:

- Greeting the participants and thanking for cooperation and collaboration
- Informing the issues of confidentiality, risks and benefits
- Informing the duration
- Informing how the interview will be conducted, including audio recording
- Giving the hard copy of the consent form
- Asking if the participants have any questions
- Interview itself
- Saying goodbye

The Semi-structured interview questions for teachers (one-on-one interview):

- 1) When did you join the school?
- 2) How is mentoring implemented in the school?
- 3) How would you describe your experience of the mentoring process?
- 4) How would you describe your relationship (the way you communicate) between you and your mentor?
- 5) In your opinion, what are key components to build a positive relationship?
- 6) What do you think about open communication and accessibility?
- 7) What do you think about goals and challenges?
- 8) What do you think about passion and inspiration?
- 9) What do you think about caring personal relationship?
- 10) What do you think about mutual respect and trust?
- 11) What do you think about exchange of knowledge?
- 12) What do you think about independence and collaboration ?
- 13) What do you think about role modelling?
- 14) Are they important for the mentoring process or not? Why?
- 15) What challenges did you have when building your relationship with your mentor?
How did you overcome your challenges?

Appendix 2

Sample Segment of CODED Interview Transcript

Participant: Mentee 4 (M4:)

Date: December 23, 2019

R: When did you join the school?

M4: I joined the school on October 1, 2019, and this is my first working experience.

R: How was the mentor assigned to you? Did you have a right to choose or not?

M4: AM2 [Yes, I could choose among four teachers who were selected for me as mentors], **MP1** [so I chose the one whose age was closer to mine, and whose personality I liked very much].

R: So, you mean, you've never had a chance to choose your mentor?

M4: Right!

R: How would you describe your experience of the mentoring process?

M4: WP1 [Firstly, we sat together and made a work plan, once it was ready], **B4** [she continued by teaching me some features of formative and summative assessments, lesson plan structure and was ready to answer any of my questions]. **Ch 3** [Owing to her, I didn't have any problems at the end of the term when we were making our analysis]. She explained to me the way it should have been done, so it was easy for me from the beginning, I can say.

R: How would you describe your relationship (the way you communicate) between you and your mentor?

M4: We have close and friendly relationships not only during work hours but out of school too. **B1** [We spend a lot of time together, learning from each other as well as having fun together. Sometimes I even joke around our department telling "Ask my mentor, she knows if I am going to do this or not" when any teacher asks me to fulfill their requests (laughing).

R: In your opinion, what are the key components of building a positive relationship? As I can see, you are very close to your mentor, so what has promoted such a warm relationship?

M4: It is probably because I am extremely sociable and of course it is owing to her absolute openness. She doesn't frame me and lets me talk to her any time I need, even if it is late in the evening. I really appreciate this and do all my best in order not to disappoint her.

R: Have you ever phoned her after 9 p.m.?

M4: Well, after 9 p.m. I don't work myself (smiling), but I called her at 8 p.m. once and there weren't any problems with that. She didn't sound annoyed or not approving.

R: What do you think about having common goals?

M4: I don't think it is the main aim of the mentoring process. **GCh2** [We are individuals with different visions and goals; hence, it is not necessary for us to have the same goal unless we want to make a project work or conduct research together]. Then, we can share a common goal.

R: What do you think about open communication and accessibility? Is it important when you can talk to your mentor openly and any time you need it?

M4: **OA1** [Open communication matters as it promotes the development of a positive relationship and when there is a friendly atmosphere you feel at ease asking about anything that worries you]. **OA2** [When it comes to accessibility, there should be some limits. I don't approve of calling your mentor at 12 p. m just because you need to ask something]. Ultimately, people should follow ethical norms. Though it is important during work time, it should be allowed after work hours.

R: What do you think about passion and inspiration. Are they important in order to build a positive mentoring relationship?

M4: I think it is important. For example, my mentor always tells me about different situations happened during her first years at school, how she reacted at that time and how she'd react today. **PI1** [Such stories inspire me to work harder. Sometimes, she even recommends me watching certain movies and then we discuss them together]. There are times when I cannot plan a lesson the way I want so I get really upset. During such situations, she always supports me in telling motivational phrases.

R: What do you think about a caring personal relationship? How far is it important to you?

M4: **CR1** [I can say, it is important. At least you feel pleased when your mentor asks how you are or being attentive to you when you are ill].

R: What do you think about mutual respect and trust?

M4: I think this is the most important part of any relationship. **RT1** [People must respect each other in order to build a friendly relationship].

R: What do you think about the exchange of knowledge?

M4: **EK1** [I'd say this is the core of the mentoring relationship].

R: What do you think about independence and collaboration?

M4: **IC2** [Hmmm, also important but I don't know for sure. I cannot answer the question].

R: What do you think about role modeling?

M4: **R2** [It depends on the mentor. Not all mentoring relations go smoothly as there are cases when a mentor and a mentee cannot work together for certain reasons].

R: Then what about you? What can you say about role-modeling from your experience?

M4: My mentor is a role model by her nature. Most of the teachers at school try to follow her example. However, for the mentoring process, it is not so necessary. Every person needs to decide whether he should follow his mentor's example or not.

R: Apart from these components of mentoring relationships, what would you add in the list in the context of our country?

M4: I'd say respect for elder people. If your colleague is your mentor, he or she is definitely elder you for at least some years. You don't have to like your mentor, but you must respect him.

R: What challenges did you have when building your relationship with your mentor?

M4: Ch 3 [I didn't have any challenges when building relationships with my mentor. She always shares with everything, talks to me, takes the responsibilities]. We even prepare plans and summative assessments together.

R: What about times when she gives feedback to you? Haven't you ever been hurt by given comments?

M4: Never. All teachers in my department are much older than me, so if they express their thought about my performance, I am only grateful for them because they see what I do not notice and they want me to become a good specialist in the sphere.

Appendix 3
Template for coding and categorizing

Category	Theme	Quotations (mentee)
AM Allocation of a mentor	AM1 Automatic assignment	I didn't choose my mentor, However, I am glad I have this colleague as my mentor as she is one of the most experienced and respected teachers in our department and indeed, she knows everything (laughing)..(Mentee 2). It was assigned by the department head (Mentee 6) I couldn't choose a mentor, I was only told that that person would be my mentor...(Mentee 7). I didn't choose she was assigned (Mentee 8).
	AM2 Opportunity to choose a mentor	I had a choice and among three mentors offered I chose the one who was older than others because I thought she would be the most experienced...(Mentee1). During the first day at school, the head department talked to me and offered to choose a mentor. I don't know why, but I had to choose only between two teachers...(Mentee 3). Yes, I could choose among four teachers who were selected for me as mentors....(Mentee 4). ...I was given a chance to choose a mentor myself...(Mentee 5). If it was possible, I wish I could have a chance to choose my mentor at the beginning (Mentee 7).
UT Undergoing training before being hired	UT1 Undergoing training at the research cite	One reason for our successful collaboration might be the fact that I've had my trainee period here, at this school. Therefore I've known the mentor for some months by the time I decided to enroll to the school. She was my supervisor at that time and she was the one to invite me to work here (Mentee 2). One more thing is, I've had two months` practice at this school and these teachers supported me a lot during that period (Mentee 5).
MP Mentees preferences	MP1 mentor's personality and age	Well, in my case I would say age matters. I think if my mentor was about 30-35 years, I would feel more comfortable and would be able to talk openly (Mentee 1). The reason behind my choice was the age of my mentor as she was not much older. So, I thought we could be friends too... I would lose the logical chain. It might be my problem as I am very slow by nature whereas my mentor is very bright, active and fast-paced (Mentee 3). ...so I chose the one whose age was closer to mine, and whose personality I liked very much (Mentee 4).
	MP2 Teaching in the same grade level	I talked to the department head and asked his permission to change the mentor. I explained him that I felt uncomfortable with my mentor and asked him to assign someone who would work in the same level of grades with me. Someone who would also teach in the primary school as well (Mentee 1)
	MP3 Close supervision	Well, I cannot take the position of every novice teacher at school but from my perspectives close supervision is important. When someone supervises you, you try your

		<p>best, you try to reach your mentor`s goals and not to disappoint (Mentee 1). There is a saying “trust but check”, hence, a mentor should trust his mentee but close supervision is equally important (Mentee 6).</p>
	MP3 Same speed of work	<p>...Very much, as her extreme activeness scared me sometimes.. (Mentee 3). Depending on their speed of work teachers tend to choose different techniques when teaching the same topic. For example, one of them is slow when explaining a new topic making a lot of pauses when talking. When it comes to my mentor, I think I am at the same pace as her and I like very much (Mentee 5).</p>
WP Certain work plan	WP1 Followed	<p>...there wasn`t any special work plan. I think she had just known what a novice teacher would probably need (Mentee 3). Firstly, we sat together and made a work plan, once it was ready, she continued...(Mentee 4).</p>
	WP2 Did not have any	<p>It`s just there were times when you could come up to my mentor and ask anything I wanted..(Mentee 1). ...we didn`t have a certain time to meet but I could consult her (or any other teacher as all teachers in my department were supportive) any time I needed...(Mentee 6).</p>
Key components of mentoring relationship		
OA Open communication and accessibility	OA1 Important	<p>..the more you talk to your mentor, the more you want to tell about your problems (Mentee 1). The most important factor for me is openness in communication, when your mentor doesn`t hide anything from you and is ready to share... (Mentee 2). If I was a mentor myself I wouldn`t be glad if my mentee would come any time and ask everything. As a working person my mentor also has her duties... (Mentee 2) Open communication is important. It promotes the feeling of relief, you become free because you do not stress...(Mentee 3). Open communication matters as it promotes the development of a positive relationship and when there is a friendly atmosphere.. (Mentee 4). It is indeed important. When a mentor is open to his mentee, it promotes a relaxed atmosphere..... my mentor is accessible, so it is beneficial when you can contact your mentor at any time (Mentee 5). I agree with open communication as if a person can speak freely about his difficulties (I mean mentees) it will help him to overcome them and develop all needed skills. When it comes to accessibility we should remember about the mentor`s own duties as a teacher. I`d say it is important but it should be in the working frameworks (Mentee 6).</p>

		It is important. For example, I can go to my mentor`s office any time I can to talk about what worries me or what I dislike, sometimes even just to chat (Mentee 8).
	OA2 Somehow important	When it comes to accessibility, there should be some limits. I don`t approve of calling your mentor at 12 p. m just because...(Mentee 4). Well, I don`t think that having an open relationship is so important because if a person needs something, I think he can find it anyway (Mentee 7). Accessibility is also not so important. I wouldn`t say she helped me a lot. Yes, I know I have someone ready to help me, but if I need to ask something, I can talk to other teachers too (Mentee 7).
GCh Goals and challenges;	GCh1 Important	It is also important. This was the reason why I decided to change my mentor at the beginning...(Mentee 1) If we have a goal, let`s say, to prepare a scientific project! That would have been great! (Mentee 2). Well, a mentor is someone whose knowledge and skills are some levels higher than yours, so having shared goals can help a mentee to reach the level of the mentor faster (Mentee 3). Sharing common goals is important (Mentee 5). This is an important factor because when you know that you are having common goals or going through some challenges together with your mentor, a mentee can feel at ease communicating with his mentor (Mentee 7). It is important too. Sharing challenges brings people together and they become closer to each other (Mentee 8).
	GCh2 Somehow important	We are individuals with different visions and goals; hence, it is not necessary for us to have the same goal...(Mentee 4). It is evident that a newly hired teacher may have completely different goals in comparison with a more experienced teacher. Therefore, I am confused a bit (Mentee 6).
PI Passion and inspiration;	PI1 Important	If I have inspiration, I ask more questions. If I am not inspired, I don`t ask questions, hence I am not motivated to develop...(Mentee 2). Inspiration matters, especially from the mentee`s side (Mentee 3). ...Such stories inspire me to work harder. Sometimes, she even recommends me watching certain movies and then we discuss them together (Mentee 4). Of course, it matters. Just looking at how motivated teaching might me you want to teach at the same level (Mentee 5). It is very important. For example, I can see that my mentor is very passionate about teaching and conducting a lesson.... (Mentee 6.) Attending her lessons, I could see her activeness, the way she was involving her students in the lesson, the way she was passionate and inspired herself. This made me feel the same way, I mean, I also wanted to be a teacher like the one she was.. (Mentee 6).

		Important. Any person surrounding you whether it is your colleague, or a friend influences you (Mentee 7).
	PI2 Somehow important	Maybe it is not that important. Well, in my case I would say age matters. (Mentee 1). I am not sure, maybe not so important (Mentee 8).
CR Caring personal relationship;	CR1 Important	I think caring personal relationship is the most influential factor in building a positive relationship (Mentee 2). I can say, it is important. At least you feel pleased when your mentor asks how are you or being attentive to you when you are ill (Mentee 4). It is important, as any novice teacher might have various problems connected to personal or school life(Mentee 6).
	CR2 Somehow important	I'd say I better know the truth without being cared of. You know, sometimes people do not want to hurt you, so they try to tell about your drawbacks... (Mentee 1) Well, this is not a family relationship to care about the member of the family...(Mentee 5). Of course, it should be, but not too much. If a mentor is too careful with a mentee, it might decrease his performance (Mentee 3). Well, I can't say anything about it (Mentee 8).
RT Mutual respect and trust;	RT1 Important	Indeed, it is important. However, coming back to age, it is very hard to build mutual respect with a much older mentor you in comparison with a younger one (Mentee 1). Indeed, respect is very important, especially, from a mentee`s side (Mentee 2) You respect your mentor, when he is qualified, you believe you can learn and benefit a lot from this cooperation (Mentee 3). I think this is the most important part of any relationship. People must respect each other in order to build a friendly relationship (Mentee 4). Respect and trust must be a part of any relationship. So, yes, it is important (Mentee 5). This is crucial because if two people do not respect each other, there can't be any talk about collaborative work (Mentee 6). If a person doesn't trust me my motivation decreases. The more people trust me, the more inner-power I get (Mentee 7). It is important. I appreciate what she has done for me. That`s why I respect her very much (Mentee 8).
	RT2 Somehow important	
EK Exchange of knowledge;	EK1 Important	Yes, of course and the best way is to attend his lesson and learn from a real-life experience (Mentee 1). As she is my mentor, I want to learn more from her, so I want her to share her knowledge with me. In my turn I can help her with her English (Mentee 2). I can say that I respect people that are ready to share with everything they know, they have prepared, I am talking about various resources that are being built through years (Mentee 3) I'd say this is the core of the mentoring relationship (Mentee 4).

		<p>The exchange of knowledge is very important. I don't know if I can share my knowledge or in what spheres I can help my mentor, but she shares her knowledge about everything (Mentee 5).</p> <p>This is the gist of the mentoring relationship (Mentee 6). (thinking) Isn't it the main reason for organizing mentoring? My mentor's experience and knowledge are very crucial, though I don't know if my experience is important for her (Mentee 7).</p> <p>I've learned a lot of teaching methods from her but not connected to the subject we teach (Mentee 8).</p>
	EK2 Somehow important	
IC Independence and collaboration;	IC1 Important	<p>Collaboration is important but not independence, at least until a mentee is skillful enough (Mentee 1).</p> <p>I can say that I am independent of my mentor when making decisions about some stages of the lesson and this is important for me (Mentee 3).</p> <p>Independence is a part of our relationship. I listen to her yet when making the decision I follow my intuition (Mentee 5).</p> <p>It is important for me. This is my second year and I can complete most of the tasks independently. When we discuss something today, she just advises me and gives the chance to choose my direction and I appreciate this (Mentee 8).</p>
	IC2 Somehow Less important	<p>Hmmm, also important but I don't know for sure. I cannot answer the question (Mentee 4).</p> <p>Mostly, I would be afraid of being independent because I feared to make mistakes. That is why I followed every direction I was give..(Mentee 6).</p>
R Role modelling	R1 Important	<p>If your mentor is a role model for you, hence, you want to be like her, and you learn more from her (Mentee 2).</p> <p>It is important when a mentor inspires you and you perceive him as a role model (Mentee 5). (thinking.....) maybe not my mentor but some people inspired me with their behavior, the way then build relationships with their students... (Mentee 7).</p>
	R2 Somehow important	<p>I don't think it is important as every person is unique. I cannot behave myself during the lesson as she does, again age difference.. (Mentee 1)</p> <p>It is not 100% important. You know, every person is unique with his skills and abilities, views and preferences (Mentee 3).</p> <p>It depends on the mentor. Not all mentoring relations go smoothly as there are cases when a mentor and a mentee cannot work together for certain reasons (Mentee 4).</p> <p>You shouldn't follow someone blindly, I suppose. Yes, you can learn some positive sides of teaching or anything connected to your work but it doesn't mean your mentor should be your role model (Mentee 6).</p> <p>I don't think it matters much. I want to be responsible as my mentor. Nothing more (Mentee 8).</p>
B Benefits	B1 Smooth induction	<p>So, my induction period is being smooth as I already have some experience working at this school (Mentee 5).</p>

		<p>We wrote lesson plans together for two months and used to send me all the additional resources required for the lesson (Mentee 8).</p> <p>We spend a lot of time together, learning from each other as well as having fun together (Mentee 4).</p>
	B2 Professional development	<p>She provided me with all the resources I needed and directed me on how to conduct it. So, I'd say it was a positive experience (Mentee 3).</p> <p>When my mentor said that she believed in me that is why I should have conducted the workshop in another school, I was so happy, so I tried my best not to disappoint her (Mentee 3).</p> <p>I've known about active methods of teaching from my mentors (Mentee 6).</p> <p>A mentor suggested to me what to read and how to teach certain topics. Three years apart, I have the confidence to teach someone and share with my knowledge too (Mentee 6).</p> <p>She supports me even today. In two days, I am going to another region with a workshop and she helped me to prepare for this seminar yesterday (Mentee 8).</p> <p>I and my mentor are working together on Lesson Study and Action Research. She has organized the process and I am following her (Mentee 8).</p>
	B3 Individual meetings	<p>Initially, we would meet very often, about three times a week. Besides, I would go looking for her every time I needed any help to clarify certain issues (Mentee 3).</p> <p>However, at the beginning of every term, we sit together look through our schedules and assign certain days for official meetings (Mentee 5).</p> <p>...when I had just started, I had some problems with the students' behavior and their parents. So, during individual meetings I'd ask the way to solve the situation and yes, she would always direct me (Mentee 5).</p> <p>Of course, we had other meetings as well but the first one was important for me as she informed me about everything I needed at that time (Mentee 6).</p> <p>She would recommend me how to talk to parents and how to treat my students, so I can say she has taught me everything (Mentee 6).</p> <p>During such informal meetings, she can give me important advice (Mentee 8).</p>
	B4 Lesson planning	<p>During the first week at school, she conducted a series of workshops to me, where I learned some peculiarities of lesson planning like lesson stages, warm-up activities, types of assessment and how to work on writing assessment criteria...every time I observed her lessons, I was amazed by her proficiency to conduct a perfect lesson, her time management and the way she behaved. I would attend her lesson, observe her behavior and make notes (Mentee 3).</p> <p>...she continued by teaching me some features of formative and summative assessments, lesson plan structure and was ready to answer any of my questions (Mentee 4).</p>

		<p>During our first meeting, she examined everything connected to the school structure, lesson planning (Mentee 6).</p> <p>She started with the explanation of the lesson plan structure and proceeded with the difference between the learning objectives and the lesson objectives (Mentee 8).</p>
	B5 Lesson observations	<p>During the first year at school we worked closely, I attended her lessons, especially in grade 9, I would observe the way she was teaching, then come back to my grade 9 and conduct the lesson in the same way.....</p> <p>After the lesson, she would give constructive feedback that helped me to understand the drawbacks.... (Mentee 3).</p> <p>Then we attend each other`s lessons. I can say we have a whole week's collaboration (Mentee 5).</p> <p>Another important thing is the constant observation of my lessons and constructive feedback given to me (Mentee 6). I believe he should still observe the lesson and give constructive feedback, attend the lesson a second time and see what progress has been made (Mentee 6).</p>
Ch Challenges	Ch1 Time	<p>In most cases it was connected to discrepancy of time, as sometimes I needed to discuss a very important matter...(Mentee 2).</p> <p>Sometimes I want to attend a certain lesson, but I have my own lesson at that time, so it is impossible. Though some problems might occur connected to time we always decide it... (Mentee 5).</p> <p>The only problem was when we didn`t have time to meet and discuss some issues...(Mentee 6).</p>
	Ch2 Lack of confidence	<p>..if the knowledge gap between these two people is too big, then it might bring additional inconveniences like discomfort (Mentee 7).</p> <p>I had a lot of questions to ask. But then I had a feeling what if she thought why I couldn`t work on my own and find everything myself. That is why even it was hard for me I still tried to find the answers to those questions myself. This is what I remember (Mentee 7).</p>
	Ch 3 No challenge	<p>Owing to her, I didn`t have any problems at the end of the term when we were making our analysis (Mentee 4).</p> <p>I didn`t have any problems, she was a role model for me from the beginning and she remained like that (Mentee 5).</p> <p>I think, I didn`t have any challenges when building a relationship with my mentor (Mentee 6).</p> <p>I didn`t have any challenges apart from some inconsistency in our schedule that was rearranged (Mentee 8).</p>

Appendix 4
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(for teacher participants)

**Teacher Mentoring Relationships in one school in South Kazakhstan: Experiences,
Preferences and Challenges.**

DESCRIPTION:

You are invited to participate in a **research study** on analyzing the experiences, preferences and challenges the teachers of schools go through when building mentoring relationships with their mentors. You are being invited to participate in this research because your experience as a member of school teaching team can contribute to our understanding and analyzing of teachers' experiences and challenges of teachers of this school.

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with your permission to record it. Your confidentiality will be protected, since your real name will not be used in any research report derived from this study, only pseudonyms. Moreover, the recorded interviews will be deleted after transcribing the interviews. During the analysis process only the supervisor and the researcher will have an access to the data. As the process of interviewing starts you will have an opportunity not to answer any of the questions that you will find not appropriate.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 60 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Risks concerning your personal and professional life for you as a result from participating in this research are minimal. Your name will not be reported in any research report derived from this study. Only the researcher will know the coding schema that will be used to substitute real names of the participants. All the information collected on this study will be stored information on a password-protected personal computer of the researcher. However, during conducting the interview there may be some minor risks concerning the time that you will spend for the interview, as you will be interrupted from your everyday activities. From these considerations, it is up to you when and where to appoint the meeting for the interview, the researcher will try to fit in with your plans.

A possible advantage is the professional development of the teacher through participation in the study. Participation in the study will allow you to make an analysis of your teaching practice, and perhaps will help you to further reveal your potential as a teacher. Participation in the study does not provide any rewards.

Your decision whether to participate or not in this study will not affect your work in school.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the researcher.....

Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work.....

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.