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Exploring the Contribution of the Five-Factor Mentoring Model in Advancing the Pre-Service Teachers' Personal and Professional Growth

Elmedina Nikoçeviq Kurti

Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", Republic of Kosovo, *elmedina.nikoceviq@uni-pr.edu*

The five-factor mentoring model is shown as a valid framework for measuring the impact of the mentoring received by pre-service teachers in the teaching practicum, but also for the mentor training. This mentoring model involves mentors' personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. This study examined the perceived mentoring experiences of fourth- year pre-service teachers (n=100) during their 8-week school-based teaching practicum. This mixed-method study combined quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The METP (Mentoring for Effective Teaching Practice) instrument developed by Hudson et al. (2005) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests were used in the data analysis. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 fourth-year pre-service teachers. The thematic analysis method was used for analyzing the interview data. Findings indicated that pre-service teachers were adequately mentored on personal attributes, while less reported was the provision of feedback by the mentors. Results indicate that pre-service teachers who taught more teaching lessons had a more positive experience with pedagogical knowledge provided by the mentors, but also received more feedback. Qualitative outcomes indicate that pre-service teachers believe they advanced their personal and professional growth when mentors shared their responsibilities with university supervisors to offer mentoring practices focused on belongingness, reflection, teacher attributes, and professionalism in teaching. This study has implications for pre-service teacher professional development during initial teacher preparation and mentor training.

Keywords: mentoring, pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, teaching practicum, personal and professional growth

INTRODUCTION

After the war in Kosovo (1999), the education system was highly affected. The physical rebuilding of schools, curriculum reform, and organization of the education system became the focus of intervention of the international aid. Since then, most schools have

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been rebuilt and physical infrastructure improved. But still, the quality of the education system suffers from the events that have devastated it.

The Faculty of Education of the University of Prishtina was established in 2002. The teaching practicum is an integral part of the 4-year Teacher Education Program at this higher education institution. Handbook for Teaching Practicum (2004), produced by this faculty, outlines mentors' and pre-service teachers' roles and responsibilities for facilitating pre-service teachers' in-school experiences. The teaching practicum at the Faculty of Education of the University of Prishtina starts in the first year of study with a 2-week long observational practicum. As part of their study program, fourth-year pre-service teachers should share teaching and other responsibilities in the classroom with the mentor teacher on an equal basis. This includes planning, preparation and evaluation of learning in at least three various courses. Faculty of Education developed a three-day training program for 300 elementary teachers to help them develop an understanding of the roles and expectations for pre-service teachers' mentoring (Gjelaj et al., 2020). Still, the main challenges faced by this institution remain the limited number of the academic staff in charge of mentoring the pre-service teachers during the teaching practicum, a high number of students in the study program for primary school teachers, and unsatisfactory cooperation between the faculty and host schools where students serve as interns.

The most significant aspect of the preparation of pre-service teachers is the opportunity to practice teaching in a real-life classroom with an experienced primary teacher. Orland-Barak & Wang (2020, p.95) raised the issue of challenges that teacher education programs (TEPs) face related to "how to effectively prepare to mentor teachers with the appropriate knowledge and strategies from different mentoring approaches, given that each of them adheres to a different theoretical assumption about teacher learning and that entrenched ideologies are hard to change". Pre-service teachers' capacity to succeed in a professional placement is closely linked to the quality of the mentoring relationship (Ambrosetti, 2014; Wilson & Huynh, 2020). Many studies had reported the challenges that pre-service teachers face during school-based placement. Some studies reported on difficulties pre-service teachers encountered to establish a positive relationship with their mentor (Bird & Hudson, 2015; Hudson, 2013; John et al., 2018; Wilson & Huynh, 2020); lack of feedback provision (Beattie et al., 2016; Farhadiba & Wulyani, 2020; Nikoçeviq-Kurti, 2022; Xu & He, 2019); opportunities to teach (Izadinia, 2017; Muyengwa & Jita, 2020; Taghreed & Mohd, 2017). Other studies have reported on their difficulties to master teaching skills, such as lesson planning, inclusion, classroom management, and instructional strategies (Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2021; Bates, 2016; Kurt et al., 2014; Nikoçeviq-Kurti & Saqipi, 2020). According to Hennissen et al. (2010), mentor teachers should be provided with appropriate and focused training to develop their skills for engaging pre-service teachers in analyzing primary teaching practices. Therefore, there is a need to identify those practices of mentor teachers that contribute to the quality of student teaching and learning experiences (Hudson, 2016; John et al., 2018; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012; Ssemata et al., 2017).

This raises urgency for conducting research to explore and analyze the perceived experiences of Kosovar pre-service teachers with their mentor teachers during their last school-based teaching practicum, but also to get their insights on necessary improvements that need to be implemented in the mentoring process toward advancing the pre-service teachers' personal and professional growth during initial teacher preparation.

Literature Review

Mentoring

Hudson et al. (2005, p.658) define mentoring "as a collaborative process that can be used to guide improvement in primary science teaching practices, which requires the pre-service teacher and the mentoring teacher to have active and productive roles." Mentor teachers are expected to provide the pre-service teachers with basic information on school procedures, norms, and expectations, but also to assist those in integrating and designing a standards-based curriculum based on students' learning needs (Aderibigbe et al., 2016; Hobson et al., 2012; Wang & Odell, 2007). However, the mentoring relationship is exposed to several challenges that may undermine its effectiveness and sustainability (Ssemata et al., 2017). Hudson (2013), Becher & Orland-Barak (2016), and Orland-Barak & Wang (2020) addressed the need for new conceptualizations of teacher mentoring approaches. As these authors explain, mentor teachers constantly deal with multiple dimensions of their work and different values that pre-service teachers bring into teaching practice.

According to Jaspers et al. (2014) when teachers have to combine the mentor and teacher roles, their primary focus is on the well-being and development of their pupils and less on their pre-service teachers' development. Therefore, Becher & Orland-Barak (2016) as cited in Orland-Barak & Wang (2020) explain that mentor teachers are often required to follow their intuition and subjective experiences instead of developing reasoned and informed mentoring practices based on a proper understanding of the promises and limitations of their practice and careful consideration of other possible options. Orland-Barak & Wang (2020) have proposed an integrated approach to teacher mentoring for field-based teacher education that surpasses the four existing teacher mentoring approaches such as diagnostic, deliberative, inquiry, and practice approaches. According to this integrated approach, mentors are expected to understand how pre-service teachers learn to teach by mapping their strengths and weaknesses, implementing the mentoring plan, developing appropriate mentoring strategies, and identifying those that are ineffective. Given that "ideas of effective mentoring practices guide the design of mentoring interventions and the measure of preservice teachers' learning to teach outcomes in student teaching" (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020, p.95), there is a need to assess and modify the mentoring practices so they can be reliably and continuously developed. Dos Santos (2021) stated that the mentors' mentoring practices and leadership serve as the important models that should be followed by pre-service teachers. John et al. (2018) have examined the process through which pre-service teachers were matched to mentor teachers and how involved parties make these

decisions. The results of this study showed that "the majority of schools simply provided the names of potential cooperating teachers to TEPs and let them make the matching decisions" (p. 35) and that "matching of student teachers to cooperating teachers based on an assessment of the individual student teacher's needs and the cooperating teacher's skills was rare" (p. 38). Findings from Killian & Wilkins's (2009) study reported that mentors differentiate themselves from their less effective peers based on three factors: teaching experiences (10-29 years), previous supervision of 5 or more pre-service teachers, and sustained relationship with the university supervisor. Furthermore, Buatip et al. (2019) reported that the face-to-face reflections provided by mentors enhanced pre-service teachers' teaching competency, such as classroom management and elaboration of content knowledge. Furthermore, this study suggests a continuous, need-focused, and goal-oriented training for mentor teachers.

Five-factor model of mentoring for effective teaching

Five factors for mentoring have been identified during the literature review by Hudson & Skamp (2003). The identified factors are personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback. After that, Hudson et al. (2005) investigated the perceptions of 331 final-year pre-service teachers on mentors' practices related to primary science teaching through a literature-based instrument. The items that were associated with each factor have been identified and justified by the literature. As the authors explain, each factor has associated mentoring attributes and practices that may aid pre-service teachers' development of effective primary science teaching. These authors developed items on an instrument that measures pre-service teachers' perceptions of their mentoring in primary science teaching. This instrument can be used as a framework for mentoring and as a benchmark for mentoring practices of those working with student teachers (Hudson et al., 2007). Substantial evidence from Bird and Hudson's (2015) study supports Hudson's five mentoring factors as a valid and useful framework for measuring the impact of the mentoring received by pre-service teachers in the student teaching experience. According to Hudson et al. (2005) and Virtič et al. (2021), teacher educators can obtain information for designing specific mentoring strategies for mentors by using this instrument. A study by Nopriyeni et al. (2019) showed the importance of providing a model of mentoring, especially to improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge.

Hudson et al. (2005) used the Mentoring for Effective Primary Science Teaching instrument (MEPST) to examine specific mentoring practices that mentor teachers provided during mentoring. Pre-service teachers are asked to report the degree to which they agree/disagree with each statement of instrument regarding their mentoring experiences in primary science teaching during their last practicum. Other studies that used this instrument (Albakri et al., 2021; Hudson, 2010; Munijita, 2021; Virtič et al., 2021) reported that mentoring on system requirements was the less used mentoring factor by mentors, indicating that many final-year pre-service teachers may not be aware of aims, curriculum, or policies for teaching in primary education before entering the profession. Studies indicate present tensions and challenges associated with mentor feedback in the teaching practicum (Beek et al., 2019; Byars-Winston & Butz, 2021;

Bird & Hudson, 2015), the limited scope of elements in the domain of pedagogical knowledge, system requirements in teaching practicum course syllabi (Gjelaj et al., 2020), and importance of establishing a friendly and supportive rapport with the pre-service teachers before mentors begin to demonstrate their teaching practices (Turpeinen, 2018; Vásquez Carrosa et al., 2019).

Aim and scope of the research

This study was based on the theory of constructivist mentoring in teacher education (Hudson, 2004). Through identification of factors that are essential for the personal and professional growth of pre-service teachers during teaching practicum, teacher preparation programs can provide guidelines for the training of mentor teachers that are aligned with desired characteristics of a mentor and a mentoring relationship. The current study aimed to explore and analyze the perceived experiences of Kosovar pre-service teachers with their mentor teachers during their last school-based teaching practicum. The main outcome of this study is to get pre-service teachers' insights into the current state of mentoring practices and necessary improvements that need to be implemented in the qualitative mentoring programs. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. How do fourth-year Kosovar pre-service teachers perceive their mentoring experience during their last teaching practicum by utilizing a five-factor mentoring model in terms of personal attributes, system requirements, modelling, pedagogical knowledge, and feedback?
2. Are there differences between pre-service teachers' experiences of mentoring practices and background variables?
3. According to pre-service teachers, what should a good mentor provide during mentoring to advance their personal and professional growth as a future teacher?

METHOD

Research design

This study utilized the mixed methods research design. To answer the research questions, a mixed method study with a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was designed and conducted. According to Aramo-Immonen (2013, p.33), "mixed methods designs provide researchers, across research disciplines, with a rigorous approach to answering research questions". Greene (2015) and Schoonenboom & Johnson (2017) all stated that mixed methods research can be integrated at the levels of methodology when both the qualitative and the quantitative components are in constant interaction, and the outcomes they produce are integrated during and at the end of the research process.

Research subjects/participants

The survey was conducted with a sample of 100 pre-service teachers enrolled in a Kosovar 4-year bachelor's program at the University of Prishtina for elementary teacher education. The survey was conducted after the pre-service teachers have finished an 8-week teaching practicum at Prishtina elementary schools. The population was around

150 pre-service teachers. The sample size calculator was used to determine the sample size. The questionnaire was prepared using Google Forms and it was distributed to the pre-service teachers via email. The questionnaire was anonymous. Out of 109 respondents, 100 questionnaires were validated and considered for analysis.

As shown in Table 1., out of 100 respondents, 96 were female and only 4 were male (stats prove the domination of females in the teaching profession). Most of the respondents were aged 18-22 years old (M=1.39, SD=.691). Also, the majority of pre-service teachers (N=46) have a GPA between 7.00-7.99 out of 10 (M=2.71 SD=.855). Forty-eight percent of pre-service teachers have taught more than 10 lessons during their last teaching practicum (M=2.59, SD=1.108).

Table 1
Sample characteristics

Gender	N	%
Female	96	96%
Male	4	4%
Age	N	%
18-22	51	51%
23-26	38	38%
27-32	8	8%
32+	3	3%
GPA	N	%
6.00-6.99	10	10%
7.00-7.99	46	46%
8.00-8.99	27	27%
9.00-10.00	17	17%
Taught lessons during practicum	N	%
1 to 3 lessons	7	7%
4 to 6 lessons	24	24%
7 to 10 lessons	21	21%
10+	48	48%

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 fourth-year pre-service teachers. The interviews were conducted three months after the pre-service teachers completed their teaching practicum. The interviews were administered individually by a researcher. Data about the interviewed pre-service teachers are presented in Table 2. The age of the pre-service teachers ranged from 22 to 26 years old. Four (4) pre-service teachers were female while one (1) was male.

Table 2
Data of pre-service teachers participating in interviews

Code	Age	Gender	Mentors' age	Mentors' gender
ST1	26	F	31-40 years old	F
ST2	22	F	31-40 years old	F
ST3	25	F	31-40 years old	F
ST4	23	M	31-40 years old	F
ST5	22	F	31-40 years old	F

Data collection methods and instruments

The METP (Mentoring for Effective Teaching Practicum) instrument developed by Hudson et al. (2005) was used to collect data. The instrument was adapted and extended for the Kosovar context based on Hudson's (2004) five-factor mentoring model and translated into the Albanian language. Before the administration of the questionnaires, a pilot test with 20 pre-service teachers was conducted to examine the clarity, validity, and reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alfa for this survey questionnaire was .840, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale. The validity of the scales was assured by the use of sub-scales already tested in previous studies. The survey consisted of 4 demographic questions and 34 Likert-type questions ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The instrument grid is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Instrument grid

Indicator	Item number	Total number
Demographic variables	1, 2, 3, 4	4
Personal attributes	1, 17, 22, 23, 26, 31	6
System requirements	4, 11, 25	3
Modelling	2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15, 19, 29,	8
Pedagogical knowledge	3, 6, 8, 10, 14, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 32	11
Feedback	13, 16, 20, 28, 33, 34	6

The researcher used the triangulation technique to get a more complete perspective on research questions, but also to enhance credibility and validity. According to Nightingale (2020), triangulation is used for three main purposes: to enhance validity, to create a more in-depth picture of a research problem, and to cross-examine different ways of understanding a research problem.

The interviewing process was conducted online via the "Zoom" and "Google Meet" platforms because of the pandemic situation. Interviewed pre-service teachers were randomly selected from a list and invited via email to contribute to this research. Pre-service teachers participated in the study willingly, and also signed the consent form. Participants were informed that the interview was confidential and will only be used for research questions with the guarantee that their identity will not be revealed under any circumstance.

Data analysis method

The quantitative data gathered were analyzed by computing statistical means and standard deviations. Chi-square (X2) test was used to investigate the differences between different categories of pre-service teachers regarding their perceptions on the mentoring experience, while the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to analyze the potential differences between pre-service teacher groups regarding their perceptions on mentoring experience based on five-factor mentoring model. The thematic analysis method was used for analyzing the qualitative data. The researcher analyzed the transcripts of the interviews in cooperation with a university colleague in order to enhance the validity of the study. The first stage consisted of the production of initial codes identified during

the reading of the transcripts. After coding, the codes were grouped into themes to be able to draw conclusions from the data.

FINDINGS

Quantitative results

The 100 completed pre-service teacher responses provided descriptors of the respondents and data on each of the five-factor model associated with experience in specific mentoring practices. Pre-service teachers had to report the degree to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements regarding to their mentoring experience within the five-factor mentoring model for effective teaching during teaching practicum. The mean of 3.90 (SD = .857) indicates a high level of pre-service teachers' mentoring experience during teaching practicum, but needs for improvement are reflected. Specifically, 27% of respondents surveyed disagreed or/and strongly disagreed that they received mentoring on these five dimensions (see Table 4).

Table 4
Pre-service teachers' perception of mentoring practices provided by mentor teachers

Descriptive Statistics			
	%	Mean	SD
Personal Attributes (PA)	78	4.05	.921
System Requirements (SR)	69	3.82	.980
Modelling (MDL)	85	4.02	.787
Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)	76	3.92	.914
Feedback (FB)	60	3.70	.935
Total	73	3.90	.857

*%=Percentage of pre-service teachers who "agree" to "strongly agree

Based on results, pre-service teachers were adequately mentored on personal attributes (M=4.05, SD=.921), while less reported was the provision of feedback (M=3.70, SD=.935). Even the highest mean score was obtained on mentors' personal attributes. The most commonly reported experience was 'The mentor had a good rapport with the primary students" (M=4.44, SD=.852), which is an item of the 'Modelling' factor, and the least 'The mentor provided me with written feedback on my teaching' (M=2.91, SD=1.283), which is an item of the 'Feedback" factor. Findings indicate that there is a substantially high need for the provision of feedback to pre-service teachers. The differences noticed in the mean value of responses lead us to the conclusion that mentor teachers were more focused on modelling teaching practices and their personal attributes, and slightly less on offering mentoring on system requirements and feedback.

Table 5. presents the results on the relationship between background variables (age, gender, GPA and number of lessons taught during teaching practicum) and the level of pre-service teachers' mentoring experience. The results showed that there was not any significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in gender, age, and GPA related to the five factors of the mentoring model. A significant relationship was found between the number of lessons taught by pre-service teachers and the level of their mentoring experience on the provision of pedagogical knowledge and feedback by their mentors.

Table 5
The relationship between pre-service teachers' background and their mentoring experience

Independent variables	Depended variables	Sig $p \leq 0.05$
Gender	Personal Attributes	0.10
	System requirements	0.08
	Modelling	0.11
	Pedagogical Knowledge	0.09
	Feedback	0.12
Age	Personal Attributes	0.08
	System requirements	0.06
	Modelling	0.15
	Pedagogical Knowledge	0.06
	Feedback	0.08
GPA	Personal Attributes	0.06
	System requirements	0.11
	Modelling	0.08
	Pedagogical Knowledge	0.11
	Feedback	0.12
No. of teaching lessons taught during practicum	Personal Attributes	0.09
	System requirements	0.07
	Modelling	0.08
	Pedagogical Knowledge	0.02
	Feedback	0.04

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the experience of mentoring for pedagogical knowledge ($\chi2(2) = 1.979$, $p < .001$) and for feedback ($\chi2(2) = 8.530$, $p < .001$) between the different groups of pre-service teachers (see Table 6). Results indicate that pre-service teachers who taught more than ten teaching lessons had a more positive experience with pedagogical knowledge provided by the mentors, but also received more feedback after their teaching. The results suggest providing more teaching opportunities for pre-service teachers so that they receive more feedback on their performance and are given the most realistic assessment possible.

Table 6
The differences between the number of lessons taught during practicum and pre-service teachers' mentoring experience

	No. of lesson taught during practicum	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Assymp. sig
Pedagogical Knowledge	1 to 3 lessons	7	44.50			
	4 to 6 lessons	24	45.90			
	7 to 10 lessons	21	47.80	1.979	3	0.001
	10+	48	54.55			
	Total	100				
Feedback	1 to 3 lessons	7	49.45			
	4 to 6 lessons	24	49.86			
	7 to 10 lessons	21	50.58	8.530	3	0.000
	10+	48	53.06			
	Total	100				

Qualitative results

The themes with the main findings derived from the interviews are presented in Table 7. Four major themes emerged as the data were reviewed and coded according to the inductive analysis approach by two separate coders. This results section shares the findings from interviews with five pre-service teachers.

Table 7
Themes and codes derived from the analysis of interview data

Themes	Codes
Mentoring belongingness	Love for the profession; Love for pupils; Providing a sense of comfort; Trust in students; No complexes to learn from the pre-service teachers; Respect, feeling of closeness; Listening to new ideas; Engaging students in meetings;
Mentoring teachers' attributes	Understandable and patient teacher; Time-related; follows the trends; responsible; detail-oriented; hospitality; respects rules in general; strict; communicative; ready to help and advice;
Mentoring reflection	Reflection on teachers' teaching on TV during the pandemic; Deeper reflection on specific topics; different models of reflection; more critical than descriptive reflections; case studies;
Mentoring professionalism in teaching	Using ICT in teaching; different platforms for educational purposes; Knowing ethical issues by students (dress code, behavior and communication); responsibilities that define a teaching profession;

The first theme derived from the interviews with pre-service teachers is 'mentoring belongingness'. The pre-service teachers reported that the teaching practicum, respectively the mentors to which they were assigned, had offered them the opportunity to think about the profession they have chosen, more precisely whether they feel this profession was suitable for them. They point out that in the first meeting with mentors they discussed about the teaching profession. Mentors have told them that love for the profession and children is crucial in the teaching profession. *"The first question the mentor asked me was: 'did you choose this profession of your own free will'?"* (ST 1).

The pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of the trust that the mentors had in them and the close relationship they have created from the beginning of the practicum. This made them feel good and encouraged them to take initiatives for involvement in the classroom. Pre-service teachers value mentors' desire to learn new teaching techniques from them as well. *"The teacher listens carefully to my ideas and we implemented them together"* (ST 3). *"I liked that the teacher was without complexes. She also involved me in working meetings with the school colleagues"* (ST 5). These positive attributes of mentors have influenced pre-service teachers to understand the characteristics that a teacher should display in front of children and others.

Specifically, pre-service teachers reported that they understood the attributes that a teacher must have in order to establish a close relationship with children and to advance their personal and professional growth. They indicate how important is patience when working with children and understanding the psychology of the child. Among other things, they emphasized the importance for the teacher to upskill themselves from time to time and to follow the new trends of techniques for working with children. Furthermore, pre-service teachers reported that through the observation of mentors they have understood the importance of other attributes that a teacher should have, such as hospitality, communication, responsibility, and accountability. "*The teacher was very detailed and strict"* (ST 3); *"She (the teacher) was always ready to give me advice and assist me in preparing the lesson"* (ST2).

Pre-service teachers reported that the practicum has helped them develop reflection skills, especially the tasks required by university supervisors. The situation with the pandemic and the provision of online and television teaching for primary school students has prompted university supervisors to seek from their mentees reflection on teachers' communication skills, presentation, and lesson planning. Also, pre-service teachers report that they have been asked by university supervisors to be more critical of the specific situations they see in the classroom, and not just to describe them. Pre-service teachers were encouraged to think of concrete cases, whether on child behavior, teacher-child relationships, or teachers' behaviors towards the class. "*We keep a diary during the practicum. We had the task to reflect on the difficulties that a child may have in learning or behavior"* (ST5). *"I had a case study assignment, to reflect critically, and to offer suggestions for improving teaching practices"* (ST1).

The last theme that derived from the interviews with pre-service teachers was the mentoring provided by the mentor teachers for the development of professionalism in teaching. Pre-service teachers indicate that mentors have encouraged them to use technology in practicum, as well as to use various online educational platforms for planning the lessons. Above all, they emphasize the importance of mentors' advice on how to introduce themselves to children, what to wear and how to communicate with children. "*From the beginning of the practicum, the teacher has emphasized the importance of the personal and moral ethics of the teacher*" (ST3). *"She (the teacher) told me that physical appearance, dress, and manner of speaking in front of children are very important for the teaching profession"* (ST5).

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study relate to the findings of other studies (see Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018; Munjita et al., 2021; Turpeinen, 2018; Vásquez Carrosa et al., 2019) who reported that pre-service teachers were mentored to a great extent by the mentor teachers in terms of personal attributes, indicating that they had strong, positive and supportive relationships with their mentors. Opposite results from those of the present study are shown in other studies (see Albakri et al., 2021; Hudson et al., 2009; Virtič et al., 2021) which reported that mentors provided feedback regularly to final-year pre-service teachers, but their mentoring lacked significantly in dimensions such as 'system requirements' and 'pedagogical knowledge'.

The findings indicated a substantially high need for the provision of feedback to pre-service teachers. Furthermore, results showed that mentor teachers were more focused on modelling teaching practices and their personal attributes, and slightly less on offering mentoring on system requirements and feedback. According to Clarke et al. (2014), mentor teachers should engage pre-service teachers in observing and modeling after their teaching with attention to having them replicate it in their classrooms. Then, their interaction should be direct and focused on providing constructive feedback on pre-service teachers' performance (Ssemata et al., 2017).

As results indicate, characteristics of gender, age, and GPA were not found to be related to the pre-service teachers' mentoring experience. There is a lack of studies that examined the differences between pre-service teachers of different gender, age groups, or GPAs in relation to the perceived mentoring experience based on the five-factor mentoring model. Female pre-service teachers are a majority in primary teacher training around the world, with the age range of 18-22 years, which can affect the research results. Achor & Duguryil (2014) found no significant difference in the attitude mean score of male and female pre-service teachers exposed to mentoring. García-Ruiz et al. (2021) found that female pre-service teachers valued enthusiasm for teaching more than their peers. The pre-service teachers' academic achievement depends significantly on the quality of mentor teachers, which in turn depends on the quality of teacher preparation programs (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018).

The current study findings revealed a positive association between the number of lessons taught by pre-service teachers and the level of their mentoring experience on the provision of pedagogical knowledge and feedback by their mentors. It's obvious that the more teaching pre-service teachers perform, it is likely that they will receive more feedback, and the more accurate the feedback is likely to be. However, sometimes pre-service teachers may be hesitant to seek support and feedback from their mentors (Dawson & Shand, 2019; Lin et al., 2016). According to Orland-Barak & Wang (2020), even studies reveal that offering positive support and sufficient space for pre-service teachers to experiment with their own ideas and construct their teaching practices are one of the most popular roles of mentor teachers, these practices in teaching may not always be consistent with those visions of teaching that the field-based teacher education reform promotes. Therefore, mentors are expected to show the moral and professional responsibility to help pre-service teachers to use the consistent professional knowledge

and activities that will produce quality student learning results in their classroom. Furthermore, Trites (2020, p.48) suggests that pre-service teachers should be provided with direct instruction and feedback. Otherwise, they will "simply report on the lesson that was taught and problems that occurred without critically evaluating their part in the lesson".

Qualitative outcomes of this study revealed that mentors should provide mentoring practices on belongingness to advance pre-service teachers' personal and professional growth as future teachers. Don Santos (2021) reported that the pre-service teachers' sense of belonging and positive self-efficacy may influence their career decision to stay in host-schools. On the other hand, Wang and Houston (2021, p.1), reported that pre-service teachers have doubts about becoming teachers because of the "presence of common myths and stereotypes related to teaching and propagated in the media that are not always grounded in objective reality". Furthermore, results showed that the pre-service teachers expect that good mentors should provide them with opportunities for mentoring on teachers' attributes and critical reflection. Conway et al. (2014), Hallman and Rodriguez (2015), and Hamilton & Margot (2019), all stated that pre-service teachers need multiple purposeful and various opportunities to learn and examine theory and pedagogy through integrated "workplace learning". Moses et al. (2017) stated that mentors should help pre-service teachers to become aware of their views and how this influences their commitment to the teaching profession. Sometimes, pre-service teachers may not be aware of the importance of reflection in enabling and operationalizing change in teaching (Wlodarsky, 2018). Additionally, findings reported on the importance of mentor teachers' committed to professionalism for the role of mentoring. Wiselet and Vinila (2019), state that educators must know the trends that emerge in the profession and they should seek new techniques and technologies to be more innovative and interactive. It is recommended that teacher education institutions should emphasize the development of mentors' capacities through training and support and strengthen the teacher educators' role "in pedagogical terms for pre-service teachers to improve in activities and methodologies" (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018, p. 158). The findings shed light on desired attributes and mentoring practices that mentor teachers should provide to support personal and professional growth of those preparing for teaching career.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate the importance of providing pre-service teachers with experiences in mastering teaching practices. These experiences involve teaching lessons as an opportunity to put theory into practice. Pre-service teachers who showed more initiative and/or have been encouraged by mentors to get involved in teaching showed more positive experience with pedagogical knowledge provided by the mentors but also received more feedback after their teaching. Mentor teachers in Kosovo pay little attention to their role as feedback providers (Gjelaj et al. 2020), therefore it is not surprising that 40 percent of pre-service teachers that participated in the survey reported that they were not provided with feedback, which directly indicated that they lack information on their positive aspects of development and areas that require further

improvement. This research concluded that mentor teachers prioritize the dimension of modelling teaching practices and helping pre-service teachers develop personal attributes. The quality of pre-service teachers' teaching practicum certainly depends on how five factors for effective mentoring were provided to them. This study offers a new theoretical perspective on the points mentioned which will advance understanding of mentoring programs. Mentoring program should be tailored to the actual needs of the pre-service teachers and desired characteristics of mentors.

Considering that pre-service teachers have become more familiar with distance learning due to the pandemic situation, mentor teachers and university supervisors should be encouraged and supported to implement digital mentoring. Technology integration remains an important component of preparing pre-service teachers for a globally competitive professional society. The educational technology allows pre-service teachers to conduct simulated lessons, interact with peers and receive critical feedback from mentor teachers as they work to develop and adapt instructional approaches based on modality to teach differently. The main purpose of digital mentoring should be to provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to develop their cognitive presence and to strengthen their relationship with faculty and school. Restructuring the teaching practicum process, by combining it with digital mentoring, can serve as a solution to the problems experienced during initial teacher preparation. Digital mentoring can be used to share and critically reflect on pre-service teachers' teaching experiences, but also as a setting where the knowledge can be shared and interpreted. Teacher preparation programs should guide mentors and pre-service teachers towards critical thinking on the impact of technology on their teaching and learning. There is no doubt that teacher educators should be competent in integrating new technology into their teaching.

Given that in Kosovo there is no formal national mentoring program, a lack of policy initiatives and studies that determine how well teacher education programs are meeting the standards in terms of course syllabi, student teaching practices, and program outcomes, has led to a lot of challenges in process of evaluation and structuring an effective field-based teacher preparation.

This study has some limitations that need to be recognized. It does not bring the view of mentors and university supervisors related to their experiences in mentoring the pre-service teachers. Future research can be directed towards investigating pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors' perspectives on the impact of digital mentoring in building mentoring relationships and enhancing their digital skills.

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