

# The Role of Mentoring and Coaching in Managerial Capacity Development

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**Abstract:** Mentoring and coaching plays an important in management process. Personal and professional developments require an essential for capacity development. This research focused on evaluating and analyzing mentoring and coaching applications in primary schools of Northern Cyprus. This study examines the importance of mentoring and coaching applications in order to increase managerial roles of head teachers. Complexity of being “new”, “inexperienced” or “young” can directly or indirectly affect their performances at early years of their careers. There are many methods for improving quality of this inexperienced teacher’s teaching experiences in developed countries. One of these applications is mentoring and coaching relationship and this kind of head teacher – newly qualified teacher relationship is greatly preferred. Study sheds a light on developing, supporting, mentoring or coaching for Northern part of Cyprus teachers insufficient. Research relies on qualitative which concentrate on experiences, working styles. Qualitative data is collected from semi structured interviews and document research. Study sample is consisted from primary schools based on rural areas of Northern part of Cyprus which is based on purposive sampling. Interviews were conducted with 20 head teachers. Thematic analysis was conducted and themes that are mentoring and coaching. The research study revealed that mentoring and coaching is important, their managerial roles were developed.

**Keywords:** *mentoring and coaching; head teachers; novice teachers; managerial role.*

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## Introduction

It is known that the 21st century is much more sophisticated and dynamic than the past. Both the relationships in our personal and professional lives have changed. Therefore, the nature of personal and professional relationships we have faced has become more complex. Also, in schools; all components must be settled to this era. According to Setyaningsih et al. (2018) in the twenty-first century, the world has entered a very variable era. In this trend, it is mandatory to assume that there is not only one true idea. Educational approaches have also changed during this era. Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should educate their students according to the demands of this century so that they can compete with their own contemporaries. Individuals who successfully completed their high education and who have the right to be a teacher experience significant difficulties in the first periods of their career. They face difficulties related to settling to dynamic and complex nature of schools. Although the higher education institutions teach to candidates what and how to teach, there are not enough applications about adaptation to become a teacher. Students have applications such as preserving or internships, however, they do not spend enough time at schools to understand their future profession. Cooper and Stewart (2009) claim that newly qualified teachers do not get efficient support and this can even push them to quit their jobs in the first years of their career.

They have to be aware of cultural differences and be open to changes. As postmodernism has changed the people's way of thinking in all aspects, education system has been revised in western countries. Although the postmodernism does not have a certain and single definition, keywords such as differences, changes, humanism, pluralism are commonly used in defining – positivism (Levy-Feldman, 2018).

One of the key factors of improving school's performance is to build an efficient teaching environment. Adequate teaching performance brings an efficient teaching environment and teaching performance, which can be developed with acceptable interactions and relationships in schools (Bush, 2008). One of the effective ways of interaction and relationship in schools or any other educational institutions is mentoring and coaching exercises (Altinay et al., 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

Nowadays, mentoring and coaching applications are preferred as an "*on-the-job*" support method in educational organizations. It is accepted as an effective professional development tool to enable teachers and

administrators to interact with each other and to deliver their skills and experiences (Chen, 2018). It can be said that the "absence of a single truth" advocated by postmodernism also applies to mentoring and coaching. The "truth" of every colleague can be different, and individuals who are in a mentor-mentee relationship can learn, accept or understand the "truths" and differences of each other. In this context, the relationship between mentoring and coaching can be accepted as a postmodernist approach.

According to Altaylı & Daglı (2018) there are no signs of mentoring and coaching applications in Northern Cyprus schools. Their study shows that head teachers try to build a supporting relationship with newly qualified teachers. However newly qualified teachers claim that they do not get sufficient or efficient support in their early years.

Studies show that an efficient and effective support relationship is a key factor for the professional development of new teachers and that mentoring and coaching practices are one of them. This research aims to evaluate and analyze mentoring and coaching applications in Northern Cyprus primary schools.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to examine school head teachers' perceptions about mentoring and coaching applications, in what kind of situations mentoring and coaching can be used and how these applications can be spread to every head teacher. In this respect, the research study tries to find answers for: How mentoring and coaching can be used in schools? What kind of training they should get before start mentoring and coaching?

## **Research Model**

In this study, qualitative approach was selected as a research method. Academicians explain the qualitative research in different ways. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) explicate this approach as a method in which data collection tools such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, data environment is analyzed and meaning is created. Furthermore, qualitative research has the ability to examine participants' perspectives adequately (Kuş, 2003). Creswell (2009) listed the characteristics of qualitative research such as; natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants' meanings, interpretive etc.

More specifically, in the qualitative research approach, the researcher is in the research process as the main tool and collects data by directly

interviewing the participants, observing the subject to be researched without affecting its natural location.

### **Study Sample**

The data was obtained by interviewing 20 head teachers who work in rural regions, as new qualified teachers work mostly in these areas of Northern Cyprus.

### **Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to achieve the objectives of this study. Legard et al. (2003) reports that face to face interview, document analysis and observation are commonly used techniques in qualitative research. Researchers can examine perspectives of participants in depth. Qualitative research allows revealing many aspects such as body language, thoughts and beliefs. While researchers can understand the feelings and thoughts of the participants in semi-structured interviews, this understanding is not possible in non-face-to-face techniques. More specifically, in the qualitative research approach, the researcher has a role as the main tool of the research process and collects data by directly interviewing with participants or observing the subject to be researched without affecting its natural ecosystem (Creswell, 2009).

In the study, three open-ended questions were asked to the participants. Questions were carefully chosen in order to be compatible with the aims of the study. The questions were presented to critics of educational management experts and analyzed by them. After their valuable reviews, few changes were made and questions became ready for the interview. Researchers and informants set up a calendar for the interviews. All interviews were conducted face to face. The informants were given preliminary information before the interview. The privacy of the participants was ensured. The voice recordings of all the interviews were collected with the consent of the participants. In addition, notes were taken and listened to better understand the participants. Interviews were conducted with each participant lasting from 15-20 minutes.

During the research, confidentiality and accurate data transfer were adopted as the most important ethical principle.

### **Data Analysis**

In each interview with the participants, categories were created for each answer of the questions and placed in the tables accordingly. The

categories created in the first stage were then converted into themes. Similar views were combined in one group and different views were combined and coded in different groups. The appropriate answer to the created categories is indicated by the number of head teachers who gave it. The collected data were analyzed by content analysis technique.

As Yıldırım & Şimşek (2013) underline, content analysis is conducted in four stages: In the first stage, the participants were named with numerical codes. The data obtained were analyzed in accordance with the framework of the research and separated significantly. It is named and coded after parsing. After examining all obtained data, code list was formed. Data that is not relevant to the research questions were not included in the study. The code list was reviewed separately by researchers and consensus was reached. Huberman's formula was used for reliability calculation. The calculation shows that the result is 91%. This result is considered as reliable since it exceeded the cut off of 70%. .

The second stage is thematization. Since the collected data is considered to be sufficient to encode, the encoded data is considered as categories and themes are created.

The next stage is organizing data. This stage can be summarized as organizing and defining the generated codes and themes. The data were made accessible to readers. Transcribed sections of the interviews were presented to readers. Transcribed sections are presented with quotes and information about which participant has indicated is typed in italics.

Abbreviations for participants were done as follows:

I: Interview note,

1-20: Numerical codes given to participants.

The final stage of content analysis is the stage where the data interpreted by researchers and many results were obtained.

## **Findings**

Analyzed data gathered by interviews are presented in this section. As interviews held in Turkish language, they were translated into English by researchers. Comments were also given after each presented finding.

***Factor 1: School head teachers' perceptions about mentoring and coaching applications***

**Table 1:** School head teachers’ perceptions about mentoring and coaching applications

Themes	Frequency	Percentage %
Head teachers should be able to use mentoring and coaching skills at a very good level.	14	% 70
In order to improve newly qualified teachers' performance, heads of schools should receive training about mentoring and coaching.	16	% 80
Heads of schools can use mentoring and coaching practices to help newly qualified teachers for solving their own problems and facilitate the process of finding solutions.	15	% 75
Mentoring and coaching can help improving the quality of education by increasing their motivation at the teaching process.	18	% 90
Mentoring and coaching can help newly qualified teachers to be emotionally supported.	8	% 40

Source: The authors own conception

“Head teachers should be able to use mentoring and coaching skills at a very good level”.

One of the head teachers stated that: *“Mentoring and coaching is an application that will affect people’s professional lives. So, for using these activities, we need to have certain skills. (I:2)* Most of the participants emphasized the need for some skills related to mentoring and coaching.

*“In Order to Improve Newly Qualified Teachers' Performance, School Heads Should Receive Training About Mentoring and Coaching.”*

Many of the head teachers stated that they think it is important to receive training in order to be able to provide mentoring and coaching. A head teacher, for instance, stated: *“Novice Mentoring and coaching exercises will be useful only. if mentors (we) are educated properly. We have to get informed about mentoring and coaching. Otherwise, all our efforts may have negative effects. (I:6)”* Another one also added: *“I think that no one should practice mentoring and coaching without a good education. (I:14)”*

“Heads of Schools Can Use Mentoring and Coaching Practices To Help Newly Qualified Teachers For Solving Their Own Problems And Facilitate The Process Of Finding Solutions.”

A head teacher indicated that: *“Young teachers may experience difficulties in the first years of their profession. This is natural. At this point, we, as more experienced people, must help them. (I:17)”* Another participant emphasized the importance of mentoring and coaching: *“Newly qualified teachers are young and inexperienced. We can help them in this process. But we have to do it right. Not ours, but their solutions are the right ones. We can help them create their own solutions through mentoring and coaching. (I:9)”*

“Mentoring and Coaching Can Help Improving The Quality Of Education By Increasing Their Motivation At The Teaching Process.”

Almost all of the participants argued that the newly qualified teachers should have high motivation. They think that they go through a difficult phase in the first years of their profession and that their motivation levels directly affect their teaching skills. *“Newly qualified teachers need a diploma to do their job. They study for four years and become teachers. However, the teaching process is learned not only in the university but with learning by doing. Therefore, our teachers may have difficulty in the first place. As school heads, we can guide and motivate them with such practices. (I:11)”*

“Mentoring and Coaching Can Help Newly Qualified Teachers to Be Emotionally Supported.”

One participant commented on this theme as follows: *“It is normal for the first years of the profession to go through adaptation problems. Therefore, we (school heads) should support them emotionally. Mentoring and coaching are just one of the ways. (I: 13)”*

**Factor 2: School head teachers’ views on which areas they should use mentoring and coaching process on newly qualified teachers at most.**

**Table 2:** School head teachers’ views on which areas they should use mentoring and coaching process on newly qualified teachers at most.

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Themes	Frequency	Percentage %
They will learn how to solve the difficulties they face, while teaching	8	% 40
They can be with their experienced colleagues to resolve conflicts	11	% 55

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They can talk to their students' parents to solve problems	10	% 50
Guiding students in maintaining good relationships	12	% 60
Support them to adopt their profession	15	% 75

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Source: The authors own conception

“They will learn how to solve the difficulties they face, while teaching.”

Some of the participants stated that if newly qualified teachers are involved in mentoring and coaching processes, it might be useful in overcoming the problems related to teaching. One of them stated that: *“The most important area in which first mentoring and coaching should be used is about teaching. Teaching is a very difficult task. Young teachers may have problems with this. Mentoring and coaching processes can help overcome these challenges. (I:9)”*

“They can be with their experienced colleagues to resolve conflicts”

More than half of the participants argued that newly qualified teachers can have disagreements with their more experienced colleagues and they will be able to use mentoring and coaching process to guide them to solve such disagreements. One of them stated that: *“New teachers can have problems with experienced colleagues on both personal and professional issues. The reason for this may be their view of the profession and life may be different due to the age difference. At this point we can build a bridge between them with mentoring and coaching. (I:4)”*

“They can talk to their students' parents to solve problems”

Half of the participants mentioned the possibility that teachers may have problems with parents. They stated that their inexperience would be a disadvantage if they experienced such a process, so that the head teachers could guide teachers through mentoring and coaching. A participant stated that *“Because of the lack of experience of young teachers, it is usual for parents to create prejudices. Inexperienced teachers may give undesirable reactions to this condition. We can help them to overcome such situations by applying mentoring and coaching with our teachers. (I:8)”*

“Guiding students in maintaining good relationships”

One of the head teachers stated: *“One way to increase the impact of the teaching process is to connect with the student. Healthy relationships with students are vital. Through mentoring and coaching, head teachers can help to strengthen these bonds. (I:10)”*

“Support Them To Adopt Their Profession.”



Three of four of the head teachers shared the idea that newly qualified teachers need support in the adaptation process in this new period of their lives. A participant’s statement is as follows: *“Starting a new profession also means starting a new life. We must support them in the early stages of their profession. It is very important that we take the right steps so that they can adapt. It is our duty to adapt the new staff. Mentoring and coaching skills can be effective in their adaptation process. (I:19)”*

**Factor 3: Views of head teachers about the training they need to do to be mentoring and coaching**

**Table 3:** Views of head teachers about the training they need to do to be mentoring and coaching

Themes	Frequency	Percentage %
Online courses	15	% 75
In-service training	20	% 100
Peer learning practices	9	% 45
Mentoring and coaching in mandatory education	8	% 40

Source: The authors own conception

Three-quarters of the school heads who participated in the study argued that online courses would be an effective way of learning mentoring and coaching. One stated: *“Online courses may be preferred due to ease of access. Managers can receive training at home or elsewhere at any time. This can motivate managers to receive training. (I:7)”*

With regards to the theme constructed, all the school administrators agreed that school administrators can attend in-service training courses. One of the administrators indicated that: *“Seminar-style trainings can be provided. We receive in-service trainings throughout our professional life. We can also get such trainings about mentoring and coaching. (I: 3)”*

Nearly half of the participants stated that the head teachers could train each other in mentoring and coaching. One of the statements is: *“As in the Western countries, administrators who receive mentoring and coaching training can carry out activities to train other managers. In a sense, they can do peer training applications. (I: 15)”*

Some of the participants shared the opinion that school heads should be obliged to receive mentoring and coaching training. A head teacher, for instance, stated: *‘I think that everyone who is a head teacher should receive mentoring and coaching training. Therefore, it should be made compulsory by the ministry. (I: 11)’*

## Discussions and Conclusion

**Dimension One: School head teachers’ perceptions about mentoring and coaching applications:** In the context of this dimension, conclusions and recommendations are presented according to the opinions of the head teachers.

In the light of the findings gathered from the interviews with the head teachers, it was observed that the head teachers care and willing to use the mentoring and coaching process. Findings reveal that head teachers think that newly qualified teachers' performance can be improved by mentoring and coaching. In this regard, Barkauskaitė and Meškauskienė (2017) posit that mentoring will contribute positively to the problems that teachers experience in their early years. On the other hand, the study conducted by Sunde & Ulvik (2014) on the Norwegian scale reveals that school principals have negative perceptions of mentoring and coaching. However, it is emphasized that they need high level skills and training in order to become effective mentors and coaches. However, the participants could not identify what an effective mentor or a coach needs.

It is clearly evident that there is a difficulty in defining mentoring and coaching completely (Pennanen et al., 2016; Robert, 2000). Mentoring and coaching processes can guide newly qualified teachers in solving their own problems and generating creative and innovative solutions. In addition, the motivation and performance of novice teachers in teaching process can be increased by using mentoring and coaching process according to almost all participants. Some participants suggested that the mentoring and coaching process can be used not only in performance, teaching quality or professional issues, but also in overcoming the difficulties experienced by newly qualified teachers in dealing with emotional issues. The results of this dimension have been also mentioned in other studies. Several outcomes of mentoring and coaching processes have been highlighted (Bukari, & Kuyini, 2015; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Richter et al., 2013; Thornton, 2014).

**Dimension Two: Views of participants on situations in which mentoring and coaching can be used:** The results and suggestions

obtained through the views of the participants according to this dimension are as follows:

Head teachers stated that they can use mentoring and coaching in their relations with inexperienced teachers for different purposes. In particular, it has been revealed that head teachers think that mentoring and coaching can be an important tool for newly qualified teachers' adaptation to the profession. It is well known that newly qualified teachers are having difficulties in their early years, and processes such as mentoring and coaching can be a vital tool for them (Vikaraman et al., 2017). In addition, the importance of the mentoring and coaching process has been highlighted in building positive relationships with other stakeholders of the school. Furthermore, it has been suggested that newly qualified teachers may have problems with older teachers or with students' parents. In such a case, mentoring and coaching can be an effective tool in the solution of such problems. Novice teachers can receive support by building healthy relationships with their experienced colleagues. This will facilitate their familiarization with the profession (Schuck et al., 2018). In addition, it has been pointed out that teaching performance is parallel to effective relationship and communication with students and mentoring and coaching process will guide inexperienced teachers how to be better communicators. As a result of this dimension, it was concluded that school heads consider that they can help newly qualified teachers overcome the problems they will have in teaching through mentoring and coaching process. It is relevant to mention that similar results are obtained when the literature is examined (Bleach, 2012). Villani (2002) also stated that newly qualified teachers can get support in the mentioned fields by the participants through mentoring and coaching.

**Dimension Three: Views of head teachers about the training they need to do to be mentoring and coaching:** In the context of this dimension, conclusions and recommendations are presented according to the opinions of the head teachers.

This research also aimed to identify potential education methods for being a mentor or coach for head teachers. It was revealed that all participants agreed to provide in-service training courses on mentoring and coaching to school principals. Garvey and Alred (2000) presented a mentor training program to their readers. Through this program, it is envisaged that the participants will be provided with training that will enable them to understand mentoring and the nature of the mentoring process. The proposed program consists of two days. In addition, many participants have stated that online courses can be an effective method because of their

advantages such as easy accessibility and flexibility. Also, it was highlighted that peer learning activities could be convenient in mentor and coach education. Finally, some participants argued that mentoring and coaching training should be made compulsory by the policy makers. Mentoring and coaching programs; such as Garvey and Alred (2000) suggest program can be beneficial. Time is also a valuable asset, so the use of online courses will be an effective way for managers to develop their mentoring and coaching skills.

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