

Mentors' Roles in Overseas Teaching Practicum: Professional Development and Identity Construction of Indonesian Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract

This study investigates Indonesian pre-service teachers' experiences of being mentored during an overseas teaching practicum in the Philippines. Specifically, it examines the roles that mentors played in supporting pre-service teachers throughout the practicum and how such mentorship contributed to their professional development and teacher identity construction. Adopting a qualitative case study design, data were drawn from personal accounts of four Indonesian pre-service teachers who completed a one-month teaching practicum in secondary schools in the Philippines. The findings reveal three prominent mentor roles: serving as role models who exemplified professional teaching conduct and dispositions; acting as collaborators who engaged in co-planning and provided sustained guidance throughout the lesson planning process; and functioning as evaluators who delivered structured, balanced, and constructive feedback following classroom teaching sessions. Collectively, these roles underscore that mentorship extends well beyond administrative guidance, it serves as a dynamic and transformative source of professional modelling that meaningfully strengthens pre-service teachers' confidence, motivation, and emerging professional identities. These findings imply that teacher education programs should prioritize structured, cross-cultural mentorship as a strategic vehicle for fostering pre-service teachers' pedagogical competence, intercultural awareness, and long-term professional identity development.

Keywords: *mentoring, pre-service teachers, overseas teaching practicum, professional development, teacher identity, role models*

INTRODUCTION

In teaching practicum, mentors play a crucial role in preparing student-teachers for their future professional development. This is because during the practicum process, mentors provide essential support that helps student teachers develop their knowledge, skills and confidence required to become professional educators. Maphalala (2013) argues that mentors significantly contribute to the growth and development of student teachers. Their responsibilities include assisting student teachers in navigating the demands of practicum by introducing them in lesson planning, supporting classroom and time management, recommending appropriate teaching methods and materials, and providing constructive feedback (Aydın & Ok, 2020). In overseas teaching practicum contexts, mentors also help student teachers understand different culture or school environments (Abdullah et al., 2020; Clarke & Mena, 2020). Therefore, mentors' roles and mentoring practices are vital in

enabling student teachers to complete their teaching practicum successfully. Ambrosetti et al. (2014) further describes mentors as individuals who may serve as advisors, collaborators, observers, role models, and supporter. Similarly, mentors may act as evaluators by offering feedback and fostering inclusion throughout the practicum process (Kwan, 2005).

A study which is conducted by Hall et al. (2008) in the United States found that mentors typically perform two major roles. The first role is providing support by giving feedback, sharing ideas, guiding and directing student teachers, as well as modelling and demonstrating effective teaching practices. The second role is acting as a critical evaluator by offering constructive feedback, encouraging reflection and problem-solving. Similarly, a study conducted by Kwan (2005) in Hongkong identified five key mentoring roles: counsellors, observers, equal partner, role model, and instructor. As counselors, mentors help student teachers with educational or personal challenges; as observers, they monitor students' teachers' lesson delivery and preparation; as equal partner, they provide support while engaging in mutual learning; as role models, they demonstrate professional behavior; and as instructors, they provide guidance and instruction on effective teaching practices.

In addition, a study conducted by Maynard (2000) in the United Kingdom identified three major mentoring roles. First, mentors provide inclusion by introducing student teachers to learners and helping them welcomed, accepted, and involved in classroom activities. Second, mentors offer support by giving advice, maintaining effective communication, and providing feedback during the teaching practicum. Third, mentors act as role models by demonstrating effective teaching practices and allowing student teachers to experiment with different instructional strategies and techniques during the practicum process.

In addition to the three roles proposed by Maynard (2000), Hudson et al. (2005) has indicated that there are at least five factor models of mentoring that mentors usually play during teaching practicum. First, personal attributes, which concerns the personal qualities of mentors that can significantly influence student teachers in a positive way, particularly in building their confidence, resilience, and professional disposition. Second, system requirements, which refers to how mentors mediate student teachers' understanding of educational systems, policies, and institutional procedures so that they gradually become capable of navigating the broader professional environment. Third, pedagogical knowledge, which pertains to how mentors serve as a source of instructional guidance, helping student teachers develop their understanding of curriculum design, lesson planning, and classroom management. Fourth, modelling, which highlights how mentors demonstrate effective teaching practices in the classroom, providing student teachers with observable examples of professional conduct that they can reflect upon and emulate in their own teaching. Fifth, feedback, which emphasizes the importance of mentors providing timely and constructive feedback, enabling student teachers to critically reflect on their classroom performance, identify areas for improvement, and continuously refine their teaching practice throughout the practicum period.

It has been widely acknowledged that mentors play a crucial role in supporting student teachers' professional development (Larsen et al., 2025). However, their roles and responsibilities are not always positively perceived by student teachers. This is often because some mentors do not sufficiently perform the expected roles, which may result in student teachers experiencing challenges related to unequal mentoring support. A study conducted by Agudo (2016) in Spain revealed that some student teachers did not receive sufficient feedback from their mentors. As a result, after conducting their lessons, they felt confused because their mentors provided little or no evaluation of their teaching performances. In many cases, mentors only observed the classroom without offering constructive comments or corrections when mistakes occurred. In other words, some

mentors may face limitations in fulfilling their role as effective feedback providers during the practicum process (Aydın & Ok, 2020).

Another study conducted by Vo et al. (2018) in Vietnam found that student teachers received insufficient support from their mentors and experienced limited cooperation during the practicum. Participants reported that mentors only attended classes to observe and allowed student teachers to fully manage teaching activities without providing adequate guidance, support, and or direction. Similarly, a study by Alemdağ et al. (2017) in Turkey showed weak communication between student teachers and their mentors. In this context, mentors did not properly introduce student teachers to the classroom community, which hindered interaction between students and student teachers and made the student teachers feel less welcome in the classroom. Arguably, restricted or limited communication between student teachers and mentors throughout the practicum is still reported as a major challenge that can hinder student teachers' professional development (du Plessis & Razmjooe, 2025). As Groenewald & Arnold (2025) argue, teacher professional development and identity construction begin to develop during the teacher education phase, particularly through the teaching practicum process, and mentors' roles are crucial in supporting this development.

However, although research has consistently reported that limited support and a lack of positive mentoring during practicum can inhibit student teachers' professional development, other studies indicate that a positive relationship, along with constructive insights and guidance from mentors, can serve as a source of inspiration for student teachers to sustain their professional growth (du Plessis & Razmjooe, 2025) and support their identity development (Groenewald & Arnold, 2025). Beyond the context of teaching practicum, mentorship is also widely acknowledged as crucial for professional development across all levels of education, including higher education (Rinfret et al., 2023). It also plays an important role in supporting students' career development as well as faculty members' professional advancement (Nabi et al., 2025; Scutelnicu Todoran, 2023).

Research on mentors' roles has been widely reported across different contexts and levels of study, revealing varied findings. Arguably, most studies have focused on mentors' roles during practicum, particularly in home-based teaching practicum settings. However, studies examining mentors' roles during overseas teaching practicum remain underexplored, especially those involving EFL pre-service teachers undertaking practicum in an ESL school context. Moreover, overseas teaching practicum studies that capture student teachers' professional and identity development are still limited. Therefore, further investigation is needed to foreground student teachers' voices and explore their lived experiences of being mentored during overseas teaching practice, particularly in relation to their professional and identity development.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore mentors' roles in supporting Indonesian pre-service teachers during an international teaching practicum, particularly in the context of their teaching placement in the Philippines, from the student teachers' perspectives. The central research questions of this study are: 1). What roles do mentors play during the overseas teaching practicum? 2). How do the mentors' roles support Indonesian student teachers in projecting their professional development and constructing their professional identity?

METHOD

Design

This study is framed under a qualitative case study as its research design. Creswell & Creswell (2017) defines a case study as an inquiry approach widely used across disciplines in which researchers develop an in-depth analysis of a case, such as a program, event, activity process, or individuals. Accordingly, this study explored the perspectives and lived

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experiences of four pre-service teachers' who were mentored during their teaching practicum in schools in the Philippines. The practicum was conducted under the Pre-service Student Teacher Exchange in Southeast Asia (SEA-Teacher) program organized by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). This is an international exchange initiative that enables pre-service teachers from Southeast Asia to undertake practical teaching practicum in another SEAMEO member country, SEAMEO Associate member country, or SEAMEO Affiliate member. During the exchange initiative, student teachers are encouraged to conduct classroom observations, plan and deliver lessons in schools, and engage in reflective activities and evaluation. At the end of the program, they are required to submit a report and publish a reflection on SEAMEO's website blog to obtain a certificate of completion.

Data and Source of Data

The primary data of this study were primarily collected through personal interviews with four student teachers who participated on the "Pre-service Teacher Exchange in Southeast Asia or SEA-teacher (Southeast Asia Teacher project). The program lasted for one month. The participants were purposively selected and participated in the study voluntarily. A snowball sampling method was used to recruit participants. Initially, the researchers approached the first participant and invited her to take part in the study. After she agreed, the researchers asked her to recommend or nominate other potential participants. In total, six individuals initially volunteered to participate; however, after the interview process began, two participants withdrew from the study without providing any reasons.

Table 1. Subjects of the study

No	Nick name	Gender	Place of teaching in the Philippines	Grade	Background
1	Meysa	Female	Saint Anthony High School	7, 8, 10, 11	English Education at a private university in Southern Surabaya
2	Rimy	Female	Mindoro Integrated High School	8, 9, 10	English Education at a private university in Southern Surabaya
3	Iga	Female	Mindoro Laboratory High School	10	English Education at a private university in Northern Surabaya
4	Nugraha	Male	Central Bicol High School	7	English Education at a private university in Sukabumi

*) All names are anonymized

Data Collection Technique

The researchers used interviews as the primary method of data collection. Interviews were selected because that are generally employed in qualitative research to explore participants' experiences, practices, and perspectives, and to elicit in-depth information from research subject. In this study, the first author interviewed four participants who had completed their overseas teaching practicum in the Philippines. The interviews were conducted in person and via telephone. Three participants residing in Surabaya were interviewed face-to-face, while one participant from Sukabumi was interviewed through a WhatsApp call. The first author conducted the interviews to minimize potential power relation issues that generally emerge in qualitative interviews, particularly inequalities position between interviewer and interviewees. Through these semi structured interviews, the participants were able to recall their memory. After the data were collected, the first author transcribed the interviews

verbatim, while the corresponding author checked and re-checked the transcription to ensure data accuracy.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a data analysis method that helps researchers to identify themes and patterns of meaning within qualitative data sets in relation to the research questions. This method is particularly appropriate for analyzing qualitative data such as interviews, focus group discussions, and qualitative surveys. In this study, the data were analyzed through seven stages: transcription, reading and familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalizing the analysis. All stages of data analysis were conducted by the first author under the supervision of the corresponding author, while the final report was written in tandem by the first and the corresponding author.

RESULTS

The results presented in this section are based on the collected data from four pre-service teachers who completed their teaching practicum in the Philippines. Overall, the findings indicate that mentors played three prominent roles in supporting the pre-service teachers' successful of teaching practicum experience. First, mentors positioned themselves as role models. Second, they served as collaborators. Third, they acted as evaluators throughout the teaching practicum.

The Mentor's Role Being a Role Model for Student Teacher Trainee

The finding indicates that positioning as a role model for student teacher trainee is generally played by the mentors. This position enables them to provide an authentic example of how to teach the lesson, manage the classroom, what attitudes can teacher applied in themselves. One of the participants said:

Excerpt 1

"Her role was very positive. She is my coordinating teacher and also my role model in becoming professional teacher. In daily life, she always arrives on time. During teaching, she uses various teaching methods that help students more understand about what they are learning ..." (Meysa)

Meysa described her coordinating teacher as an important figure who significantly influenced her professional development. She emphasized that the mentor demonstrated strong professional through punctuality and innovative teaching practices in the classroom. Moreover, the mentor's consistent discipline, such as arriving on time, reflecting a strong ethic that become a behavioral example for the Meysa. In addition, the mentor's use of varied teaching methods was perceived by Meysa beneficial in mediating students understand learning materials more clearly. In other words, effective teachers do not only deliver materials but also create activities that encourage students' participation, as illustrated by Rimy in the following

Excerpt 2

"She often uses games in learning that make students more active..." (Rimy)

The extract indicates that the mentor frequently applies game-based learning as an instructional strategy to improve student engagement. By integrating games into classroom activities, the mentor creates a more interactive and engaged learning atmosphere that encourages students to get involved actively in the classroom rather than remain passive

learners. This suggests that the mentor's creativity contribute to a more enjoyable and motivating learning environment. Furthermore, Rimy's statement reflects that games are not solely used for entertainment, but functions as a pedagogical tool to encourage classroom participation and improve students' motivation. In addition to using engaging teaching strategies, the mentor was also perceived as effective in managing students' misbehavior during the lesson.

Excerpt 3

"Her attitude that I want to apply to myself is that when learning is ongoing there are some students who are naughty ... she just warned the student in a soft tone, instead she paid more attention to the naughty student, different from the teacher in Indonesia..." (Nugraha)

The extract illustrates that the student teacher admired the mentor's classroom management style particularly in dealing with students who misbehaved during the lesson. Instead of reacting harshly, the mentor addressed the situation by warning the student in a soft manner. This approach reflects the mentor's ability to maintain classroom in discipline while still showing respect and emotional control, which can create a safer and more supportive learning environment. This suggests that the mentor viewed misbehavior as an indicator of learning needs rather than merely a problem to punish. In this sense, Nugraha explicitly compared this approach with the teachers in Indonesia, arguing that the mentor's calm and caring response was perceived as 'different' and more effective. In short, the extract highlights the importance of empathetic discipline in fostering positive teacher-student relationship.

To be specific, such as supportive and respectful approach strengthened the student teacher's admiration for the mentor and influenced their perception of professional teacher.

Excerpt 4

"I considered her as a good role model; she gave me positive insight into being a good and professional teacher in the future." (Iga)

The extract indicates that the student teacher perceived the mentor as a significant role model who influenced her perception of professional teacher. By describing the mentor as a 'good role model', the participant suggests that the mentor's behavior, attitudes, and teaching practices served as an example of what effective teaching should look like. Theoretically, this emphasizes the importance of observational learning in shaping student teachers' understanding of professional standard.

Furthermore, the student-teacher said that the mentor provided 'positive insight' into becoming a good and professional teacher in the future. This indicates that the mentor's presence ultimately contributed not only to practical learning experiences but also to the student-teacher's professional identity construction. The mentor's role was, therefore, perceived as meaningful in guiding the student-teacher's projection on professionalism, including how to manage classroom, engage students, and demonstrate responsible conduct as an educator. This suggests that mentorship during the teaching practicum does not merely function as administrative guidance, but also as a source of professional modeling that able to strengthen student-teachers' confidence, motivation, and identity formation.

The Mentor's Role Being a Collaborator for Student Teacher Trainee

In this section, the second theme which emerged from our data analysis is that mentors played a key role as collaborators, as reflected in the interview data. This collaboration was evident in lesson planning and teaching preparation, particularly through mentors' involvement in discussing and reviewing student teachers' lesson plan before classroom

implementation. The following extract clearly illustrates the mentor acting not only as a supervisor, but also as a collaborative partner who supports the trainee through shared planning and joint preparation.

Excerpt 5

“An example of cooperation with my mentor is discussing about lesson plan, for example today I was asked to make a lesson plan and then she asked me to submit it to her, so that I can use it to teach the next day.” (Meysa)

Excerpt 6

“Yes, she asked me to make a lesson plan then she helped me to correct it...” (Nugraha)

Meysa’s and Nugraha’s statement highlights the mentor’s role as a collaborator through lesson planning cooperation. The mentor actively engages in the trainee’s preparation process by requesting Meysa to design a lesson plan, asking her to send it for review, and ensuring it becomes a practical guide for the next day’s teaching. This indicates that the mentor and trainee collaborate in a professional partnership where lesson planning is not being an individual responsibility, but through ongoing discussion and shared responsibility. Such positive and supportive collaboration helps the trainee feel supported, improved lesson quality, and strengthen readiness for classroom implementation.

The current research findings further emphasized the mentor’s guidance was not limited to giving instruction, but involved continuous assistance that helped the trainee improve the quality of the lesson plan. This collaborative assistance contributed to the trainee’s confidence and ability to produce a very well-prepared teaching plan, as reflected in Rimy’s statement”

Excerpt 7

“Maybe if there were no help and guidance from her, I couldn’t make a lesson plan as perfect as this.” (Rimy)

The collaborative support from the mentor enables the trainee to refine the lesson plan and achieve a better teaching preparation. This demonstrates that mentoring practices can strengthen trainee’s professional growth through shared planning and continues supportive supervision during the lesson planning process.

Excerpt 8

“I have been through the difficulties in making and compiling the lesson plan... and she wanted to explain clearly until I understood. That’s great!” (Iga)

The extract illustrates that mentors acted as collaborative partners who providing clear explanations and guidance when student teachers experienced difficulties during the lesson plan development. Iga’s experience accentuates that mentor did not simply give instructions but patiently explained the lesson planning steps in very detail until the trainee fully understood. This implicitly means that the differences in language background between Indonesian student teachers, their mentors, and their students create challenges. English is a foreign language for the student teachers, while it is a second language for the mentors and students. As a result, Indonesian student teachers may be less familiar with preparing lesson plans designed for second language learners. However, with the continuous support provided by their mentors, the student teachers are eventually able to tackle the challenges of preparing lesson plans and implementing them in the classroom.

The Mentor's Role Being an Evaluator for Student Teacher Trainee

The findings of the current study show that the mentors acted as an evaluator, particularly through providing constructive feedback right after the student teachers finish their classroom teaching. The mentor evaluates not only the student teachers' teaching effectiveness but also specific aspects of classroom practices, such as teaching strategies, student engagement, and communication skills. Through this evaluation role, the mentor helps student teachers recognize their strengths and identify areas that need improvement.

Excerpt 9

"She told me my strengths and weaknesses during teaching, for example, she was very happy with my learning especially about my activities at a more active student center, and for my shortcomings, for example when teaching my voice was less loud when delivering the material, and she told me in soft words. And after finishing the evaluation she gave the words "Good Job" for the teaching that I have done." (Rimy)

Excerpt 10

"... she immediately gave me an evaluation of how less and more of the teaching I had done in class, the way she gave an excellent evaluation, she presented his feedback in a relaxed and pleasant manner so that I became satisfied after being evaluated by her... she always said "Good Job" at the end of the evaluation." (Iga)

Rimy's and Iga's extract clearly illustrate the mentor's role as an evaluator through the process of giving detailed and balanced feedback after teaching practices. The mentor evaluated the student teachers' performance by identifying both their strengths and weaknesses, such as appreciating of using student-centered learning activities while also showing weakness particularly in voice projection. This indicates that the mentor's evaluation was specific and based on the actual classroom practices and observation. Moreover, the mentor delivered the feedback in a gentle and encouraging way, which reflects supportive and constructive evaluation rather than harsh criticism. The mentor's final encouragement, such as saying "Good job", also demonstrates how evaluation can motivate student teachers to improve their teaching confidence and professional growth.

In addition, the findings further show that mentors play an important role as evaluator by providing written and verbal feedback, while also maintaining student teachers' motivation and confidence as is illustrated in the following extract.

Excerpt 11

"She called me to her office, after that there would be an evaluation note on the back of the lesson plan paper that I had printed. And on her notes, there are my strengths and weaknesses while teaching in class. Then she told me my strengths, and she gave me the word "congratulation, good job" which made me even more enthusiastic about teaching the next day, and for my shortcomings in teaching, she conveyed it in a soft tone so that I didn't feel disappointed and she reminded me to improve again." (Nugraha)

Nugraha's statement illustrates that written form feedback, adding evaluation notes to the lesson plan, showing that evaluation was seriously organized and based on documented teaching materials. Moreover, the verbal feedback which is conducted directly through private channel can be understood as showing professional and supportive mentoring approach. Crucially, the mentor balanced criticism with encouragement by praising Nugraha's achievements and delivering suggestions for improvement in a gentle

manner. This indicates that the mentor's evaluation not only functioned as an assessment of teaching performance, but also as a motivational instrument that helped student teachers maintain confidence and enthusiasm for future teaching.

All in all, the findings of the study highlight that mentors played an important role as evaluators in helping student teachers' professional development through planned, supportive, positive and personalized feedback. As a result, student teachers are able to recognize areas for improvement and develop greater confidence and enthusiasm to enhance their future teaching practices. In other words, evaluation can serve as a meaningful space for mentors to support student teachers' identity construction and professional development.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that mentors consistently positioned themselves as professional role models for Indonesian student teachers throughout the overseas practicum. This role extended well beyond instructional guidance to encompass the modelling of professional attitudes, pedagogical decision-making, and classroom interaction styles, all of which became a primary source of experiential learning for the trainees. By observing how professional teaching is enacted in authentic classroom contexts, student teachers gained practical insights that directly informed their understanding of effective pedagogy. This is consistent with Ndebele & Legg-Jack (2022) who argue that mentorship meaningfully shapes student teachers' pedagogical knowledge and technical teaching skills, while simultaneously supporting their professional identity development and their future-oriented self-projection as competent educators. In a similar vein, Ticknor (2014) asserts that mentors can significantly transform student teachers' professional development and identity construction by instilling confidence, agency, and a sense of professional empowerment, all of which are foundational components in the formation of a coherent teacher identity.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that Indonesian student teachers encountered what they perceived as ideal role models whose classroom practices resonated with their professional aspirations, consequently fostering positive shifts in their views of what it means to be a good teacher. This aligns with Delgado et al. (2020), who found that when student teachers' idealistic professional expectations converge with exemplary mentors and supportive classroom environments, positive identity construction is more likely to occur. This is further supported by Ardi et al. (2025), who highlight that mentors in EFL contexts serve not only as guides for practical pedagogical aspects but also as models of the inner professional self that pre-service teachers aspire to embody. Taken together, the student teachers' expressed commitment to replicating and adapting their mentors' pedagogical practices in their future classrooms serves as a concrete indicator that meaningful professional identity development was actively taking place throughout the practicum experience.

However, it is important to note that not all studies report uniformly positive outcomes of role modelling in mentoring relationships. Clarke et al. (2014) caution that over-reliance on mentor modelling may inadvertently constrain student teachers' pedagogical creativity and independent thinking, as trainees may feel compelled to replicate their mentors' practices uncritically rather than developing their own distinctive teaching styles. Similarly, Rajuan et al. (2007) found that student teachers who were excessively oriented toward imitating their mentors occasionally experienced tensions between their mentors' expectations and their own emerging professional values and beliefs. These contradictory perspectives suggest that while role modelling is a powerful mentoring tool, teacher education programs should also encourage student teachers to critically reflect on observed practices rather than adopting them straightforwardly.

The findings further indicate that mentorship extended into collaborative professional partnership, particularly evident in the lesson planning process. Mentors did not merely supervise or instruct; rather, they engaged in shared planning, provided detailed explanations, and offered continuous guidance that helped student teachers navigate the challenges of designing and implementing effective lesson plans. This collaborative dynamic resonates with Hargreaves (1998), who argues that mentoring rooted in collegial collaboration, rather than hierarchical supervision, is far more effective in promoting professional learning and sustaining long-term professional growth. Likewise, Hennissen et al. (2008) found that mentors who adopt an interactive and dialogic approach to supervision produce significantly more reflective and autonomous student teachers compared to those who rely on directive or evaluative styles alone.

This collaborative dynamic is particularly significant given the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic context of the practicum, where Indonesian student teachers, for whom English is a foreign language, were required to design lesson plans for Filipino students who use English as a second language. The linguistic and curricular unfamiliarity made lesson planning particularly challenging, and mentors' patient and sustained support proved instrumental in helping student teachers overcome these difficulties. This finding confirms earlier research suggesting that lesson planning is a time-intensive and cognitively demanding process (Goodnough et al., 2009), and that student teachers are particularly vulnerable when mentors' support is limited or insufficient (Guise et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the collaborative mentoring model is not without its limitations. Bullough (2005) warns that collaborative mentoring relationships can sometimes develop into overly dependent dynamics, where student teachers become excessively reliant on their mentors' guidance and consequently struggle to exercise independent professional judgment once the practicum concludes. This concern is echoed by Norman & Feiman-Nemser (2005), who found that some student teachers in highly supportive mentoring arrangements reported difficulties in transitioning to autonomous teaching practice, as they had grown accustomed to the continuous scaffolding provided during their training. These findings suggest that while collaborative support is essential, it should be strategically balanced with opportunities for student teachers to practice independent decision-making and self-directed problem-solving. The interpersonal closeness cultivated through collaborative mentoring is also noteworthy. As Hagenauer et al. (2023) argue, the quality of the interpersonal relationship between mentors and student teachers throughout the practicum is a prominent determinant of high-quality mentoring, which ultimately benefits student teachers' overall training experience.

The findings also highlight the critical role of mentors as evaluators, particularly through the provision of structured, balanced, and constructive feedback following classroom teaching sessions. Mentors evaluated multiple dimensions of student teachers' performance, including teaching strategies, student engagement, voice projection, and communication effectiveness. Crucially, feedback was delivered in an encouraging and emotionally sensitive manner, which helped student teachers receive criticism constructively rather than defensively. The consistent use of affirming language such as "Good Job" and "Congratulations" at the conclusion of feedback sessions served as a motivational mechanism that sustained student teachers' enthusiasm and confidence for subsequent teaching. This is consistent with Izadinia (2015) and Zhu et al. (2020) who assert that positive mentoring during teaching practicum significantly enhances student teachers' confidence and contributes to their professional identity formation across multiple dimensions, including their sense of voice, vision, and professional self-efficacy. Supporting this view, Crasborn et al. (2011) found that mentors who balance evaluative feedback with affirming dialogue are more effective in fostering student teachers' reflective capacities and long-term professional resilience.

However, it is important to acknowledge that evaluation can function as a double-edged sword. While constructive feedback can motivate student teachers and foster professional growth, feedback that is overly critical or poorly delivered can undermine confidence and hinder development (Hagenauer et al., 2023). This tension is well-documented in the literature. Hobson et al. (2009) found that student teachers who received predominantly critical or unsupportive feedback during their practicum reported significantly lower levels of professional confidence and higher rates of attrition from teacher education programs. Furthermore, providing sufficiently critical yet supportive feedback remains a persistent challenge for mentors, as student teachers often possess insufficient background knowledge to fully interpret or apply the feedback they receive, leading to potential mismatches in understanding (Hagenauer et al., 2023). Adding to this complexity, (Nilsson & van Driel, 2010) argue that even well-intentioned mentor feedback can be misappropriated by student teachers who lack the conceptual frameworks necessary to translate evaluative comments into meaningful instructional change. These contradictory findings collectively underscore the need for mentor training programs that explicitly develop mentors' capacity to deliver feedback that is not only accurate and specific but also cognitively accessible and emotionally attuned to student teachers' developmental needs.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine Indonesian pre-service teachers' mentoring experiences during an overseas teaching practicum in the Philippines, with a particular focus on the roles mentors played and how those roles shaped professional development and teacher identity construction. The findings consistently demonstrate that mentors fulfilled three interconnected and mutually reinforcing roles throughout the practicum: role model, collaborator, and evaluator. As role models, mentors provided pre-service teachers with authentic, observable examples of professional teaching conduct, prompting student teachers to critically reflect on their own emerging professional values and to articulate clear commitments to replicating effective practices in their future classrooms. As collaborators, mentors engaged in shared lesson planning and offered patient, sustained guidance that helped student teachers navigate the linguistic and curricular challenges inherent in a cross-cultural practicum context, fostering interpersonal trust and professional confidence that extended beyond the practicum itself. As evaluators, mentors provided structured, balanced, and emotionally attuned feedback that enabled student teachers to identify their pedagogical strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and sustain their motivation and enthusiasm for teaching, underscoring that the manner in which feedback is delivered is as consequential as its content.

Taken together, the findings of this study affirm that high-quality mentorship during overseas teaching practicums is a multi-dimensional, relational, and deeply consequential process. The three mentor roles did not operate in isolation; rather, they functioned as an integrated system of support that collectively shaped the professional growth, pedagogical confidence, and identity formation of the pre-service teachers involved. These findings carry significant implications for teacher education institutions. Mentors should be deliberately selected and formally prepared for their roles, equipped with the competencies to fulfil relational, pedagogical, and evaluative functions effectively. Furthermore, the cross-cultural dimension of this practicum highlights the unique developmental value of international practicum experiences in broadening pre-service teachers' intercultural competence and pedagogical perspectives, a value that warrants greater institutional recognition and policy support.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The small sample size of four participants, while appropriate for a qualitative case study design, necessarily limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore expand the scope of inquiry through larger-scale, longitudinal, and comparative studies that

examine how mentoring practices and outcomes vary across different cross-cultural practicum contexts, institutional arrangements, and linguistic backgrounds. Such research will be essential for building a more comprehensive understanding of how mentorship can be optimized to support the professional development and identity formation of pre-service teachers in increasingly diverse and globalized educational settings.

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