

**MENTORING AS A MEDIATOR FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND WELL- BEING OF NEW TEACHERS IN RURAL SABAH****\*Jusli Bin Kailu, Shahlan Bin Surat and Faridah Mydin Kutty**

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**Abstract**

The issue of teachers' welfare is highly sensitive issue and closely related to the quality of education in the country related to the policy of developing the ummah and human civilization making it an ongoing debate. The welfare of teachers is associated with the application to transfer among teachers every year. Therefore, this study was conducted scientifically to examine the role of mentoring programs as a mediator for career and cultural adjustment as factors contributing to the well-being of new teachers in rural areas using a quantitative approach based on survey design to look at the phenomenon of teacher well- being among new teachers. The study population consisted of 310 rural primary school teachers throughout the state of Sabah through a proportional and systematic random sampling method. The study used questionnaires from Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Mentoring Function Scale (MFS), Mentoring and personal learning: Content, Antecedent and outcomes (MPL) and Job Related Affective Well Being. The findings of this study indicate that the level of well-being and cultural adjustment of rural teachers was moderate. This study also confirms that mentoring programs fully mediate the relationship between cultural adaptation and the well-being of new teachers.

**Keywords:** Well-being, Mentoring and Cultural Adaptation.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The key to the success of the country's education lies in the hands of teachers as the implementers of the country's education policy. According to a report on the Ministry of Education (MOE) website (2018), the number of teachers nationwide is 421,828 covering preschools, primary schools and secondary schools. This number is increasing every year in line with the growth of Malaysia's population. The 2015 report of the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025 (PPPM 2013-2025) found that more than 60% of teachers today will be teaching for the next 20 years, a long tenure full of challenges and ever-changing syllabus. In view of this long period, the teaching profession should receive special attention from the government. This includes improving staffing schemes, teachers' welfare, and self-development and school infrastructure. Sani Ibrahim & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah (2012), Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani & Abd. Khalil Adnan (2015), Sani *et al.*, (2012) and Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani (2015) stated that the government spent millions of ringgit to fund teacher professional development programmes. The government's 9th Malaysia Plan (9MP) allocates RM390 million for the specific purpose of teacher education to produce quality teachers based on robust and structured training modules. As part of education transformation and quality assurance. The Malaysian Teacher Standards document serve as a guide to improving teaching profession quality and raise the status of educators. Meanwhile, in 2016, the government introduced a special staffing scheme to foster promotion than usual based on performance and competency evaluation.

This is in line with efforts to make the teaching profession professional as contained in the PPPM 2013-2025. The policy aims to bridge the gap between rural and urban education, by strategically placing trained teachers in rural schools. This aspiration is to provide equal educational opportunities to children in rural areas with equal opportunities and the same quality education as urban schools, ensuring equal academic achievement for both rural and urban students. However, this goal is still far from being achieved due to the large rural school population, especially in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, showing low performance (PPPM 2013-2025). The vast, mountainous terrain, presence of rivers and islands, lack of infrastructure, absence of water and electricity supply, and lack of telecommunication lines make rural schools less desirable for teachers, especially new ones. This indirectly hampers efforts and policies to bridge the gap between rural and urban education, especially in Sabah and Sarawak indirectly (Baharin & Azura 2010). In addition to the challenges of daily tasks, cultural differences, beliefs, daily life and exposure to safety risks require new teachers to have strong resilience in adapting to the new environment. To overcome these challenges, cultural adaptation is crucial for new teachers; failure to adapt may lead to career conflicts (Sanawiah Abdul Salam & Ku Suhaila Ku Johari 2018). Realizing that cultural adaptation is a major challenge for new teachers, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has planned several programmes, including the Student Integration Plan for Unity (RIMUP), which has proven to strengthen social interaction among diverse school types. This is supported by findings from the Jemaah Nazir and Quality Assurance (JNJK) study, as well as efforts to promote national identity and respect for cultural diversity (PPPM, 2013-2025).

## Research questions

A professional teacher must be responsible and positive in their careers even if they are placed in remote areas; adapt to the new environment and be creative in implementing learning in resource limited rural areas (Firman Mansir, 2018). A high level of egoism among new teachers must be addressed, as it can lead to crises and social conflicts (Hafzan Omar & Zolkepli Haron, 2018), making teachers uncomfortable and ultimately unhappy in the workplace. Bibie Anak Neo & Ling Ying Leh (2017) emphasized that workplace well-being motivates employees to perform their responsibilities effectively. Rohman (2016) added that teachers' adaptation to the social environment influences their efficiency in teaching and classroom management.

The well-being and happiness of teachers are important in student satisfaction and achievement. Teachers' well-being issues need to be address immediately and resolve to prevent teachers from experiencing stress and depression when they placed far in the countryside. According to A. Poormahmood, F. Moayedi, & K. Haji Alizadeh (2017) the level of happiness of a teacher is a benchmark of stress and enjoyment as well as a marker of success in the workplace and affects students and school performance in producing excellent students. For new teachers stationed in rural areas, feelings of anxiety haunt the mind; extreme anxiety affects emotions or physicality and affects self-adjustment (Tan Yoong Yee & Zainudin bin Hassan 2019). Teachers who are unable to adapt to an emotionally unprosperous environment are increasingly stressed, affecting teachers' emotional, physical, mental, and physical health (Wong Yi Sze, Shahlan Surat & Salleh Amat 2022). The condition of dilapidated schools in rural areas has an indirect impact on the well-being of teachers, this is evidenced by the findings of a study by Firman Mansir (2020) which found that 90% of rural schools have dilapidated school conditions that are not conducive which requires proper attention.

The prerequisite for achieving the self-welfare of teachers in rural areas is that teachers need to adapt and accept the culture of the local community. Failing to understand the culture makes it difficult for teachers to adapt, unhappy with the environment, prone to boredom, constantly showing dissatisfaction, fatigue, and incompetence in performing tasks (Yusni *et al.*, 2015), the egoism attitude of new teachers often tends to trigger crises and social conflicts (Hafzan Omar and Zolkepli Haron 2018). Failure to understand the culture affects self-adaptation (Tan Yoong Yee & Zainudin 2019), stress (Norhazirah Mustaffa 2020) and ultimately makes teachers lose interest in serving. Failure to address cultural challenges is the main cause of teachers requesting transfers or quitting, negatively affecting the organization and students (Normazwin *et al.*, 2020). According to e-Tukar data from the Ministry of Education Malaysia's website, 23,000 teachers applied for transfers in 2019, increasing to 24,158 the same year, with numbers rising annually. This increase in relocation applications has a negative impact on an area, especially in the interior. This situation certainly has a negative impact on the country's education system, most notably due to the shortage of experienced teachers in rural areas in Malaysia (Han Li & Na Zhao 2022) as well as the quality of education (Han Li & Na Zhao 2022) especially in rural areas. Contributing teachers quitting or changing careers after 5 years of service (Subhan Bar-Tal *et al.*, 2020). This situation is a huge loss in human

resource management, as the government has spent millions of ringgit Malaysia to train teachers during teacher training, especially at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia (IPGM) (Husaina *et al.*, 2015; KPM 2015; Bar-Tal *et al.*, 2020). To overcome this problem, a mentoring program is needed to help new teachers. According to Callahan (2016), personal learning coaching is an emotional support for new teachers in increasing their confidence and efficiency in performing daily tasks. In Russia Zasytkin, Zborowski, & Shuklina (2015) suggested that a mentoring policy should be enacted to improve teachers' working and living conditions and thus improve teachers' well-being. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has made it mandatory for new teachers to attend a mentoring program called the New Teacher Development Program that began in 2015.

## Study Objective

- Identify the level of mentoring, cultural adaptation and well-being programmes for new teachers in rural Sabah.
- To measure the mediating effect of mentoring programs on the relationship between cultural adaptation and the well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah.

## Research Hypotheses

- What is the level of mentoring, cultural adaptation and well-being programmes for new teachers in rural Sabah?
- There was no significant relationship between non-mediator mentoring programmes in relation to cultural adaptation and the well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah.

## Past Studies

According to Yuliezar Perwira Dara *et al.*, (2021) the level of teacher welfare is low. Teachers' well-being has negative psychological effects such as stress and fatigue (Burić, Slišković, & Penezić 2019). The teaching profession is a high-pressure career (Sasono 2017) this directly affects the well-being of teachers. Based on the findings of several studies in Japan, 5,000 teachers take sick leave due to mental health issues (Nitta *et al.*, 2018). A study (Yin *et al.*, 2018) found that teachers' well-being closely related to their ability to manage emotions which helps minimize the level of stress. In addition, teacher well-being is a contributing factor to burnout (Burić *et al.*, 2019) and decreased motivation (Cameron & Lovett, 2015). Low levels of well-being are a hindrance to school improvement and education reform (Tina Hascher & Jennifer Waber 2021). Burić *et al.*, (2019), linked teacher well-being to teacher stress and resilience and development fatigue. The lack of attention from the relevant authorities has led teachers to leave areas that lack facilities affecting education in rural schools (Firman Mansir, 2020) and retire early. Meanwhile, Lai Eng Fei *et al.* (2020) argue that teachers' well-being within their first year of service affects their teaching effectiveness and professional attitude. Other researchers who study teacher well-being from various perspectives include (Soykan *et al.*, 2019). This was affirmed by Gökmen Arslan (2018) who identified several domains of life in talking about the welfare of teachers. According to Hogan, J. P. & White, P. J. (2021) Burnout is the most common symptom and can be described as a state of feeling sad due to a chronic workplace environment. A work environment full of stress and tension puts teachers at greater risk for burnout, especially early career teachers. Study

of Nadia Abd. Razak & Faridah Mydin Kutty (2021) showed that there is a significant relationship between the level of psychological well-being of teachers and social relationships. However, research has yet fully explain the concept of well-being, indirectly hindering the development of well-being theory (Tina Hascher A. & Jennifer Waber 2021). Added (Veronese *et al.*, 2018) economic factors, psychosocial factors, professional factors and contextual factors with the quality of education services are factors that contribute to the well-being of teachers. Improved teacher well-being is often associated with a positive school culture (Lei me Thien & Hoay Chyi Lee 2023). School culture has a significant impact on teacher well-being (Cann *et al.*, 2020; Thien & Lee, 2022). However, Hascher & Waber (2021) found that theories on teacher well-being have been minimally investigated. While teacher well-being is related to teacher stress and fatigue (Buri'c *et al.*, 2019), and teacher motivation (Cameron & Lovett 2015).

However, the problem of teacher welfare has not yet found the best solution (Diputra 2018). Among the factors is due to the lack of studies related to teacher well-being which causes theories related to welfare in the teaching profession to be very minimal (Hascher & Waber 2021). Exposure (Heffernan *et al.*, 2019) over 50% of teachers in Australia intend to leave the profession within ten years stems from burnout and stress, as the Australian government and other countries need to address issues related to teacher well-being to ensure the continued strength of the school system in the future (Heffernan *et al.*, 2019). It is the responsibility of authorities to improve teacher welfare. Improving the well-being of teachers means also indirectly improving the quality of education in the country (Firman Mansir 2020; Yusni Zaini Yusof *et al.*, 2015).

The issue of well-being among new teachers needs to be addressed urgently, as it influences teachers to stay in the profession (Hobson & Maxwell 2017) and understand the psychology of teachers in rural areas. The welfare of teachers must be taken care of and it is important to ensure that the environment is conducive and prosperous to remain professional. Culture is a fundamental aspect of human life, passed down through generations both materially and orally. Cultural differences do not only occur from external aspects such as the way of dress, language and communication and speech, but involve more abstract questions such as the beliefs, values and norms of the society as well as the meaning of the community in the worldview of the individual and the society itself (Ab. Halim Tamuri & Nur Hanani Hussin 2017). According to Berry (2005), the clash of two or more cultures in a shared physical and social space leads to cultural stress, termed psychological acculturation, which involves conflicts, crises, and individual adaptation. Ab Halim Tamuri and Nur Hanani Hussin (2017) argue that cultural differences often trigger sensitivity in the life of a new teacher, especially in urban areas when compared to rural areas where the average low-income society is in the world. In this situation, new individuals will face with culture shock when contact with parents, friends and college lecturers is diminished, feeling separated from relatives and friends, left alone and having to make decisions without the help of family and friends (Young Yun Kim 2017). Therefore, new teachers who are stationed far in remote areas are responsible for adapting and unconditionally accepting the culture of rural ethnic communities based on the expression of the values and cultural norms of the local community (Noraini 2015).

In Malaysia, Thien & Lee (2022) found that school culture directly affects teacher well-being. A supportive school culture plays an important role in improving teacher effectiveness in schools (Lee & Louis 2019), educational reform initiatives and innovations (Caliskan & Zhu 2020), and teacher job satisfaction (Toropova *et al.*, 2020). Jan- Erik Romar & Alexandra Frisk (2017) define teacher socialization as referring to the process of understanding a teacher to become a member of society that contributes to the progress in an organization or society. According to Yasmin Ahma, & Najeemah (2016) teachers' lack of sensitivity to cultural diversity in the field of education stems from egnotism (Hafzan Omar & Zolkepli Haron 2017) which causes incidents of racism between teachers and colleagues. Thien & Lee (2022) urges a focus on the influence of school culture and teacher well-being in research because based on three reasons, according to him, first, the influence of school culture across school sizes, small schools may promote a healthy school culture compared to large schools (Avalos-Bevan & Bascope 2017) which leads to teachers being happier working in small schools because they are mandated greater autonomy in terms of decision-making and responsibilities (Karlberg-Granlund, 2019) compared to large schools that have a lot of assignments, a larger teaching and clerical workload, and which reduces reduced levels of teacher well-being. However, research on how school culture influences teacher well-being across different school sizes remains limited (Leime Thien & Hoay Chyi Lee, 2023). Both empirical studies consider school culture as a construct in data analysis even though school culture is multidimensional (Lei me Thien & Hoay Chyi Lee 2023), compared to the findings of the study (Thien & Lee 2022) successfully showed that school culture only accounts for about 40% of the variance associated with teacher well-being, meaning school culture as a latent variable without stating the dimensions of school culture that affect teacher well-being. Thirdly, according to (Thien & Lee 2022) in developing countries in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia pay very little attention to the impact of school culture on teacher well-being compared to western countries, whereas Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and religious country. The Malaysian education system allows for the coexistence of three types of public primary schools National schools, Tamil national schools and Chinese national schools dominated by their respective ethnic groups influencing the inter-school culture which impacts the thinking and character of students even though the same curriculum is applied across schools in Malaysia (Raman *et al.*, 2015).

In the process of understanding and adapting to the local culture, teachers need to adapt by understanding the culture, social environment and culture of school organizations and local communities first. According to (Lian Y, Xiaojun H & Cuiling W 2023) the rural school environment is very special due to its unique geographical location and challenging personality of new teachers. The work environment of rural schools has a significant impact on teachers' personalities further influencing their social, emotional and moral development (Niu, Z. Q. (2018).

Kelchtermans (2017) claims that teacher' unrealistic expectations regarding the school context cause teachers to feel discouraged when they do not achieve teaching objectives. Therefore, it is very important that teachers have realistic expectations to teach in rural and indigenous areas so that they are better prepared to face the challenges of rural students

(Angela Rossana Baeza Pena, 2019). Therefore, the process of forming a new teacher's identity will be shaped based on the rural school environment (Lian Y, Xiaojun H & Cuiling W 2023).

The placement of new teachers to rural schools refers to teachers assigned to rural areas whose environments are different from urban areas, different regional identities and cultures that can trigger identity crises (Lian Y, Xiaojun H and Cuiling W 2023). Development of special skills and knowledge required to work in rural contexts (Angela Rossana Baeza Pena 2019). According to (Lian Y, Xiaojun H & Cuiling W 2023) the rural school environment is very special due to its unique geographical location, having a different local personality to the needy Banda schools, a special work environment as well as specific requirements for the role and identity of rural teachers (Zhao and Xie 2020). School culture and school climate refer to aspects of how to feel, learn, or work in a particular school (McChesney & Aldridge 2021). Wang & Degol (2016) suggests the term school climate encompasses "almost every aspect of the school experience," including aspects related to safety, community, academic climate, and institutional environment. Therefore, McChesney & Aldridge (2021) offers a more detailed understanding of the factors that affect the implementation of new learning by teachers. Mentoring programs are essential to help new teachers adapt, especially in rural areas with distinct cultural contexts. Mentoring as an induction program helps new teachers adapt to the school's organizational culture (Hanson 2008), individual professional development (Benjamin Kutsyuruba & Lorraine Godden 2019), create good relationships and prosper in the workplace. The implementation of mentoring programs is a strategy to help support the presence of new teachers in staff. Mentoring is a formal guidance and training program for an organization.

The challenge of new teachers is to adapt to the career and culture of society. Cultural adaptation challenges the mental, psychological, physical, and emotional challenges of new teachers, especially when placed in remote areas that lack infrastructure, causing teachers to experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inevitable burnout (Hogan, J. P. & White, P. J. 2021). The findings of a qualitative study (Xinglin Jin *et al.*, 2019) entitled learning from novice expert interaction in teachers' continuing professional development, found that mentoring programs help the professional development process of new teachers, new teachers need the support of mentors to encourage, maintain learning and be productive in learning. Mentoring programs can help the development of new teachers' professional identities (Shields & Murray 2017), help provide more information on alternative teaching methods, provide feedback on classroom and emotional experiences rather than comprehensive practical knowledge. Mentoring programs help mentees build relationships with colleagues in harmony, help each other in a team, and prosper while working (Gozukara 2017). The transition from teacher training to professional teaching is often dramatic and stressful, leading to burnout (Hogan & White, 2021) and isolation (Weldon, 2018; Arnup & Bowles, 2016). Therefore, administrators need to be sensitive and concerned about the welfare of new employees. In the context of new teachers, teachers' initial perceptions of school culture and leadership are unsupportive, contributing to feelings of isolation, leading to a pooling of ambitions and factors that cause new teachers to distance themselves from school

leadership compared to colleagues (Hogan & White, 2021). The importance of mentoring in mentoring programmes, several countries have made policies emphasizing the need to implement mentoring as a key strategy to address the problem of new teachers in rural areas who experience feelings of isolation and frustration in a new environment. Therefore, it is not surprising that many researchers have proposed mentoring programs as one of the efforts to help teachers socialize formally into the profession, workplace, organization and community context to support new teachers (Hogan & White, 2021). This view supports the recommendation of Faye McCallum *et al.*, (2017) in the Teacher Wellbeing: A review of the literature that teacher mentoring programs in the early stages of their careers are a proactive initiative, supporting new teacher induction programs to achieve well-being while transitioning from trainee teachers to real teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey methodology. This study was conducted in Sabah, focusing on new primary school teachers in rural areas. The study consisted of 310 new teachers placed in rural schools who had served between 6 months and 3 years. A proportional stratified random sampling method was used in this study. The data were analyzed using SEM-AMOS.

This study uses four instruments. First, the Communicative Competence Scale (CCS) instrument was built by Wiemann (1977) to measure communicative competence and the ability to "choose the available behaviors and communicatives" to achieve a person's interpersonal goals. Wiemann (1977) reported an alpha coefficient CSS value of .96, McLaughlin & Cody (1982) reported a CSS alpha value of .91. Jones & Brunner (1984), Query, Parry & Flint (1992) reported CSS alpha values at .86. The second instrument for mentoring consists of two tools: the Mentoring Function Scale (MFS) by Raymond A. Noe (1988), which uses a 5-point Likert scale. Chao stated that the Mentoring Function Scale instrument has alpha coefficient values of .85 and .79. Abdul Ghani bin Abu Hassan (2019) has used this instrument and found that Cronbach's alpha value is 0.95. The second mentoring scale is the Mentoring and Personal Learning Questionnaire: Content, Antecedents, and Outcomes by Langkau & A. Scandura (2002). Abdul Ghani bin Abu Hassan (2019) used this instrument which has been translated into Malay and found that the reliability of the Cronbach alphabet construct for self-learning is .92, while the development of self-skills .92 carries the value of the Cronbach alphabet .94. Meanwhile, for the wellness instrument, this study uses the Wellness Instrument - Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener *et al.*, (1985) with a value of .87. The alpha value is not much different from the findings of Irene Checa, Donatella Di Marco & M. Rocío Bohórquez (2021) .89, and *J. Clin. Med.* (2021) .85.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study examined the level of mentoring programs, cultural adaptation, and well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah, revealing that mentoring programs in these schools were at a high level (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.461). Although cultural adaptation among new teachers in rural Sabah was moderate (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.125), their overall well-being was also found to be moderate (mean = 4.39, SD = 1.278). As for the second hypothesis, there is a weak relationship between non-

mediated mentoring programmes and the relationship between cultural adaptation and new teachers' wellbeing in rural Sabah. This study's findings revealed that culture does not directly influence the well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah ( $\beta = 0.196$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, for every 1-unit increase in cultural adaptation, teacher well-being increases by 0.196. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho1) is not supported. Consequently, the hypothesis of this Ho1 is not meaningful. The findings of this study indicate that mentoring programmes fill the gaps in the relationship between culture and well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah through significant regression coefficients of the culture and well-being ( $\beta_1$ ) and the mentoring and well-being ( $\beta_3$ ), but not substantial for the mentoring and culture ( $\beta_2$ ) as suggested by (Zainudin 2015) and Zainudin *et al.*, (2018). As such, mentoring programmes are considered complete mediator in the relationship between culture and the well-being of new teachers in rural Sabah.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that mentoring programmes for new teachers in rural Sabah were at a high level (mean = 3.20 and SD = 0.461). In comparison, the level of cultural adaptation for new teachers in rural Sabah is at a moderate level (mean = 3.39 and SD = 0.125). Lack of exposure to cultural diversity during basic teacher training or teacher training does not providing new teachers with teaching methods for different ethnicities was one of the factors contributing to the findings of this study. This study also proves that mentoring acts as a social support in the workplace (Vumilia *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, it is a medium of personal learning in adapting to a new environment, the process of teacher socialization and the learning process about roles with the culture of the teaching profession (Vumilia *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, it contribute to human capital in education and help teachers remain in the profession (Sergio Merida-Lopez *et al.*, 2020; Collie *et al.*, 2017; Ju *et al.*, 2015). In this regard, the findings of this study can have significant implications on the development of the well-being of new rural teachers, and further suggest that a special mentoring program for new rural teachers be formulated with a more specific module. A more inclusive mentoring module that meets the need of rural teachers, helping them adjust, achieve job satisfaction, enhance wellbeing (Benjamin Kutsyuruba & Lorraine 2019; Aguilar 2018). The authorities are obliged to pay attention to the issue of teacher well-being that is still underexplored and in particular the well-being aspect of the life of new teachers in rural areas. By ensuring that the welfare of teachers is improved (Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2016), so that new teachers can adapt and understand the culture of either the organization or the environment to retain teachers to serve in rural areas. For new teachers in the service who are currently participating in the New Teacher Development Programme, which was introduced in 2015, they should take the opportunity to learn from the appointed mentors and mentors should be committed in the implementation and guide the new teachers to understand the career environment and culture of the new area. In addition, the modules of the New Teacher Development Programme need to be improved and adapted to the more challenging working environment of rural teachers.

The process of career adjustment and understanding of local culture in rural schools requires teachers to guide formally and informally. The mentoring program as a formal and informal coaching strategy helps new teachers in the process of tutoring

either in teaching or understanding the values and norms of life in the rural community. The modeling process forms a response stimulus that allows teachers to learn to do things by observing the environment and then repeating what they see. The guidance of a more senior mentor allows for the process of imitating only good behaviour that will be used as the behaviour of the new teacher. As a result, the resulting behavior is in line with the norms and values of the organization and the local community without triggering any conflict. Informal support from the school helps new teachers, especially in rural areas, adapt to an often-inadequate school environment, thereby reducing anxiety and stress at the beginning of the teacher's attendance. Mentoring programmes, one of the strategies that have proven to be effective, helping new teachers adapt to the real career of an educator and understand the culture of the local community need to be empowered with the cultural elements of the local community. Mentoring programs provide space for new teachers to build emotional, psychological strength and career development. In addition, mentoring is a sign of official support and welcomes the presence of new teachers to be placed, especially in rural areas.

## Conclusion

Empowering mentoring programmes as a strategy is the first step in supporting new teachers, as their effectiveness has proven. However, the implementation needs periodic refinement so that guidance in mentoring achieves the goal of improving well-being through the continuous learning process in mentoring. In the context of the interior, special modules should be designed and used as a guide for mentors in guiding mentees. A structured and purposeful mentoring program broadens new teachers' perspectives, boost their confidence, and motivates them to serve longer in rural schools. Careful planning, a structured mentoring module, and the continuous learning process can positively affect the well-being of new teachers in rural areas. The results of this study can increase knowledge and provide information to the State Education Department, District Education Office, school leaders and placement policy makers. The information from this study needs to be used to develop or modify mentoring strategies to improve teacher well-being and retain new teachers in rural schools thereby increasing the long-term retention of permanent new teachers in rural schools and indirectly improving teaching quality. In order to gain real-life experience and assess the level of well-being of new teachers, future researchers are encouraged to conduct in-situ or longitudinal studies. This study will provide an opportunity for researchers to find out the current situation of teachers placed in rural schools. The findings of this study can be used as a reference to help the relevant parties examine and concurrently conduct mentoring programmes to adapt new teachers and identify the needs of teachers in rural schools. A framework and specialised mentoring modules should implemented in rural schools, tailored to contextual needs and specifically designed for new teachers. Effective mentoring practices should integrated with the development or modification of existing mentoring modules.

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