



RESEARCH PAPER

**Mentoring Role of Senior Colleagues in Professional Socialization
of Beginning English Teachers in Pakistan**

Dr. Adnan Tahir¹ Dr. Zia Ahmed² Dr. Ayyaz Qadeer³

1. Associate Professor, Department of English, Govt. Emerson College, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Professor, Department of English, Govt. Emerson College, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS University Islamabad, Wah Campus, Punjab, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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Corresponding

Author:

adnantahirquires
hi@gmail.com

This study explores the mentoring role of senior colleagues in the professional socialization process of beginning English teachers. The study has employed the survey method for generating the required data from a randomly chosen stratified sample from the colleges located in the Punjab province and the capital city Islamabad, Pakistan. A valid questionnaire measuring the constructs under investigation was used for data collection, the results of which were then statistically evaluated using both descriptive and inferential analysis techniques. It was found that senior colleagues had an effective mentoring role in the successful professional socialization of beginning English teachers. However, the study results also highlighted some issues related to workgroup relationship of senior colleagues and principals. The study would help the beginning teachers to understand better and thus strengthen their working relationships with their senior colleagues. This would ultimately lead towards a successful teaching career

Introduction

The field of teacher professional learning, the focus is changing from the off-the-job developmental program to the on-the-job workplace learning. The successful workplace socialization can be linked with many other organizational variables, e.g., the self-efficacy, teacher academic priorities, and level of job satisfaction. It is a common observation that the teachers, especially, the beginning teachers are not satisfied with traditional off-the-job training modules as they are not effective in the real life classroom situation. In the context of the present scenario of workplace socialization, the mentoring role of senior teachers is of great significance. The senior teachers, including both the teachers of the same standard and the administrators, can influence the course of professional development largely.

The main objective of this study is to explore the influencing role of senior colleagues in the initial occupational enculturation of beginning teachers in their jobs and to predict the challenges in establishing healthy professional relationships with their senior teachers and principals. The study attempts to understand how the principals and subject related senior teachers contribute to the initial adjustment of these novice English teachers to their teaching profession. This study has been conducted in the education context of Pakistani institutions to explore how strongly the mentoring and guidance of senior teachers influence beginning teachers' job satisfaction and performance level. The study also prepares the recommendation based on the findings of this study as to how the situation can be worked out towards better relationship of novice teachers with their senior teachers and the principals. Finally, the findings are important and can be linked up with strong and healthy association among the teachers, cooperative role of principals and administrators, supportive organization culture, and, the most significant, positive development in teachers' self-image. Fisher (1986) has pointed out various factors indicating the successful functioning of beginning teachers and senior teachers including healthy working relationship with colleagues, developing self-efficacy, continuous occupational development and enculturation into the organizational culture. The study aims to understand the nature and types of challenges related to the working relationship of novice teachers with their coworkers and senior colleagues.

Literature Review

Beginning teachers' effective socialization in the local context

Danziger (1971) explains teacher professional socialization is a multifaceted process whereby the individual teachers effectively acquire the practices, norms, behaviors, knowledge and skills required for successful adjustment in teaching profession and the education culture of that particular organization where teachers choose to work. The process of teacher professional socialization is highly influenced by the indigenous culture and hence the similar studies have been conducted in different cultural contexts and institutional backgrounds. Similarly, Zeichner and Gore (1990) have recorded a number of studies of different regions of the world including Australia, the United Kingdom and United States. These comprehensive studies explore both commonality and uniqueness in the process of teacher professionalization in specific cultural context. If looked from the unique cultural perspective, it must be realized that findings of the works done in native English speaking regions must not be generalized for the non-English speaking countries. These studies share another commonality of focusing on the prospective and beginning teachers on the assumption that the initial period in teaching job is the most crucial time to get socialized with organizational and professional norms, values and practices, i.e. educational culture.

According to Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999), the indicators for successful professional socialization are the successful and effective programs arranged formally and informally for the professional learning of teachers, whether on individual level or institutional. Smith (1989) concludes that successful professional socialization affect the beginning teachers at least in three ways: enhancing their level of job satisfaction, strengthening their job commitment, and reducing the turnover phenomenon. It has been observed that successful adjustment in the early years of teaching job reduces the turnover rates to a large extent (Feldman, 1981). In Pakistani institutions, the novice teachers have to deal with many challenges, e.g., non-productive professional learning programs, absence of healthy relationship with the heads, absence of good infrastructure (Tahir & Qadir, 2009). Many studies, e.g, Warsi (2004), Siddiqui (2002) and Sarwar (2001), conducted in Pakistani context, have explored the miserable plight of English language teaching in academic institutions. These poor conditions are not conducive to the successful organization socialization of teachers, especially who have newly joined the profession.

Mentoring Role of Senior Teachers

In the educational institutions, senior and experienced colleagues, especially of the same grade, are a great source of inspiration, guidance and direction for the beginning teachers (Southwell, 1970). Taylor and Dale (1971) have found that the beginning teachers frequently consult their senior teachers for problem resolution and seeking their advice to comply with the institutional regulations and practices. If not formally assigned, at least the informal mentoring from the senior colleagues is a common phenomenon for seeking academic guidance (Fair, 1973). Mentoring from senior teachers is the most successful workplace learning strategy, which ultimately contributes positively to the successful professional adjustment of beginning teachers. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) present a strong relationship between the outcomes of professional development with the enhancement in the reflective approach which illuminates teachers' self-image, an essential constituent of effective professional socialization. Carter (2000), in the comprehensive literature review on the role of mentors in the professionalization of teachers, has explored how strongly the mentors and senior colleagues affect the successful enculturation of novice teachers. According to Marsick and Watkins (2005), a strong connection between reflective transformational approach and the successful teachers' development programs. They assert that the transformation approach of mentoring is directly associated with the improved self-image, occupational values and the behaviors of teachers to evaluate, react, interpret and question the professional culture. In a comprehensive study, Malderez and Bodoczky (1999) have explored the five influential roles of effective mentors: beginning teachers get inspiration from them; mentees seek their advice and guidance in their adjustment to the new job settings; they guide and make connection between beginning teachers and the right people; beginning teachers seek the support and help of these senior teachers in dealing with

classroom and organizational challenges; they motivate and educate beginning teachers for professional learning programs.

Principals as Role Model for Beginning Teachers

Commonly, all the academic and administrative activities in the institutions at college level move around the principal who is generally responsible for initiating all the institutional programs and projects. In a study of an extensive review of literature, Gimbert and Fultz (2009) classified the role of principals in four dimensions. The first and foremost role of a principal is to promote a healthy working environment with the teachers, especially the novice teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). A sensible principal pays full attention on establishing good relationship with new teachers by directly providing mentoring and guidance in their classroom affairs, listening to their organizational, managerial and academic problems emphatically, receiving feedback on various programs and activities designed for these teachers, and acknowledging and encouraging teachers' achievement individually as well as publically (Angelle, 2006). The second important issue where a principal need be clear and cooperative is his expectations from the beginning teachers (Marsick & Watkins, 2005). The principal can help them in clearly informing and guiding about what is expected by them in managing the classes, maintaining the disciplinary issues of students, recording progress reports and following the syllabic guidelines and employing the effective teaching strategies in the classrooms (Brock & Grady, 2007). The third place where principals can play an influential role is (re)shaping the self-image of beginning teachers. The previous works (e.g., Cheng & Cheung, 2004) have found that personal and public acknowledgement from the principal plays a significant role in enhancing the level of self-efficacy of teachers. The fourth significant area where a principal's role is very crucial is to provide and motivate the beginning teachers for professional development and learning opportunities. According to Black (2004), the wise principals very judiciously arrange the informal or formal mentoring and professional learning opportunities for the beginning teachers and motivate them to participate enthusiastically. In this context, it can be easily understood that the success of overall process of professional socialization depends heavily on the effective and professional role of the institutional heads or the principals.

Material and Methods

Research design

The study has carefully planned and sustained the usual standards in designing the instrument of research used for collecting the primary data, choosing the right sample and then accessing them appropriately, and finally gathering the data, which could satisfactorily explain the study question. The study was mainly based on the quantitative data collected through survey method with the use of questionnaire; however, the data was also interpreted quantitatively in the context of and with the reference of similar studies and the objectives of the present study.

Population and Sampling

This study mainly involved quantitative research practices along with the qualitative interpretation of the results were required to elucidate the quantitative data analysis. The population comprised the newly joined English teachers of the college sector of Higher Education Department, Punjab, Pakistan. The stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure the true representation of the population. The stratum included: (1) *Gender type* (Men&Women); (2) *Type of Institution* (Public & Private, Rural & Urban, Federal Board & Provincial Board, Co-education & Single-gender); (3) *Job Type* (Regular & Contract). The term of beginning teachers was delimited to the English teachers having maximum five year teaching experience.

Survey Tool: Questionnaire

This study has used a closed-ended questionnaire for data collection. It comprised three sections: A) sought the demographic information of the participants; B) provided the scale for measurement of the construct of effective socialization; C) provided the scale for measurement of the construct of mentoring role of senior teachers and principal. The scale of five points on Likert format was designed for each question. To make the composite variable of *effective socialization (ES)* and *relationship with senior colleagues (RSC)*, 15 items and 14 items were combined respectively (See Figure.1). The scale was used to interpret the aggregate responses of all the participants by calculating the weighted mean for every question:

Range	Interpretation
4.1 - 5.0	(Disagree Strongly)/ (Big Problem)
3.1 - 4.0	(Disagree)/ (Little Problem)
2.1 - 3.0	(Neutral)
1.1 - 2.0	(Agree)/ (Fair)
0.0 - 1.0	(Agree Strongly)/ (Very Fair)

The statistical reliability of the questionnaire was checked through Cronbach's alpha, which reflected the results as 0.84 for ES and 0.82 for RSC. It was quite satisfactory to get 74% overall response rate as the returned questionnaires were 319 out of total 430. However, finally 295 questionnaires were added for the data analysis, owing the errors in 24, which were rejected for further processing.

Results and Discussion

Description of data: Univariate analysis

The collected data was analyzed using first descriptive exploratory analysis and then applying inferential statistics. The SPSS 26 and MS Excel 2016 were used

for processing the data and which was later tabulated accordingly.. The Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) was done in two ways: generating data plots and generating data numbers. Both helped in describing the data and its normality through descriptive statistics which included, for this study, the Minimum and Maximum value, Mean, Median, Mode, Standard deviation, and related Skewness.

The results (Table 1, 2, 3) reflected that all the required statistical measures including *the mean, the median and the mode* were within the required parameters of normality (as per the information given in the codebook). Similarly, the other allied statistical measures of *std. deviation, skewness, maximum & minimum* were also found within the expected range. Finally, the data was declared as error-free and normal which was further processed for inferential analysis.

Table 1
Descriptive analysis for ES

	Clarity of objectives	Managing resources	Care from Authorities	Sense of Belongingness	Professional learning	Work stress	Clarity of Role	Inner commitment	Adjustment	Favorable working environment	Self-confidence	Amiability	Feeling of Achievement	Cultural adaptation	Job satisfaction
Valid	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295
N	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.8	1.8	2.2	2.6	2.7	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1
Median	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.2	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Mode	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.70	.96	.98	.72	1.01	1.0	.83	.69	.97	1.09	.87	.82	.77	.72	.74
Skewness	.58	.64	.49	.25	.81	.28	1.0	1.7	.34	.16	.78	.33	.26	.59	.50
Std. Error of Skewness	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14	.14
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
Percentiles	25	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
	50	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
	75	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis of RSC (Senior Teachers)

	Managing class activities (*F)	Managing class activities (**Q)	Student motivation (F)	Student motivation (Q)	Seeking novel ideas (F)	Seeking novel ideas (Q)	Maintaining class discipline (F)	Maintaining class discipline (Q)	Administrative policies (F)	Administrative policies (Q)	Making relationships (F)	Making relationships (Q)	Individual problems (F)	Individual problems (Q)
N Valid	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295	295
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	2.21	2.22	1.79	2.00	1.89	1.92	1.93	2.04	2.03	2.18	1.96	2.07	2.26	2.38
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Std. Deviation	.610	.597	.661	.702	.678	.736	.599	.659	.692	.637	.651	.689	.697	.632
Skewness	-.15	-.11	.25	.05	.14	.12	.02	-.04	-.04	-.17	.03	-.09	-.40	-.51
Std. Skewness	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Percentiles	25	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	50	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	75	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

*F=Frequency of advice

**=Quality of advice

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis of RSC (Principals)

	Support of the Principal	Role model of the Principal	Attention from the Principal	Acknowledgement from the Principal	Professional attitude of the Principal	Tolerant behavior of the Principal	Public appreciation from the Principal
N Valid	295	295	295	295	295	295	295
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mean		2.19	2.78	2.73	2.34	2.34	2.87	2.73
Median		2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		2	3	3	2	2	3	3
Std. Deviation		.888	1.143	1.073	.958	.896	1.125	.896
Skewness		.813	.310	.349	.606	.546	.061	-.276
Std. Error of Skewness		.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142	.142
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Percentile	25	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	50	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
	75	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00

Test of Relationship

The statistical test of linear regression analysis was implemented to compute the effects of independent variable of RSC over dependent variable of ES. Both the variables were entered for analysis that produced the output as follows:

Table 4
Correlation summary

R	Square R	R Square Adjusted	Error of Estimate
.62(a)	.39	.39	.266

- 1 Predictor: RSC
2. Criterion: ES

The Table 4 presents the correlation summary which shows that the coefficient correlation equally 0.62 ($R^2 = 0.39$) and further the R^2 adjusted equally 0.39, signifying that 39.0 % of the variance in ES may be calculated after RSC.

Table 5
Total Significance (Numerical)

	Squares Sum	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.54	13.54	191.64	.000(a)
Residual	20.85	.07		
Total	34.49			

- 1 Predictor: RSC
2. Criterion: ES

The overall statistical significance is present in the Table 5 as $p = .000$ and $F = 191.64$. The results indicate that the variable of RSC significantly affect the criterion variable of ES.

Table 6
Beta Coefficient Correlations

	Coefficient	Standardized	T	Sig.
(Constant)	Beta		11.45	.000
Composite RSC	.62		13.84	.000

(a) Criterion Variable: *ES*

The Table No. 6 presents the standardized form of beta coefficient which can be explained in the same way as the correlation coefficient. It can be observed clearly that *ES* is being affected by *RSC* as $s = .62$ when $p = .000$

Significant Relationship

The study came up with a statistically significant relationship between both the composite variables, which affirmed a positive impact of the mentoring provided by their colleagues on the effective organizational and professional adjustment of novice English teachers. The results affirmed that the mentoring role of senior teachers has a great effect on their professional enculturation novice English teachers, i.e., as $p = .00$ and the expected variance was 39%. Furthermore, the relationship was declared as positive, suggesting a parallel direction of variables in the same direction, either positive or negative.

Mentoring role in Professional Socialization

The study affirms the idea that the senior teachers may have a great influence on the professional socialization of novice teachers. The results reflect that junior teachers contact their seniors for day-to-day issues and problem solving, particularly related with pedagogical and administrative implications, whereas they are least motivated to seek help from their administrators and principals. The study results have also found some challenging issues in relation to the behavior of senior teachers and the principals.

Mentoring Role of Senior Teachers: Need to do More

It was found that the teachers feel disinclined towards the idea of seeking help and taking guidance from the senior teachers, especially regarding their individual problems. Further, even if they seek advice, do not regard as the good quality advice. For example, the Table 2 shows that in response to the choice (*from time to time*) and (*good*) from the section (*personal problems*), the cumulative percent was 59.3% and 53.9% respectively, the mean 2.26 & 2.38 respectively. This clearly indicates that greater than 40% and 46% of the beginning English teachers, correspondingly, are not in the favor of consulting their senior teachers for advice and guidance and further do not consider their suggestions good in quality.

The study brings forward the need of more attention to the effective mentoring from senior teachers for the successful adjustment of novice teachers into their occupation. However, the earlier studies have explored the phenomenon that the senior colleague plays a significant role in contributing to the successful adjustment of neophytes in the teaching profession. The senior teachers, as formal or informal mentor, can significantly affect the grooming of junior teachers for their successful professionalization within their organizations (Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999). The institutions can introduce many socialization programs to achieve this purpose, for instance: initiating mentoring programs for beginning teachers both formally and informally; organizing informal gatherings where both teachers can have informal interaction with each other; allocating various joint programs where both the teachers can perform teamwork and understand each other's roles.

Principal as Role Model: Lack of Trust

The results of this study indicate a great number of novice English teachers do not perceive principals as a role model to be followed. In this context, it can be understood that the beginning teachers do not get much inspiration from the principals in seeking advice and guidance to cope with various professionalization challenges, especially, when they are beginning their career. The results also show a discouraging picture, i.e., mean 2.78, for the domain of *principal's attention* only 44.7%, mean 2.73, *principal's tolerance* only 34.5%, mean 2.87, and for *public recognition* only 37.3%, mean 2.73 (Table 3), which indicate a weak relationship between beginning teachers and the principal.

From the extensive literature in the area of mentoring and teacher education, it is quite evident that beginning teachers' initial years in the service are highly influenced by the nature of their relationship with senior principals (e.g. Fair, 1973; Southwell, 1970). However, the present study highlights a gap in this area in Pakistani educational institutions with the perspective that beginning teachers require their help and patronization instead of simply orders and commands. Another area the principals should focus is to initiate and implement effective mentoring programs, both at formal and informal levels, which ultimately promote collegial communication between the beginning teachers and administration. According to McCann et al., (2005) and Melton (2007), the new teachers should be paired with experienced and trained mentors who can monitor and direct their smooth enculturation in teaching profession.

An Improvised Self-Perception of Beginning Teachers

The study results indicate that beginning English teachers feel hesitant to express their concerns, especially contradiction in front of their heads. The heads and senior teachers can play a positive role here by encouraging the new teachers to question and share their viewpoint on different institutional issues. This communication gap blurs their perception to see the principals as their role models. Such feeling, if sustain longer, ultimately, develop a weak self-image of

beginning teachers about their social and professional prestige. This poor perception, however, can be enriched by recurring reassurance to the beginning teachers of their important position and all the members of teacher professional socialization process including, principal, senior teachers, administrator, fellows and students are necessary to participate in this course of development. In a similar study, Cheng and Cheung (2004) have found the self-perception of novice teachers is high when their administrators' perception is aligned with their self-perception. It is very imperative to empower the beginning teachers in their real life classroom to strengthen their self-image. This way, the level of self-efficacy of teachers will be enhanced and it would ultimately contribute to their professional growth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the process of professional learning and socialization is influenced positively by the mentoring and guidance of senior teachers; however, the principal's care may have the potential to facilitate this process of smooth adaptation to the newly joined teaching profession. This mentoring from the senior teachers may be an effective and economical professional development strategy with both formal and informal arrangement. However, the study results also highlighted some potential challenging areas in relation to the mentoring role of senior teachers, which could hinder the successful professional socialization of novice teachers. The findings of the study would help the beginning teachers understand and control their professional practice better and this would help them enhance their self-efficacy.

In the early years professional adjustment of beginning English teachers, the formal and informal mentoring programs with the support of principals and senior teachers may work as a strategy to strengthen the bonding between senior and novice teachers. The senior teachers can mentor the beginning teachers for managing their classrooms, designing their course material, coping with the administrative practices and dealing with different organizational challenges. This study is significant in the context that mentoring role of senior teachers in beginning teacher professional socialization has many pedagogical implications and its relationship with other crucial areas of teaching profession, e.g., job satisfaction, work performance, and the rate of teachers' turnover. The Pakistani beginning English teachers, being more aware of their socialization process and the mentoring role of their senior teachers, can have a better understanding and this way would be able to better manage their professional development. The findings of this study can be worked out in more details to make them a significant part of the present English language teaching reforms in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Senior teachers and the heads need to improve the communicative link with their junior colleagues. The beginning teachers are not comfortable to express their opinions and share their viewpoint freely. The principals need to reshape the

organizational culture to make it freer and more tolerable by introducing and sharing democratic practices where opportunities should be available equally and systematically. Such an open-to-all principal can develop an inspiring personality as a role model for the beginning teachers. In brief, it has been discovered the early term, especially three to five year, in teachers' professional life remains a period of facing professional and organizational challenges and during this time they are heavily occupied in seeking new occupational and institutional adjustments. In this early time, a democratic culture within the educational institutions will promote tolerance, flexibility and open-mindedness in their professional as well as behavioral practices. The senior teachers and the principal should organize the formal and informal mentoring programs for their novice teachers. In this context, the senior colleagues can take help from the established models of teacher professional learning programs, e.g., microteaching, online learning, lesson study, individual counseling.

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