E-MENTORING SYSTEM APPLICATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE TEACHERS: AN ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract

E-mentoring offers a functional support process that helps gather individuals who aspire to benefit from the knowledge and experience of mentors on the same platform. Although the newly-recruited village teachers face a great number of shortcomings, it is known that they need the help of people who are more experienced in terms of position. This action research is designed to contribute to the development of village teachers with e-mentoring practices based on qualitative data. In this context, an e-mentoring application lasting 10 weeks was carried out with 4 mentors, 4 mentor support team members, and 20 village teachers. At the end of the study, it was concluded that village teachers made progress in professional (n:56), academic development (n:23) and personal(n:11) wanted to continue as mentors in the later stages of their professional life (n:26) along with studies related to mentoring and that their participation in graduate education increased. For future studies in this field, it is recommended that the e-mentoring process should be meticulously planned, a purposive model should be followed while selecting mentors/mentees, and communication with mentees should not be interrupted during the process.

Keywords: E-mentoring, Higher education, Ministry of national education, Village teachers.

Köy Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Gelişiminde e-Mentorluk Sistemi Uygulaması: Bir Eylem Araştırması

Öz

E-mentörlük, mentorların bilgi ve deneyimlerinden yararlanmayı hedefleyen bireyleri aynı platformda bir araya getirmeye yardımcı olan işlevsel bir destek süreci sunmaktadır. Yeni işe alınan köy öğretmenleri çok sayıda eksiklikle karşı karşıya kalmalarına rağmen pozisyon açısından daha deneyimli kişilerin yardımına ihtiyaç duydukları bilinmektedir. Bu eylem araştırması, nitel verilere dayalı e-mentörlük uygulamalarıyla köy öğretmenlerinin gelişimine katkıda bulunmak üzere tasarlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda 4 mentor, 4 mentor destek ekibi üyesi ve 20 köy öğretmeniyle 10 hafta süren bir e-mentörlük uygulaması gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonunda köy öğretmenlerinin mentorlukla ilgili çalışmalarla birlikte mesleki (n:56), akademik (n:23) ve kişisel (n:11) gelişimde ilerleme kaydettikleri, mesleki yaşamlarının ileriki dönemlerinde mentor olarak devam etmek istedikleri (n:26) ve lisansüstü eğitime katılımlarının arttığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu alanda yapılacak gelecekteki çalışmalar için e-mentörlük sürecinin titizlikle planlanması, mentor/mentör adaylarının seçiminde amaçlı bir model izlenmesi ve süreç boyunca mentorlarla iletişimin kesilmemesi önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: E-mentorluk, Yükseköğretim, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, Köy öğretmenleri.

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1. Introduction

Mentoring practices include work contents that affect every segment at every level of education. These studies, which positively affect the synergy of educational organizations, are effectively used in teacher education (Yirci & Kocabaş, 2012). Successful teachers and administrators' guidance for new teachers with knowledge and experience fosters professional competencies at a faster pace. As a result, there is a significant difference between those who receive mentoring services and those who do not for newly-recruited teachers (Watson, 2006). Especially teachers recruited in villages have difficulty in teaching what they have been taught throughout their university life. The studies conducted in Turkey reveal that the need for mentoring village teachers who have just started their profession is inevitable (Çekiç & Paçalı, 2016). In this regard, in recent years, KODA (Village Schools Exchange Network) Association has been carrying out various activities for teachers, teacher candidates and parents so that children in villages can receive a more qualified education. One of the projects of this association, the Village Teachers Hand in Hand Mentoring Project, shows that the transfer of experience between teachers is beneficial (KODA, 2024). These studies are limited to teachers. On the other hand, there is a mentoring network gap between teachers and academics at the faculty of education who train these teachers.

In this respect, academicians should be encouraged to take part in mentoring services for teachers who have just started their profession, which, in turn, will contribute to both sides. Within the scope of field studies in Turkey, there is no such e-mentoring program for village teachers conducted with the cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and the Higher Education Institution. It is thought that this study, which was carried out with the cooperation of Higher Education and Ministry of Education institutions, will spearhead scholars in the literature and related field studies. In this research, mentoring experiences of educators and education managers working in different formal education institutions will be described transparently. In this respect, the research content is an example that will guide academics who will work in the fields of mentoring in higher education, mentoring in teacher education, mentoring based on academic/personal/professional development, e-mentoring applications and village teachers. In this direction, the main goal of this study is based on the question, "Do e-mentoring applications contribute to the development of village teachers?". The sub-goals are as follows:

1. What are the expectations of mentees for e-mentoring applications?
2. How are e-mentoring applications perceived by mentees?
3. How do e-mentoring applications contribute to the development of mentees?
4. What are the suggestions of mentees for e-mentoring applications?

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Mentoring

Mentoring is a learning period in which a well-trained and erudite person and a person who wants to get support willingly come together to share their experiences, feelings, and thoughts, and thus continue new processes at a more advanced level. Mentoring is a multifaceted interaction process that focuses on the development of both mentees and mentors (Yarrow & Millwater, 1997). Effective mentoring provides a powerful potential that paves the way for deep learning (Bush vd., 2011).

The relationship between the parties involved in the mentoring practice is a purposeful bond that is predetermined and progresses in line with a plan, as opposed to a spontaneous process. At the end of this process, which consists of the phases of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Kram, 1983), mentors seize an opportunity to increase the relational skills and competencies that lead

to improved career outcomes such as career advancement and satisfaction (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007), on the other hand; receiving psychosocial support such as encouragement, friendship, advice, and feedback on performance (Kram, 1985), mentees gain more confidence and personal satisfaction and receive emotional and career support (Douglas, 1997).

1.1.2. E- mentoring

Although the literature encompasses different mentoring practices, mentoring is generally applied under various names such as formal mentoring, informal mentoring, one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, reverse mentoring, and e-mentoring. Studies on e-mentoring, which can be applied in all types of mentoring following the widespread practice of mentoring in many different sectors and the advanced possibilities of technology, are increasing at a remarkable level with the introduction of digital learning into life. E-mentoring is a computer-mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a mentee, which provides learning and modelling, that is often boundaryless, timeless, and qualitatively different than traditional face-to-face mentoring (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Some types of software used in the e-mentoring process are specially-developed software such as "Telementoring Orchestrator" (O'Neill vd., 2005, s.112), commercial mentoring software such as Chronus and Adaptation of Learning Management Systems such as Docebo (Kuzu & Karaman, 2016, s. 83). In addition, these online programs allow teachers working in rural areas to access up-to-date information, get virtual training opportunities, and access a virtual support network (Quintana & Zambrano, 2014).

1.1.3. Mentoring in Education

Mentoring helps ease the transition from student to qualified professional for teachers at the beginning of their careers (Mohono-Mahlatsi & van Tonder, 2006). Mentoring in education is defined as getting support from experienced educators so that a teacher who has just started the profession can develop his or her knowledge and skills more quickly and effectively, adapt to the school and the teaching profession, as well as provide personal and academic development. Therefore, having a mentor is considered important by field experts for reasons such as supporting individuals' personal and professional development, directing their careers and helping them adapt to new environments (Kuzu & Akbulut, 2013).

2. Method

This section includes e-mentoring applications used in the development of village teachers, the design, place, and time of the research, and the collection and analysis of data.

2.1. Research Design

The action research design, one of the qualitative research models, was used in this study that focuses on the application of the e-mentoring program designed for village teachers in cooperation with the Directorate of National Education and Higher Education Institution. Action research involves identifying a problematic issue, imagining a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it, and changing practice in the light of the evaluation (McNiff, 2001). Action research not only provides the opportunity to research and gain knowledge in education and training but also prepares an environment suitable for changing existing situations or problems. In this respect, in this study, the research problem included the experiences of teachers in village schools in the province of Siirt, which is one of the disadvantaged regions, while adapting to school, students, and parents in distance education, and whether they could carry on their educational activities at a qualified level in face of regional impossibilities. Action plans were created to solve the relevant problem.

The action research process helps educators assess their needs, document inquiry steps, analyze data, and make informed decisions that will lead to desired results (Ferrance, 2000). In this respect, weekly practices were determined in the planning phase of the research and worked on accordingly (see *Table 1*).

Table 1

Research Process

Period	Content of the Study Conducted	Person/Persons Managing the Process
Week 1	Mentor and Mentee Selection	Research Team
Week 2	Introduction and Project Introduction	Mentor and Mentee Team
Week 3	Infrastructure of Village Schools (Advantages and Disadvantages), Coordination of Village Schools with Provincial Administration	Mentor 1 (Siirt MEB Provincial Director of National Education)
	Problem Determination Studies for Village Schools Where Mentees Are Located	Mentee Group (Siirt Province MEB Village Teachers)
Week 4	Basic Language Skills and Their Relationship with Other Courses	Mentor 1 (Siirt University/Academic Staff)
	Problem Determination Studies for Village Schools Where Mentees Are Located	Mentee Group (Siirt Province MEB Village Teachers)
Week 5	Qualified Teacher Characteristics: Creative, Solution-Producing Leader Teacher Characteristics	Mentor 3 (Siirt University/Academic Staff)
	Mentees Creating Projects for Their Village Schools	Mentee Group (Siirt Province MEB Village Teachers)
Week 6	Introduction of Theoretical and Applied Research and Project Examples Conducted for Village Schools and Village Teachers	Mentor 4 (Siirt University/Academic Staff)
	Mentees Creating Projects for Their Village Schools	Mentee Group (Siirt Province MEB Village Teachers)
Week 7	Discussion and Evaluation of Mentees' Project Proposals/Brainstorming	Mentor and Mentee Group
Week 8	Presentation and Evaluation of Projects Produced by Mentees	Mentor and Mentee Group
Week 9	Presentation and Evaluation of Projects Produced by Mentees	Mentor and Mentee Group
Week 10	Panel Program and Awarding of Certificates to Mentee Group	Mentor and Mentee Group

2.2. Place and Time of Research

Aiming to provide academic and professional support to village teachers through distance education, this study was carried out online through the Zoom program between 15.10.2021 and 10.12.2021. Apart from this, the meeting where the program contents were evaluated, the products at the end of the process were revealed and the participants were given their certificates was held in the form of a face-to-face meeting in the last week.

2.3. Study Group

Since this article is included in an action plan produced as a solution to a research question for a specific target audience, certain criteria were used to determine the study group (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The literature review reveals that the faculties most likely to be included in mentor training are business and management sciences and education faculties and that it is beneficial for education administrators to participate in mentoring services (Şahinoğlu & Arslan, 2019; Özcan & Çağlar, 2013). In this context, the selection criteria for mentors and mentor support teams to be included in the e-mentoring program for village teachers are as follows:

- To be a member of the academic staff working within the university and in a field that can provide experience transfer to village teachers,
- To be a part of the provincial administrative staff to which the village teachers working within the Ministry of National Education are affiliated,
- To have professional experience that can provide academic and R&D support to those working within the Ministry of National Education,
- To be voluntary.

The selection criteria of the mentee group to be included in the study within the scope of the paper are as follows:

- To be a part of the teaching staff in primary schools in the villages of Siirt province,
- Be willing to develop professionally and academically
- To be voluntary.

The study group determined in this context consists of 4 mentors, 4 mentor support team members, and 20 village teachers. 3 mentors work as faculty members at the University and 1 of them is a top manager in the Ministry of National Education. Mentor support team members work in the teacher academy within the Ministry of National Education and R&D units, and mentees work in the branches of Classroom, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, English, Pre-School, and Psychological Guidance and Counselling in primary schools in different villages of Siirt.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

In this research article, research diaries were collected from mentors and reflective diaries were collected from mentors in line with weekly practices. In addition, video, audio recordings and photographs were obtained in the interviews conducted via the Zoom online program and observations were made regarding the process. Within the scope of the 10-week group e-mentoring study with 20 teachers (mentees), 4 mentors (academicians and Provincial Director of National Education) and 4 mentor assistants (MEB R&D and Teacher Academy Unit); 10 50-minute meeting records with visual and audio content, 20 research diaries, 95 reflective diaries and 80 photographic data were obtained. In addition, mentors and mentees communicated via messages, e-mails and phone calls regarding their plans, meetings, post-meeting evaluations and mentee individual work projects throughout the process.

The MAXQDA qualitative analysis program was used to analyze the collected data and the data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. Content analysis is a method that allows similar data to be transformed into themes with specific expression and conceptual patterns and to be interpreted in an understandable way through arrangements (Usluel and Mazman Akar, 2010). Based on this technique, the data obtained during the research process were analyzed with 4 themes, 32 categories and 360 codes. The statements of the mentored individuals were coded as "M1, M2, M3, …." in the quotation marks of the relevant codes.

3. Findings

The findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data were collected under 4 themes: "Expectations toward e-mentoring applications", "Perceptions toward e-mentoring applications", "Contribution of e-mentoring applications to village teachers" and "Recommendations for e-mentoring applications".

3.1. Expectations Toward E-Mentoring Applications

Based on the data from the research process, the reflective diaries of mentees were analyzed and 2 categories and 3 codes were determined under the theme of the expectations of mentees toward the e-mentoring program applied to village teachers. These include gaining experience from mentors (28 opinions), gaining experience from other mentees (7 opinions) and share their experiences with teachers working in village schools (14 opinions).

Table 2

Expectations of Mentees Toward the E-mentoring Program

Category	Code	Number of Opinions (N)	Samples of opinions
Gaining experience	Gaining experience from mentors	28	*I think the experience and knowledge of program managers will be beneficial for us* (M5).
			All of the instructors participating in the program are experienced and very successful in their fields. It is great that they share their experiences and spend time with us. Thanks to them, I think I will be in a much better position at program conclusion. (M1)
			It is highly useful to see in particular the attitude of our National Education Director toward us village teachers, who makes us feel that we are not alone and shares her/his past experiences (M13).
	Gaining experience from other mentees	7	*I aim to benefit from the experiences of expert mentors and colleagues working in different villages and to convey my own experiences* (M6).
			At program conclusion, I will have learned to find common solutions to the problems and obstacles that I am likely to encounter in professional life, within the framework of cooperation with mentors and fellow mentees, to act in line with the goals, and to be open to developments as a part of the mentoring group. (M12).
			Hearing new ideas from fellow teachers and you, I develop myself and this also helps revive the love of education in me. I hope that at the end of the project I will be at a very different level (M7).
Transferring experience	To share their experiences with teachers working in village schools	14	*I think that village teachers, who are able to adapt to changing environmental conditions in every way, prepared for everything and solution-oriented, aware of the fact that there will always be a solution no matter what the problem is, and never give up, will share their knowledge and experience in this field, contribute to each other's professional and personal development.* (M1)

Category	Code	Number of Opinions (N)	Samples of opinions
			The common goal of all of us is to start a teaching process where we can share our experiences and support each other's development with a team whose goal is to touch the spirit of the school (M6).
			... I have realized that we have a lot to learn from each other. From now on, I will support the newly-recruited village teachers as a mentor teacher (M12).
TOTAL		**49**	

Looking at the comments about the e-mentoring application for village teachers, one may notice that mentees are willing to gain experience from both their mentors and colleagues (other mentees) working in different places within the scope of the e-mentoring process and to make use of such experience in the future as mentors themselves. In this respect, the expectations of mentees and the objectives of the e-mentoring program overlap.

3.2. Perceptions Toward E-Mentoring Applications

Based on the data obtained during the research process, the reflective diaries of mentees were analyzed and 2 categories, 2 sub-categories, and 21 codes were determined under the theme of mentee opinions regarding the e-mentoring program for village teachers. A sub-theme classification was also applied due to the diversity and excess of code definitions under this theme that includes the most comprehensive findings of the research process.

The codes obtained in this context are as follows: The effects of the e-mentoring program include "Arousing curiosity, demand continuity of the program, guiding, raising awareness, gaining self-confidence, motivating" and to be satisfied codes" (101 opinions), e-mentoring program content includes "need-oriented, inspiratory, useful, different, planned, enjoyable" and sincere" codes (82 opinions), personal codes include "friendly, energetic and interested codes" (12 opinions), professional codes include "expert in the field, experienced, and a good instructor codes" (6 opinions), academic codes include "having academic an background code" (5 opinions).

Table 3

Mentee's Perceptions Toward E-mentoring Applications

Category	Sub-category	Code	Number of Opinions (N)	Samples of Opinions
Perceptions toward e-mentoring applications	Effects of the e-mentoring program	*Arousing curiosity *Demand continuity of the program *Guiding *Raising awareness *Gaining self confidence *Motivating *To be satisfied	101	*I can't talk much and I can't sit still in online meetings. I have a 20-month-old baby. On the one hand, I take care of my baby in the evenings; on the other hand, I try to understand every word by listening carefully. (M10).* *I find the program more important when I have the opportunity to hear field experts' experiences as well as ideas of those with whom I can hardly speak in normal life* (M1). *Also, you made a very good choice. I have realized that all of our selected friends are already kind of mentors. We all seem to have been involved in similar activities, which also made me happy* (M16).
	E-mentoring program content	*Need-oriented *inspiratory *useful *different *planned *enjoyable *sincere	82	*During this week's mentoring program, I realized that I got to know others and the content of the program better with each passing day. As a teacher, I am happy to see and feel that I agree with other teachers about some of the ideas I already hold.* (M1). *This week, there was a sincere dialogue with the R&D team. I especially wanted to participate in the Erasmus program while I was studying at the university. I think I'm thinking of doing it now. Very good information was presented. The program was good. I took occasional notes. I generally paid attention and benefited without getting bored. It's nice to participate in such presentations.* (M3)
Perceptions toward mentors	Personal	*friendly *energetic *interested	12	*We came together with highly energetic and vigorous educators. I'm already excited for what we're going to do in the coming weeks* (M6). *Now we are sure that we have a principal and academics whose door we can knock on without hesitation, no matter what the subject is* (M12). *I think that the sincere and informative statements of our Provincial Director of National Education at the weekly mentoring meeting, the sympathetic attitude of our teachers and your helpful and caring attitude contribute greatly to the creation of a healthy*

Category	Sub-category	Code	Number of Opinions (N)	Samples of Opinions
				and positive communication environment. (M3)
	Professional	*expert in the field, *experienced *a good instructor	6	*In recent years, I have realized that our provincial directorate of national education has accelerated change and innovation exactly as we want. Its approach to us in this program is really nice* (M12). *You have encouraged me to improve myself, you have brought me together with my teachers who trained us and introduced me to my managers. I am very happy to have the chance to witness their professional experience closely* (M20). *Hearing the past professional lives of people whom I would not have the opportunity to talk to in normal life increases the importance of the program for me* (M6).
	Academic	*having an academic background	5	*First of all, our program is progressing very well. We learn new information every week. Thank you very much for bringing us together with our experienced teachers* (M15). *In addition to the meeting being exciting, it was frankly encouraging to have an experienced staff with us* (M11). *I want to pursue a master's degree and I have been in contact with our mentor teachers since the beginning of the process and I have been moving forward with their experiences* (M9).
TOTAL			**206**	

The comments about the e-mentoring application for village teachers highlighted that mentees hold positive views on the content of the e-mentoring program and have progressed positively from the beginning of the process and mentors have been role models personally, professionally, and academically.

3.3. Contribution of E-Mentoring Applications to Village Teachers

Based on the data obtained during the research process, the reflective diaries of the mentees were analyzed and as a result, the theme of the contribution of the e-mentoring program applied to village teachers to village teachers consists of 1 category and 4 codes. These codes consist of professional development (30 views), self-development efforts of the mentees to become mentors in the village schools they are in (26 views), academic development (23 views) and personal development (11 views). The most repeated findings in the analyses are presented in the table below.

Table 4

Contribution of E-mentoring Applications to Mentees

Category	Code	Number of Opinions (N)	Samples of Opinions
Contribution of e-mentoring applications to mentees	Professional development	30	*What our teachers think of our village teachers made me believe in the process and my profession at a higher level* (M1). *In general, the project has given me the opportunity to ask "What else can I do to develop myself professionally" and do some research. I am so glad I took part in this project* (M17).
	Mentees' attempts to be a mentor	26	*Exchanging ideas for activities I will do in my future school and continuing to receive support even after the mentoring training process is over is an indication that development will always continue for us* (M7). *I have decided that once this program is over, I will first write an article, then do an Erasmus + project, and finally create an exemplary teacher role model book* (M13). *This week, I started to rewrite about many shortcomings in my school. I re-established a dialogue with the parents. I started reading articles for students' literacy process* (M 18).
	Academic development	23	*I'm glad you introduced the Dergipark (an article platform) and gave us the opportunity to examine the process of writing an article together. I have earned a lot from this fruitful process, and thanks to you, I have clarified my idea of starting my master's degree.* (M19) *This week has been a week of being informed more academically, I have already had some ideas, but I would never think that I could put them into the project* (M13). *As part of my development process, I think about developing an individual plan to move forward with the project ideas and SWOT analysis for the problems* (M8).
	Personal development	11	*It was a good social platform where we interacted with our village teachers working in different places* (M8). *I think that in the second week of the program, our mentors will provide us with the opportunity to express ourselves while conveying their experiences, which will contribute positively to our professional and personal development* (M2). *It is really great and important to see that slower and well-grounded progress will bring success, and progress with quality people giving training 1-2 hours a week, even if it is a virtual one, will contribute to our development* (M14).
TOTAL		**90**	

The comments about the e-mentoring application for village teachers highlighted that mentees gain personal, professional, and academic experiences during the e-mentoring process, hold positive thoughts about the development plans that are handled with different aspects every week in the meetings, and willingly continue attending the whole program. In addition, it is remarkable to note that after a 10-week development period, mentees want to continue as a mentor in the future and start their professional and academic studies.

3.4. Recommendations for E-Mentoring Applications

Based on the data, the reflective journals of the clients were analyzed. As a result, the clients suggested that the content of the meeting presentations within the scope of the e-mentoring program for village teachers should be more interesting and face-to-face work should be included among the mentoring activities. The opinions of the clients regarding the relevant coding content are given below.

However, I think it is important to have a face-to-face meeting in the coming weeks so that all of our mentee friends can express themselves better and each of us can benefit from their experiences and ideas. I think that this will support the continuation of the process with the spirit of cooperation and togetherness and help achieve the desired goals at the end of the program. (M6).

If you include a cartoon or video in your presentation, it can grab more attention (M11).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, where the problems experienced by village teachers during their new start to the profession were addressed and an action plan was prepared and implemented to solve these problems, it was aimed to reach the most ideal working process focused on the development of teachers. Action research is a research design suitable for the long-term and changing structure of mentoring studies. A seminar-focused mentoring study designed for the adaptation process of school administrators who are new to the profession by Ongun et al. (2024) was designed as a collaboration-focused action research and the process was successfully completed. Similarly, it was observed that the implementation process of the mentoring model designed by Paçalı (2019) for undergraduate students was structured with the action research technique since it consisted of stages covering a period of 1.5 years. When similar mentoring studies in the literature were examined, it was concluded that the nature of this research and the research technique were compatible and that no difficulties were experienced in process management.

Although it is clear that nothing can replace the instant and face-to-face mentoring process, electronic mentoring can fill this gap, especially in development studies aimed at educating teachers in rural areas, when face-to-face mentoring is not possible (Seabrooks vd., 2000). This study has produced quite functional results in terms of the mentoring process, as it allows participants living in different cities and districts to participate in online meetings held in e-mentoring applications from their homes outside of working hours. In this way, it has been determined that these mentoring applications, which take longer with face-to-face programs, are realized with intensive work in a short time and this process contributes to the development of village teachers. In addition, in the study titled "From Face-to-Face to e-Mentoring: Does the "e" Add Any Value for Mentors" (Shrestha vd., 2009), which is mentioned in the literature on e-mentoring, it is seen that the participants' lack of competence in using technological products and the lack of internet connection cause disruptions in the process. Within the scope of this study, the relevant disadvantages (access restriction, illness and mandatory situations) are rare (synchronous participation rate is 80%), but they were also seen in this study. In order to eliminate the deficiency in this process, each meeting was recorded and mailed to the mentees weekly, and mentoring was provided on the content of the phone calls, and deficiencies were tried to be eliminated.

During the study process of this research, it was observed that the researcher mentor (coordinator) communicated with the mentees regularly every week via messages or calls and carried out process-oriented mentoring management. It was determined that this situation encouraged the mentee teachers to participate in the mentoring activities regularly, helped to shape the meeting the next week in line with the mentee expectations and needs, and accordingly, teacher development and

satisfaction were found to be more than the participant expectations at the beginning of the research process. There are studies supporting the increasing success rate with good mentor-mentee communication in mentoring processes (Hudson, 2016; Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Mentors should be a safe and sincere consultant who provides psychological support to new teachers in order for their dedication to the profession to be continuous, and an educator who is a role model for them with their knowledge and experience. At the same time, according to Malderez and Bodoczky (1999), the roles of a mentor are listed as model, trainer, sponsor, supporter and educator. In this respect, the study contents in the literature coincide with the definitions of mentors as experienced, expert in their field, accessible, highly energetic, caring and sincere in the research findings.

In the e-mentoring process, mentoring by senior managers working in the Provincial Directorate of National Education facilitated the direct communication of teachers' professional needs and also contributed to organizational commitment. When the career management processes and teaching experiences of the mentors are considered, it was noticed that the transfer of experience increases day by day. In this respect, the most important result of the research is the professional development of teachers in the mentoring process. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that mentoring provided to newly appointed teachers has a significant effect in terms of professional development. In another research on the subject, it was determined that professional development increased significantly in a mentoring study focused on training school administrators and teachers (Sezgin & Koşar, 2014). At the same time, in a research in which the historical process of mentoring practices in the training of candidate teachers was conveyed, it was concluded that mentoring is an important component in ensuring the continuous professional development of candidate teachers in the Turkish Education System (Yılmaz & Günbey, 2024). In this respect, it is seen that the research results and the literature studies are in a similar direction.

Bierema and Merriam (2002) mention in their study titled "E-mentoring: Using computer mediated communication to enhance the mentoring process" that there is a need for university-supported mentoring programs and that there are few examples of this. In this respect, the faculty members and senior university administrators in the mentoring cadre of this study constitute an example in the literature. Since most of the mentoring practices conducted for teachers focus on professional development, the difference of this study is that the academic aspects of teachers are also taken as a basis. In this context, within the scope of the research findings, it was determined that teachers started scientific study activities (articles, oral presentations and projects) with their mentor teams on the subjects they are interested in with the mentoring content and the effect of the service they receive. When the literature is examined; in a case study examining the level of school principals fulfilling their mentoring roles (Sezgin vd., 2014), it was concluded that the school principal made encouraging speeches to assistant principals and teachers regarding postgraduate education because he had a master's degree, acted proactively in asking for and granting permission, and contributed to the professional and personal development of his trainers as a role model. Similarly, in this study, the activities of academic mentors and the fact that the Provincial Director of National Education has a master's degree have resulted in mentee perceptions of the mentor as being a role model, a resource provider, encouraging academic development, different, experienced and original. In this respect, the research results and the literature data overlap.

It has been concluded that mentees who take part in e-mentoring practices show personal development as well as professional and academic development. In this regard, it has been determined that listening to their ideas every week, being valued and seeing progress in their work in practice under the mentorship of experts in the field increases their self-confidence, hopes and motivation against

burnout, and they expand their social circles by establishing dialogues with mentors and other teachers by establishing an environment in a field different from the work environment. This result is consistent with the data of the study conducted by Smith-Jentsch et al. (2008). The relevant study shows that e-mentoring programs, although short-term, contribute positively to developing self-confidence and social integration, and that the process continues for a long time in terms of declaring that they want to continue even after the program ends and sharing the completed work. Similarly, in the findings of this study, if the mentoring program is opened again, a request for application has been detected and it has been revealed that mentees are motivated to mentor teachers in their own institutions or newly appointed village teachers in the same branch. This situation shows that mentees take the experts they guide as role models. In the context of the relevant literature, the results of a study in which opinions were obtained from educators regarding the implementation of a mentoring program for candidate teachers support this finding (Balkar & Şahin, 2024).

5. Recommendations

It is known that e-mentoring support for teachers who are new to the profession, which has been actively implemented in the international arena for a long time, was first put into practice in Turkey at the end of 2021 (MEB [The Turkish Ministry of National Education], 2021). In this respect, this research has content that will pioneer studies in Turkey. In the light of the experiences gained within the scope of the research, the following points are suggested.

- In order for the e-mentoring process to progress more regularly and without interruption, a platform can be provided where meetings, messaging, document access and regular reflective diary collection processes from mentees are carried out on a common platform by utilizing existing e-mentoring information technologies. In addition, an artificial intelligence-supported access network can be created.
- In order to increase teachers' commitment and trust in the program in e-mentoring practices to be carried out with teachers, it is suggested that senior managers in the provincial directorate of national education should be appointed as mentors and in addition, people in active roles such as R&D and teacher academies in the provincial directorate of national education should be included in the team as assistant mentors.
- In the e-mentoring process, all participants must have the ability to use technological tools and equipment, otherwise the meetings or research process may be interrupted. In this regard, the relevant technological skill usage conditions should be clearly stated in the preliminary interviews with the candidate participants, and the existence of computer/phone/tablet and internet network access in the area where they live should be confirmed.
- It is recommended that the selection process of the mentor team and mentee teachers who will take part in the implementation process be determined by the purposeful sampling technique, and that the most willing individuals are selected from among the applications for the continuity and efficiency of the process in line with the relevant criteria. This is important in order to prevent disruption of the mentoring process and to minimize data loss for researchers.
- It is important to update the action cycles in line with the reflective diaries from the mentors and mentees during the implementation process and to follow the results in the reflective diaries taken in the following weeks. In this respect, it is important for researchers to conduct weekly data analysis.
- It is recommended to hold a face-to-face meeting at the beginning, middle and end of the e-mentoring process to better control the research process and establish a closer mentee-mentor bond.

6. References

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